THE NATIONAL ART SCHOOL - A SOCIAL HISTORY FROM 1833 to 1973 and a
CATALOGUE OF THE ARCHIVAL ART COLLECTION

VOLUME 1

CAE)

Queensland College of Art

Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland.

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ABSTRACT

At the core of this thesis is a broad social history of the origin of the National Art School (NAS), dating from the earliest days of art history in NSW when the Mechanics Institute was formed. From 1833, after many incarnations and name changes, this organisation evolved into the National Art School. Since 1922 it has been located in the old Darlinghurst Gaol in East Sydney. I have detailed the growth of the School until 1973 when it was absorbed into the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education. The documentary material used in the construction of the NAS history is examined in relation to the social and political forces that operated in Sydney and Australia during the period under examination.

The thesis began as a project to catalogue the extensive collection of student paintings held by the NAS. The lack of documentation, at the most basic level of student and staff names, extended the necessary scope of the research. The photographic record of the collection of student paintings is included as an appendix, as is the catalogue of these works. My thesis also includes, as appendices, the definitive (although incomplete) list of over 4,000 past student names, dating from the beginning of the twentieth century to 1973, and an incomplete, although comprehensive list of teachers names covering the same period. It has taken some years of research to compile these listings from a variety of official, published and press sources. This thesis also contains a coverage of the formation of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme and the effect this scheme had on a number of young student artists, many of whom became leaders in their various fields. No study of this group has previously been undertaken. I interviewed ex-students and teachers, and from them gathered names of some ex-CRTS students. I was able to contact a small number of still active artists and from the results of a questionnaire administered to them, formed conclusions about how they survived their financially stringent time as CRTS assisted students, and how the results of the training and support they received at the School affected their subsequent careers.

The importance of this study, apart from its intrinsic value, is the material it offers to future investigation by scholars from different fields. There is potential for much further research in every decade of the school’s history.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signature:...............................................................
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAI</td>
<td>Australian Artists Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGA</td>
<td>Artists and Galleries of Australia</td>
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<td>AGNSW</td>
<td>Art Gallery of New South Wales</td>
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<td>AIF</td>
<td>Australian Infantry Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMCAE</td>
<td>Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education</td>
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<td>AS</td>
<td>Australian Sculptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASTC</td>
<td>Associate of Sydney Technical College</td>
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<td>AWAS</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Army Service</td>
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<td>AWCP</td>
<td>Australian Water Colour Painters</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>College of Advanced Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAI</td>
<td>City Art Institute</td>
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<td>CRTS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme</td>
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<td>EAA</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Australian Art</td>
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<td>EFTS</td>
<td>Effective Full-Time Students</td>
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<td>ESTC</td>
<td>East Sydney Technical College</td>
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<td>LAA</td>
<td>Library Association of Australia</td>
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<td>NAS</td>
<td>National Art School</td>
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<td>NASC</td>
<td>National Art Students Club</td>
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<td>NIDA</td>
<td>National Institute of Dramatic Art</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>NSW HEB</td>
<td>New South Wales Higher Education Board</td>
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<td>NSWIA</td>
<td>New South Wales Institute of the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCA</td>
<td>Sydney College of the Arts</td>
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<td>SCAE</td>
<td>Sydney College of Advanced Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
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<tr>
<td>SORA</td>
<td>Studio of Realist Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>STC</td>
<td>Sydney Technical College</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWP</td>
<td>Society of Women Painters [Sydney]</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAF</td>
<td>Women’s Auxiliary Air Force</td>
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<td>WW1</td>
<td>World War 1</td>
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<td>WW2</td>
<td>World War 2</td>
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Art Students - East Sydney Technical College c.1930s

Photo by Sam Hood, Collection of the State Library of NSW
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the History of the National Art School

This thesis presents an overview of the history of the National Art School at East Sydney in New South Wales, and the historical and social events that affected its growth from 1833 to 1973, the year in which it integrated into the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education (AMCAE). Born out of the Mechanics Institutes of the nineteenth century, the NAS had many incarnations and was referred to under many different titles including the Working Mens College, the Art Department of the Board of Technical Education, the Art Department of Sydney Technical College, the Art School at East Sydney Technical College, the Government Art School and the National Art School, over its long history. Throughout the thesis I have used the title of the School current at the time of which I was writing. ESTC refers to the College as a whole including schools other than art, NAS refers to the Art School within ESTC, and when I mention the school, I am referring to the Art School. For a further explanation of the dates and usage of these terms, see Chapter 7 Section 6.

The initial impetus to write this thesis was provided by a touring exhibition from the Manly Art Gallery and Museum, The Studio Tradition, which featured some paintings and drawings from the NAS student collection. On the opening night at the Coffs Harbour Art Gallery, curator Therese Kenyon stated that the NAS collection had never been catalogued. I felt a compelling urge to rectify this situation, and later, to undertake the massive task of compiling a history of such an important institution.

My reasons for attempting this research were partly sentimental. In 1948 I was a student at Saturday morning art classes run by East Sydney Technical College, in 1957 I attended part-time night classes in art there, in 1975 I spent a semester at the College as an AMCAE student and in 1985 I was employed by TAFE as an Art Reference Librarian to evaluate the Rare Books Collection in the library. Thus my thirty-seven year association with the College gave me a close interest in its fortunes and I welcomed the opportunity to investigate its history.
Given the School’s long history and its role in training well-known artists in Sydney, an attempt to document its sometimes turbulent history was overdue. A literature search into the early years of art education in NSW revealed that almost nothing had been written about the NAS. A few pamphlets and exhibition catalogues gave brief histories, and a short general history appeared in the catalogue of the *The Studio Tradition* exhibition. Apart from these tantalising morsels, there was a paucity of history for a school of such long standing. Its location in an old convict-built gaol required investigation, as did the outcome of the careers of its graduates, both men and women, and its place in the retraining of ex-service people. No comprehensive listing of past students had ever been compiled and no list of staff members existed.

The Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS), first proposed in 1940, was a government-funded scheme that allowed ex-service men and women to be re-educated, enabling them to return to employment on the same standing as those who had not been involved in active service. Art was included in the eligible courses and new students, as well as some returning to studies interrupted by the war, applied for entrance. The role of the NAS in the scheme is discussed in Chapter 10. The success of the scheme as applied to art training has never been researched, nor the implications of the age, maturity, or financial constraints of the NAS group. The study of art was not mentioned in any of the works that I located relating to the CRTS, which included J Watter’s Ph.D Thesis, *A Study of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme*, H Gallagher’s *We Got a Fair Go: A History of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme 1945-1952* and J Barrett’s *We Were There: Australian Soldiers of World War II*, being concerned mainly with reminiscences, individual histories, and a general overview of the scheme. Thus, my findings on the CRTS related to the NAS are original contributions to this area. Archival searches in Canberra revealed the Parliamentary passage of the Act covering the CRTS and some Departmental files and documents related to re-training.

I believe this to be the first social history to be written of the National Art School and there is scope for much more work for future researchers. I wish them well and as much pleasure as this thesis has brought me.
1.2 Methodology

In 2003 I was granted permission by TAFE authorities and the then Director of the National Art School, Bernard Ollis, to access the student art collection, held at that time at TAFE in Harris Street, Ultimo, in Sydney. Storage conditions were not ideal, works being clustered without regard to size or condition. They were however, in a constant temperature environment. I was able to photograph a large number of them before they were moved to the NAS premises in Burton Street, East Sydney. Some time later they were re-photographed by the School and I gratefully received some images lost from my collection because of problems computer problems I had encountered.

Early in the project I began to digitally photograph the paintings in the NAS archives at TAFE in Pyrmont to compile an up-to-date catalogue of the works. Each item was scrutinised for artist, subject, condition and measurements. An integral outcome of my research is my original catalogue of art works by students and others, held in the School’s archives. (See Vol.2 Appendix 8) Of the collection of approximately 400 paintings, those that are named and dated total 146. Most of these date from 1940 to the 1960s but a few exist from 1900 to late 1930 and there are two from the 1970s. I had hoped that my catalogue of the NAS archival collection would offer a resource for quantitative analysis to reveal information such as percentages of male to female artists, pass marks attained by students, or even such basic information as age groups and duration of studies but lack of documentation on individual works limited its application. The collection is dominated by nude studies, portraits, still lifes and compositions. Since Deborah Beck’s appointment as College Archivist, works by ex-students are being slowly acquired by donation.

During my research in the School’s archives I found that a basic catalogue of the collection had, in fact, been compiled around 1982, using black-and-white photographs and some coloured slides. This catalogue was useful in confirming my own photos. Two years after I finished my compilation, funding was given to the NAS for a new catalogue that has now been entered on MOSAIC by staff and volunteers. Funding has also recently become available to document a large collection of works on paper, such as drawings, posters, and some etchings, largely anonymous. This collection was too vast to use as a resource for my thesis but should be invaluable for future researchers.
In attempting to put the art works into an historical context, I found that a coherent history of the School had never been written. This lack of specific documentation led me to seek out ex-students and teachers to build a more comprehensive overview of its history. The qualitative analysis of the information gathered in interviews informs part of my historical framework. At this stage I decided to convert from a Masters Degree to a Ph.D. and research the School’s origins and its history more thoroughly, to conclude at the point at which it was absorbed into the AMCAE.

Two books were useful in guiding my research. Joan Cobb’s excellent work *Sweet Road to Progress: The History of State Technical Education in New South Wales to 1949* was invaluable as a general history, although the Art School or Department as it was known in the early days (one of only many Schools within TAFE), had minimal coverage. She documents the rise and fall of technical education in New South Wales because of wars, vagaries of weather, and financial vicissitudes which must also have affected the Art Department, although this is not specified in her book. Ann Stephen’s *Visions of a Republic: the Work of Lucien Henry*, was published to accompany the exhibition of the same name, held at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, from April to October 2001, offered a starting point. Henry was an early and influential teacher at the Working Mens College and set a curriculum that was followed for many years by the Technical College.

I have long been aware of a group of artists who trained at ESTC under this scheme and were known to the School collectively as the CRTS students. A number of them are represented in the art collection and many became prominent in the art world, not only in NSW but Australia. I wished to investigate why so many attained this status. The list of names (approximately 255) of these students that I compiled was included in the catalogue of the exhibition *Lines of Fire*, at the NAS Gallery during July-August 2008. I had traced a few of those students who were living in NSW and Queensland and, following a broad general scheme of questioning as outlined in Vol. 2, Appendix 3, conducted interviews, some in person, some by telephone and some by written correspondence. From the results of this very small group’s questionnaires I was able to make some general assumptions that would possibly apply to the group as a whole. I also drew information about the CRTS artists from important primary documents, a number of secondary sources, and exhibition catalogues. One person whom I interviewed advised me that two of the CRTS students (Klaus Friedeberger and Fred Schonbach) and a previous lecturer (Peter Kaiser) had been interned in Australia after being transported from England in the ship ‘Dunera’. I
investigated this event further, discovering that these men were among a group of 2,542 people escaping war-torn Europe in 1940. When arriving in Melbourne, some were sent to Tatura while others continued on to Hay, 750 kms west of Sydney. After scrutiny of a painting provisionally titled Soldi ers’(No.47a) by Fred Schonbach, I realised it was a pictorial record of the internees embarking on the Dunera, explicitly showing the unfortunate internees surrendering their possessions. The threatening attitudes of the officers in charge and the bayonet-carrying soldiers are clearly shown. This unique painting is possibly the only visual record of that historic event. (Vol. 2, Appendix 12)

In tracing the history of the NAS, I discovered that its origins lie in the Mechanics Institutes of Australia. Thus I investigated their growth from initially offering cultural and basic practical instruction to small groups in cities and country towns, to the later stage when they introduced technical education in a more organised form. The Sydney Technical College’s many departments included art and I studied each decade after 1890 for significant events, both social and artistic, that may have influenced its development of the Art Department. I discovered that the growth of the College was affected by political, economic, and even international events. The demand and supply for art classes varied according to the nation’s prosperity, but by 1921 there was enough support to warrant the establishment of a full school of art which was located in the old Darlinghurst Gaol complex in East Sydney. Until this point art taught at the Technical College had been strongly industry oriented. The Art School began to award Diplomas in 1930.

Fortunately, some Art Student Club Minute Books from 1926 to 1944 survived in the School Archives, and I used them to gain insight as to what life was like for students in the Depression and war years. I obtained EA Harvey’s undated document It Was a Damn Good School (c.post-1974) from the AGNSW archives; as a record of his life as an artist and art teacher at ESTC, it proved to be invaluable for its reminiscences.

Through my research I discovered that the women graduates of the School generally received little exposure, except for the sculpture students of the Hoff era. There was minimal coverage of a few from the late 1940s and even less of a talented group from the 1960s. Thus I investigated a number of the women graduates and have included a large section about the ‘invisibility’ of women artists in the period covered by this thesis, and about the ways in which they responded to the changing world around them. Again, there is work here for the future.
I also set myself the enormous task of compiling a list of the students enrolled at the school until 1973. However because of the frustrating lack of enrolment and teacher records it took several years of investigation to compile the list of between four and five thousand students’ names which are contained in Vol. 2, Appendix 5. This is the first such list ever compiled, and will be added to the data base of past students that the NAS is currently assembling. I searched the NAS Archives, the TAFE Archives, and the National Archives of Australia in Canberra for student names with limited success. Most regrettably, after extensive searching on the part of myself and staff at the National Archives at Chester Hill, it appeared that name and subject files of CRTS art students, compiled by the Commonwealth Office of Education in 1945, had been mislaid or misfiled at some point in the past, possibly before the card collection was sent to that facility, and could not be found. I perused microfiche in the State Library of NSW for Annual Examination results in newspapers, and an incomplete set of the Sydney Technical College Handbooks for student names, exam results and teachers names from 1896 to 1975. The State Records Office at Kingswood yielded enrolments of the 1920s. The Internet provided a number of names of students from recent decades. While the list of student names is incomplete it gives an idea of the huge number of people who studied art from the early days of the Sydney Technical College. I also compiled an incomplete list of teachers’ names and the dates that they taught, a basis for further investigation. It is expected that at some time in the future, documents relating to the CRTS students will be returned to the NAS, and may provide valuable additional information about this era.

The School has an impressive list of alumni and others associated with it, and I chose to investigate one person, John Kaplan, who made a significant contribution to its history. Because he is now deceased, I had to rely on written sources for information. John Kaplan was the ESTC librarian from 1949 to 1962. As I am former art librarian, Kaplan was of specific interest to me. I was advised of an un-catalogued item by him, entitled *Problems in the administration of art libraries*, in the NAS library. This was an essay submitted to the Australian Libraries Association in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the diploma in librarianship in 1954, and was valuable in demonstrating Kaplan’s judgment and ability in his management of the library.

The NAS’s collection of plaster casts and mouldings is an important and still-used resource. A comprehensive catalogue of these was compiled by Isolde Lennon who gave me permission to include it in my Appendices.
1.3 Structure of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, ‘The Establishment of Mechanics Institutes in Australia’, I give the background to the establishment of the Technical Education system by way of the Mechanics Institutes. These Institutes, modelled on European examples, provided some of the earliest forms of art teaching available to the general public in Sydney. I describe how they became fundamental to community-building at a time when Australia was forming its new national character. From 1837, classes were held in the newly built Sydney Mechanics Institute building in Pitt Street, Sydney. Between 1843 and to 1855 the classes were hobby-based, although in 1849 architectural drawing and geometrical drawing were introduced. After 1860, and as industries grew, technical and trade subjects increased in number. In 1881 Lucien Henry began teaching art in the Institute and two years later the School of Arts integrated with the Board of Technical Education. In 1883 this Board was taken over by the Technical Education Branch of the Department of Public Instruction and in 1884 the Sydney Technical College was formed with Henry appointed as Instructor in its Department of Art.

Chapter 3, ‘The Technical College’, goes on to describe the next phase of this institution’s history. On 9 March 1891, the Technical College was established in Harris Street, Ultimo, Sydney. The chapter details how Australia spent 1900-10 recovering from the disastrous droughts and bank closures of the late-nineteenth century. At this time, the Technical College offered art and technical art classes to many hundreds of students, a number that at least matched enrolments at other art schools of that time. I discuss the structure of the Technical College Art Department and its classes, which were often contracted due to wartime demands, times of recession, or the need for training in new technologies in an increasingly industrialised country. With the onset of WW1, the number of art classes diminished even though the Superintendent of Technical Education, JW Turner, strongly supported art’s important role in society. I detail how other Art Schools in Sydney vied for students and the conflicting attitudes pertaining to the creation of a ‘National’ Art School.

Chapter 4, ‘Darlinghurst Gaol’ provides a brief history of the establishment of Darlinghurst Gaol which was converted into a teaching facility to accommodate the excess student numbers the Sydney Technical College experienced after WW1, particularly due to
the vast numbers of ex-service personnel needing retraining. From this time the Art School at East Sydney began to assume an identity of its own.

In Chapter 5, ‘Historical and Social Issues Affecting the Development of Art Teaching Between the Wars’, I discuss the growth of a national style of painting, the so-called blue/gold school, and the dearth of women artists of repute at the time, in spite of the large numbers of female students attending art classes from the late-nineteenth century. During WW1 artists were sent to produce pictorial records of the fighting, and on their return they popularised the romantic image of the Australian countryside. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, women responded to the new ‘modern’ art with enthusiasm, which I introduce in this chapter.

Chapter 6, ‘The Growth of Modernism in Art in Australia’, considers the formation of women’s art clubs as a support for women struggling to establish themselves as artists. I also discuss the increasing trend for them to travel overseas for further instruction. They and some male artists followed modern and abstract art movements in Europe and on their return to Australia (prior to WW2), shared the results of their experiences with artists who were interested in non-representational art. The success of women sculpture students under Rayner Hoff’s regime is noted, as is the influence of art teachers Grace Crowley and Frank Hinder in the 1940s.

Samuel V Rowe, a recognised designer, had been appointed head of the Art School in 1916 and he held that position for almost two decades. Chapter 7, ‘The East Sydney Technical College’, considers his appointment and influence. As I detail, the 1920s proved to be a difficult time, and Rowe faced shrinking budgets, antagonistic competitors in commercial art schools, and fluctuating social conditions. A Diploma course added lustre to the Art School. In 1930 the first Diploma of Art was awarded to Eileen McGrath, a highly successful sculpture student who studied under Hoff. It was probably due to Hoff, a close friend of Norman Lindsay, that Lindsay was vocal in his support of the School’s teaching practice. Hoff’s sculpture students were given wide publicity because of their high standards and achievements. The Technical College introduced Scholarships that gave some assistance to less affluent students. I also discuss the history behind the School’s name change to National Art School, first referred to in 1928.
Chapter 8, ‘The Effects of the Depression, WW2, and the ensuing Decade on NAS’ continues chronologically, noting how Rowe kept a critical eye on students, not always with complete success. An increase in fees resulting from complaints made by rival art schools, meant that art was the most expensive course in the College. I discuss the turbulent years of the 1920s and 1930s also providing insights drawn from minute books of the Student Clubs. As I detail, the onset of WW2 changed the nature of life at the School. Young men were conscripted and many of the remaining students and teachers were involved in war-effort activities. Several very talented women students emerged during these years but with the exception of Margaret Olley, most moved overseas following the war to further their careers.

In 1940, several thousand refugees, mainly Jews escaping Nazi Germany, were living in England. Many hoped for placement in the armed services, or to be allowed to migrate to other countries. Chapter 9, ‘Dunera Internees and their Connection to ESTC’, outlines how some of these unfortunate men were sent from England on the ship Dunera to Australia. When the ship landed in Melbourne, one group was sent to Tatura, Victoria, and the rest were sent to Hay in NSW via Sydney. On release from the camps, two of these men, Klaus Friedeberger and Fred Schonbach, came to study at the NAS under the auspices of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS). Another detainee, Peter Kaiser, spent some time teaching at the School before returning to Europe. I discuss the roles of these men in the NAS.

Chapter 10 ‘The Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS)’, discusses a significant era in the School’s history, heralded by the training of post-war CRTS trainees. Over a period of almost a decade, hundreds, possibly up to a thousand ex-service people trained full and part-time at the School. Many of them became outstanding figures in their various fields. In this chapter, I investigate the history of the Scheme, including its aims, conditions of eligibility, and some of the problems that were faced administering such a large-scale program. I prepared a questionnaire that I gave to the few CRTS trainees I was able to contact and the results of these are discussed.

Chapter 11 ‘Peacetime’, discusses the responses I received from former CRTS students in more depth and also uses published sources to further consider the successes and failures of the CRTS in other institutions as well as the NAS. I also note how the post-war period was significant for the several large scale exhibitions that toured state galleries,
featuring international collections. I discuss the escalating status of art and art-making which was evidenced by the increasing number of art prizes being offered by corporations and municipal councils. As I outline, the number of commercial galleries grew in most major cities, sometimes taking on a ‘stable’ of artists, often including many who trained at the NAS.

Chapter 12 ‘Post-war Changes to the Structure of Educational Institutions’ discusses the changes to tertiary educational institutions from the mid-1950s, when a financial crisis appeared regarding the funding of higher education. Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) were proposed and these grew to be the largest tertiary-education sector. Many small colleges were absorbed into larger institutions. As I explain, the creation of these colleges was fraught with lack of funding, inadequate premises, amalgamation problems, and dissatisfaction experienced by all sectors involved. I have attempted to explain this complex situation which resulted in the Art School at ESTC almost losing its identity, following its incorporation in 1973 into the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education. In 1989, after many years of confusion and name changes, it separated from the New South Wales Institute of the Arts and returned to TAFE, a very pale shadow of its former illustrious self.

In Chapter 13 I discuss an important ESTC identity, John Kaplan, the innovative first School librarian, who also introduced students to classical film and had an impact on course content for art students.

The Conclusion draws together the themes that are discussed throughout the thesis, recapitulating how the National Art School (in its various incarnations) came to be in existence, and its turbulent history, compounded by many social, political, and economic circumstances. It summarises the unique primary information I was able to collate, including archival research and personal anecdotes from former students. As this is the first such history to be written of the National Art School there is scope for much more work for future researchers. I wish them well and as much pleasure as this thesis has brought me.
“Art is never independent of its place, and takes on the features of its locality as surely as it takes on the features of its time.”

CHAPTER 2

The Rise of the Mechanics Institutes

The Mechanics Institutes in Australia, also known as Mechanics Schools, School of Arts, and Literary Institutes were the stepping stones to the Technical Education movement and ultimately to the formation of the NAS and two major universities in Sydney, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Worthy of inclusion in the Australian History school curriculum, the history of the Mechanics Institute movement reflects the growth of population and settlement, the educational and cultural aspirations of new colonists, and the emergence of industry and technology at grass-roots level. In this chapter, I trace the British origins of the Mechanics Institutes in Australia, and their rapid spread throughout the country. In spite of their original aim to provide education for the working class or mechanics in society, it was the rising middle class who most used the resources provided. Mention is made of the notable intellectual leaders who promoted the Institutes. From the earliest days, art was a subject most requested, but when the Institutes evolved into schools for technical education there was an attempt to remove art from the curriculum. However pressures from teachers as well as students prevented this from happening.

2.1 The Establishment of Mechanics Institutes in Australia

In Europe, and notably France, there were well-established institutions for the training of art and design, engineering, science and trade skills. The *Ecole des Arts et Metiers* (School of Arts and Crafts) was considered the best fundamental trade school in Europe. During the 1850s Britain lagged badly behind Europe in the provision of industrial teaching and elementary schooling. The South Kensington Palace of Art, later linked to the Sydney Mechanics School as an examining Board, had been established by Prince Albert

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after the Great Exhibition in 1851. While this exhibition was intended to demonstrate Britain's industrial superiority it revealed that Europe, particularly France and Germany, surpassed Britain in this field. After official enquiries into the British education system, ‘in 1870 Britain laid the foundation for a universal system of compulsory elementary schooling’. 

Prince Albert and others determined to raise the country's level in trade and craft skills particularly. The deficiency was apparently felt throughout society, not the least by those interested in design and manufacture.

While Engineering, Mining and Chemistry schools were introduced in the 1840s and 1850s, Britain still clung to the factory floor and apprenticeship systems and further training was the individual's responsibility and expense. Mechanics Schools of Art were set up to provide such training and from 1820 to 1840 over 200 schools were established in the United Kingdom. This model, which also included teaching in Science and the Arts, was the one adopted in Australia. The term ‘School of Arts’ referred generally to artisans not artists and Mechanics Schools did not necessarily mean they were only for the education of mechanics. While artisan is defined in the *Macquarie Dictionary* (1982) as 'one skilled in an industrial or applied art, a craftsman', it is also given that an artisan is a 'member of the urban working class'. Mechanics can mean 'the science dealing with the action of forces on bodies and with motion, and comprising statics, kinematics and dynamics' or the 'methods of operation, procedures and the like'. Shakespeare used the term 'rude mechanicals' (Act 3, Scene 11) in ‘A Midsummer Nights Dream’ in 1595. The Oxford Dictionary gives sixteenth-century usage of the word ‘rude’ to mean lacking in book learning or unmannerly or devoid of culture. Shakespeare’s use of ‘mechanic’ can mean vulgar, of the lower orders or one who works for bread. By the nineteenth century it can be seen that the mechanic has risen in society to a point where he is considered to be not only needful, but worthy of education. In the twenty-first century, he is an indispensable technician, without whom civilisation would return to the pre-machine or pre-computer era.

The Rev. Dr John Woolley, first Principal of the University of Sydney, stated that the Australian Mechanics Institutes had been modelled on the London Society of Arts, but

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3 J Cobb. op. cit., p.10.
4 ibid., p.3.
5 ibid., p.5.
they may equally have been modelled on the Edinburgh School of Art (1821), Glasgow Mechanics Institute (1821), or the London Mechanics Institute (1823), all part of a worldwide movement to provide education and intellectual enlightenment for the labouring or mechanic classes of society. The Glasgow Mechanics Institute began in 1799 when Professor George Birkbeck, Professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry at the University of Glasgow, conducted a series of lectures for the working men of Glasgow. In 1823 the London Mechanics Institute began giving lectures, soon followed by Manchester in 1824. Remarkably, the first Australian Institute, known as the Van Diemans Land Mechanics Institute, opened in Hobart, (Tasmania), in 1827, only 24 years after the first settlement, which shows that although it was a convict settlement, there were already residents who desired educational or cultural stimulation. Similar Institutes could be found in Canada, South Africa, New Zealand or, as Candy observes, ‘anywhere that was coloured red on the map of the British Empire.’

In NSW, Governor Burke wished to supersede ‘those tastes for idle dissipation which are unhappily too prevalent’ in the community, and he approached the Rev. Henry Carmichael to help him in this cause. In March 1833 a committee was formed to establish the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts. The first meeting to form the School was held on 23 April 1833, chaired by the Rev. Carmichael, and the objects in the Regulations were to be attained by engaging ‘Teachers and lecturers of the various branches of Science and Art.’ Among the courses proposed was a class in drawing. The first Institute building in NSW, known as the Sydney Mechanics’ School of Arts, was designed by John Verge in 1830 and erected at 275 Pitt Street Sydney in 1837. The whole building has now been meticulously restored as the Arthouse Hotel and all three levels are used as art exhibition areas and recently, for ‘drop-in’ drawing evenings. A small area of this building was still being used as a subscription library until 1989 when it moved into temporary accommodation, then finally to its present permanent home at 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. It has a stock of over 30,000 books for loan.

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10 P Candy, op. cit., p.213.
2.2 Spread of Institutes through New South Wales

In many cases the Mechanics Schools developed into civic centres, eventually numbering 2,000 throughout Australia.\(^{11}\) They provided the entertainment desired by their patrons, be it chess, dancing, reading rooms, lectures or stage entertainments. The halls were also used in early days as churches, meeting places for lodges, council chambers and later, cinema houses among other activities. These centres provided a community focus in remote places, where a sense of identity was forged and political and cultural issues were aired. Until the Compulsory Education Act of 1880 the only formal education many settlers and their families received was by classes organised there, or given by itinerant lecturers. The Institutes diversified into social as well as educational centres because country towns had often not existed long enough to have public meeting places other than churches. The Institute buildings were a natural consequence of settlement, given that long into Australian history the home was a private place and often unsuited to entertainment or meetings because of its small and crowded rooms and the poverty of its owners. A local meeting place such as an institute building placed no burden of hospitality on the straightened citizens and the 'bring a plate' system (enduring to this day) satisfied the catering problems. The centres, as Baragwanath points out, ‘were the common ground option to a church or hotel’.\(^{12}\)

The townspeople owned and were comfortable in them and as time passed and memories were built around them their sense of civic pride, the first step towards national pride, was nurtured. The Institutes often prepared the towns for the next stage of civic growth by engendering the need for community facilities such as libraries and Council buildings.

The Institutes were criticised and lauded, the former for not meeting the needs of the labouring classes, the latter for bringing information and culture to a population intent on bettering itself in its new country. Woolley said ‘I am so firmly convinced that the habit of meeting is itself a priceless good, that it would be worthwhile to come (to the institute) if only to shake hands and go home again.’\(^{13}\)

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\(^{11}\) P Candy, op. cit., p.2.

\(^{12}\) P Baragwanath, op. cit. p.6.

\(^{13}\) Cited in P Candy, op. cit., p.168.
The early supporters were motivated by altruism. In Sydney, the Rev. Dr John Dunmore Lang, Rev. Henry Carmichael, Rev. Dr John Woolley, and later, Sir Henry Parkes (who had honed his elocutionary skills and gained most of his education in the Birmingham Mechanics' Institute), were all men of benevolence and learning who believed that, at the least, the dissemination of 'rational amusement' (proposed in the Rules of the Launceston Mechanics Institute in 1844), and knowledge, would enhance the moral tone of society and keep the working classes away from degrading influences such as taverns and low houses. Furthermore, they believed that education was a right for all men (but not yet for women). In 1833, Governor Bourke hoped that the schools would promote 'a taste for mental cultivation among persons of the middle rank, thereby tending to check those coarse pursuits unhappily too common in the colony'.

As an example of similar edifying programs proposed, Taree School of Arts was to provide:

mental and moral improvement and rational recreation of its members by the maintenance of a Library, Reading Room and Recreation-room, by lectures and readings, by the formation of Classes, and by any other means that may appear desirable to the Committee of Management.

In essence, Parkes agreed with Governor Bourke on the Institutes’ raison d'être although from a different viewpoint. He believed that 'an ignorant people infuriated by sense of wrong, would wreck the social structure education is (sic) destined to strengthen and improve'. He used his position as editor of The Empire to advocate not only for the building of public libraries and institutions of adult education but for the government to initiate the establishment of a new scientific society, because of the 'phillistinism of the colony's wealthier classes'. It was appropriate that his famous Federation Speech was delivered from the Tenterfield School of Arts in October 1889.

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14 P Candy, op. cit., p.7.
15 J Cobb, op. cit., p.7.
16 P Candy, op. cit., p.7.
17 ibid., p.8.
18 ibid., p.167.
19 ibid., p.6.
Education was disseminated in many differing locations. In some cases Institutes were set up in shearsers’ sheds, canefields and cattle stations as well as rural communities and cities. In Cooma, classes were held in an old brewery; in Cowper at a convent, in Singleton, an old hospital. Cobb describes:

The Macleay art students in the early 1900s shared a room with billiard players and on one occasion painted bravely on while a supper for a ball was prepared around them. At West Maitland the students shared the technical school with the rehearsing local philharmonic society. As late as 1925 classes were held on the School of Arts balcony at Taree and shuffled in and out according to the weather.20

The Taree School, renamed the Taree Literary Institute and located in a prime position in the town was still active as late as 1994, contributing financially to many local cultural activities and providing a free library.

 Debating clubs were strongly patronised by young men polished their debating abilities in an era without television or radio and with fewer publications than are now available. Topics ranged from 'Whether Capital Punishment should be abolished', 'Should intoxicating drink be prohibited', 'Votes for women', 'Are strikes justifiable'. Such contests shaped public opinion as strongly as today’s current affairs and talk back shows on television and radio. Candy writes–

It is evident that the institutes were far from passive purveyors of a single homogeneous world view, and it is as well to recognise their role in responding to, as well as shaping, Australia's varied political, social, intellectual and cultural inheritance.21

It is also worth noting that most Institutes had a library and some of them were substantial, giving readers access to literature that might have been beyond their financial means. The collections included classical poetry, plays and fiction, philosophical, scientific and political works. State governments recognised that the Institutes were the adhesive that bonded communities together and Government grants were available for the purchase of books, acquisition of land on which to build the Institutes and sometimes grants for building them. A number of grand edifices were built in cities, some of which are now classified by the National Trust, but in country towns a basic shelter was often all the community could afford and it usually reflected its level of affluence and the materials available in the district.

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20 J Cobb, op. cit., p.128.

21 P Candy, op. cit., p.212.
In many towns the local people built the hall themselves, by donations and labour, further strengthening companionship and mutual dependence.

They were often opened as gala occasions, with visiting dignitaries, processions, lunches, dinners or picnics. Public holidays were sometimes declared. Fundraising, then as now, had much to do with fetes, 'bring and buys', and raffles. It is important to note that women were permitted to run these social affairs as auxiliary members but could not sit on committees or borrow from libraries for some decades. In South Australia, the feminist Catherine Helen Spence ‘had to ask her brother to borrow books for her in the 1840s”22

It can be surmised that the city and country Institutes met different expectations. The country dwellers, while hoping for educational content, would possibly patronise their centres primarily for social reasons. By contrast the city Institutes could offer a broader spectrum of topics for study and the social aspect would not have been as important because of new attractions available in cities. Henry Parkes hoped that these Institutes would divert the citizens away from 'theatres and taverns'23 to activities that would improve their minds. Parkes’s disapproval of theatre probably arose from the early history of play houses in both Victoria and NSW. They were viewed as disorderly, leading to rioting and rowdy behaviour, and the content presented was often lewd and unseemly, objectionable to the upwardly mobile citizens looking for more moral entertainment. Other attractions that could divert the public were subscription concerts, and shopping arcades, for instance the Bon Marche Store (1852) Farmers (1854), horse racing at Randwick from 1833 and 1860, the Sydney Arcade (1891), and silent films 1890 onwards.

The range of subjects offered at the Institute depended on its size and the interests of its supporters. Country towns showed interest in lantern slide lectures by itinerant teachers and classes in subjects such as geology, wool classing and agriculture, as well as art and literature. In 1846 the Sydney Institute was asked by its subscribers to provide classes in French, Latin, Greek, music, arithmetic, mechanical and architectural drawing, figure and landscape drawing, writing and grammar as well as those existing such as chemistry, mechanical philosophy and architecture, but few of these subjects were likely to attract the 'mechanic class'. The so called middle classes were those who most often attended and the focus of the Institutes changed over time with the emphasis more on entertainment and social interaction.

22 P Candy, op. cit., p. 6.

23 ibid., p.165.
Amusements, debating societies, newspaper reading rooms and billiard tables characterised the intellectual and rational enjoyment dispensed in the remaining decades of the century. From Albury, where the Debating Society established an institute in 1857, to Katoomba where the Progress Association did likewise in 1889, the story was the same. Unless entertainment facilities were offered, even the library would languish, despite considerable government subsidies.\(^{24}\)

There were also strong critics of the Institutes. A letter in the *Courier Mail* (Brisbane) signed ‘Blanche’ follows:

I wish to call attention to a ‘Mechanics Ball’ about to be held at a public house in this neighbourhood. This Ball is objectionable if held where liquors are sold. Public house amusements, of whatever description, are dangerous to the working classes. Much more then are dances, which bring the young of both sexes in contact with those practices which have a tendency to weaken moral principle and destroy modesty. No young woman should be seen in such a place. No young mechanic should ask any girl for whom he has any respect to go to such meetings. Avoid such places all ye mothers of the next generation. Avoid such places ye fatherless and motherless girls, for although the magistrates are your supposed guardians, they betray their trust when they sanction such gatherings. Some will tell us that the genteel society indulges in such amusements, and why may not we? I answer, we got all the vices we have by following genteel society. Experience has taught us that those who have most grace in their heels have very little anywhere else.\(^{25}\)

### 2.3 Reasons for the non-involvement of the working or manual class

The failure to involve the (manual) working class in both the cities and country could have been for several reasons. There is no indication in any of the literature that their needs and wishes were actually consulted and the organisers did not seem to recognise that members of the working class, physically tired at the end of the day, would probably, like their modern counterparts, prefer a beer and an early night or some form of light-hearted relief. The working man could therefore go to the centre for his billiards, debates and newspapers, but his technical or trade education was where it had always been - in the hands of employers. Over the next two decades, there were occasional lectures in science, surveying and engineering throughout the states but nothing that offered a systematic course of study of a technical nature.


\(^{25}\) *Courier Mail*, p.19, 3/8/1859.
One could argue that training on the shop floor was adequate for the needs of the times. Manufacturing methods and machinery were still comprehensible to the 'labouring' man and the one-on-one apprenticeship system was satisfactory to the limits of the master's ability to teach. The simple tools and equipment that were used on farms, building construction sites, ships, horse drawn vehicles and goldfields could be made and repaired by blacksmiths and handymen, and indeed such skills are still held by practical people on many country properties. Unlike the U.K, Australia did not yet have the concentration of people in cities to provide a pool of knowledge of the skills needed by mechanics, engineers etc. Most manufactured goods were being imported from the large U.K and European cities but as the home-based industries expanded, practical knowledge grew not from the educated class, whose training had largely been in the classics and professions but from the floor up. It was an evolutionary process.

2.4 Involvement of Rev. Dr John Woolley in Mechanics Institute courses

By the 1850s changes were occurring. Dr. Woolley commenced his term as Principal of the University of Sydney in 1852 and tertiary courses began for the aspiring intelligentsia of NSW. Woolley also delivered many lectures to the Mechanics Institute in which he had a strong interest. He believed that 'intellectual training set the working man free,' and he understood the value of formal and continuous classes of instruction. At the same time, because of the gold rush to Australia, the population increased significantly. Between 1851 and 1871 it rose from around 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million, significantly accelerating the demand for locally produced goods and services. New technologies were introduced and Mechanical Drawing, the first vocational course that began in 1865, became very popular. In fact, its high demand led to other practical classes, which was the starting point of the establishment of the Working Mens College, first suggested by Dr Woolley c.1855.

2.5 The growth of art classes at the Sydney Mechanics Institute

From its inception in 1833, the Sydney Mechanics Institute delivered classes in art.

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26 P Candy, op. cit., p.166.
1841 J S Prout gave three lectures on the Principles of Drawing, J Kemp gave one lecture on Printing and John Rae, four on the Principles of Taste.

1843 Prout conducted art classes and two series of six lectures each were given. Prout treated his subjects in a non-academic way and illustrated them with a large number of drawings. There was seating for 500, but later this was not sufficient accommodation for all those who wished to attend. He left Sydney in that year for Hobart but his involvement continued with the Van Dieman's Land Mechanics Institute. His classes were very popular and Louisa Ann Meredith in 1852 wrote that-

...the prevalent fashionable epidemic, instead of betraying symptoms of the ancient Berlin wool influenza or the knitting disorder, had taken an entirely new turn... and that a landscape-sketching and water-colour fever raged with extraordinary vehemence.

1848 Lectures on the fine arts were organised by a Mr Gilfillan and classes were formed to teach drawing to nine pupils.

1849 Classes were given in Geometrical and Architectural drawing.

1854 After some years of administrative confusion in the Sydney Institute, Joseph Fowles commenced drawing classes. During the first year there were fourteen students and they were examined by George French Angas. Fowles taught for several years.

1855 Rev. Dr John Woolley proposed a true Working Man’s College.

1857 Fowles organised an exhibition of 336 original paintings by European and Australian masters, including works by Caravaggio, Titian, Velasquez, Rembrandt and other famous painters. This exhibition must have caused great interest and stimulation in the Colony.

There were day classes in art, elocution and music, as well as the more vocationally oriented courses. A complex rationale linked fine art to the Technical School, the essence being that the mastery of form would encourage good

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30 P Candy, op. cit., p.213.

31 ibid., p.214.
design, thus drawing classes were important. Throughout the years the belief was held that ‘learning to combine form and function would simultaneously train the eye and hand. Creative design would then be the inevitable outcome of a natural desire to construct the form that the student had just learned to draw.

...this 'eye and hand' method was argued to be relevant to both creative and technical competence.32

The urge for self expression and education gained momentum.

1865 Technical and Mechanical drawing were introduced. The first class in technical education held in NSW was taught at the Mechanics School of Art in Pitt Street Sydney by Mr Norman Selfe, later to become Chief Engineer at Morts Dock and an organising committee member and Vice President of the Board of the Technical Education from 1875 to 1889.

1869 Mr F Nixon commenced the first drawing class for women.

1870 Mr Thomas Hodgson, Head of the School of Design taught three drawing classes and a watercolour class each week.

1871 A second watercolour class commenced at the Mechanics Institute and in 1877 Prizes were awarded for Mechanical and Architectural drawing.

1881 In this year Lucien Henry began teaching at the School. A special class to teach Drawing, Modeling and Design was formed in 1881 by the Technical College for teachers of both public and private schools and was held on Saturday mornings.

1883 The Government assumed financial responsibility for the College and proposed to transfer the technical education within the School of Arts to a Board of Technical Education, to be known as the Sydney Technical College. This began on 1 August 1883. Art classes were held six days a week and the subjects taught were Practical plane geometry, Practical solid geometry, Perspective model drawing and Freehand drawing.

To complete the history of the Working Mens’ College after it became the Sydney Technical College, it eventually spawned the University of New South Wales, the Institute of Technology, and the University of Technology Sydney. The Sydney Technical College is now TAFE and the Sydney Institute of Technology.

32 J Cobb, op. cit., p.10.
2.6 Popularity of art classes in Sydney

The public press, unwittingly or not, added weight to the importance of a combination of artistic and technical training. In April 1871, *The Empire* carried an article stating the urgent need for the development of appreciation for the fine arts in the community, to act as a catalyst upon local industry.\(^{33}\) The comment, that it is 'necessary to call in the counsels of art, to help in adapting the new products of handicraft to the character of the people and to the land in which they are to be used', is similar in tone to that of Parnell Johnson\(^{34}\), a teacher at the Technical College in 1882 who wrote 'here on a new continent...our necessities will ultimately create for us a national style....to be understood by succeeding people.' In May 1871, the editorial leader in the *Sydney Morning Herald* argued that 'the value of the material in a carpet, a stove, and a chair is increased by design; therefore skill in design should be cultivated'.

In 1884 a selection of work from the art classes of the Board of Technical Education, (as the Mechanics Institute was now known), including freehand, architecture, mechanical and women’s classes received a gold medal at the Melbourne International Exhibition.\(^{35}\) The standards set by Lucien Henry, the chief art instructor, were apparently high. In that year he taught Geometry, Perspective, Freehand drawing and Modelling. He was lauded in 1889 in the *Illustrated Sydney News* -

'Anybody who has taken an interest in the Technical College within the last 8 years must be aware of a secret influence which has raised the artistic standard and moulded a group of earnest, hard-working young men, who will in their turn go forth and scatter the seeds of truth and self respect among the people.'\(^{36}\)

At this time there were forty-nine centres for Technical Education in NSW. Drawing classes were popular throughout Sydney with art and drawing taught in most country centres. It is of interest that in Broken Hill in 1890 the only classes where attendance was considered satisfactory were the art classes. At Granville, the most industrial of centres, Art was taught alongside Carriage Building, Steam and Steam Engines, Applied Mechanics and  


\(^{35}\) P Candy, op. cit., p.215.

other strictly technical subjects. On the north side of the Harbour, the Northern Shore Academy of Art was acquired by the Department of Public Instruction along with its teacher George Thomas. He designed an art syllabus that included non-technical art and drawing classes that always attracted large numbers. In *Spanners, Easels and Microchips*, examples are given of the Annual Art Exams. The Second Year Still Life set piece was of a small white pudding basin, set upside down on a sheet of glass about 12" square. The glass was to be on a larger sheet of dark brown paper and the basin was to touch the background, to be of any neutral colour. An egg was to stand beside the basin. The time allowed was five and a half hours. No medium is stated, but because of the time given we may assume it to be oil paint. (Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 3) The subject matter is basic to say the least, but technique was all and the examination was marked by the way these simple objects were represented. In 1889 only one other department exceeded the enrolment in the Art Department and this was the Department of Commercial Economy, whose highest enrolment was in shorthand.

### 2.7 Dissolution of the Board of Technical Education

On 15 November 1889 the Minister for Public Instruction, Mr J H Carruthers dissolved the Board of Technical Education and transferred its responsibility to the Technical Education Branch of the Department of Public Instruction with philosophical differences concerning the nature of the courses to be offered and the difficulties in meeting funding contributing to this decision. ‘The Ministers of Public Instruction believed that the Board members harboured grandiose ideas in their desire to build and expand the concepts of Technical Education, so the Board was disbanded.’ It had been a protracted struggle, with the Board pressing for increased funding and the Department of Public Instruction eventually questioning why it was giving these funds, but not running the organisation. Some classes remained with the Institute and retained their status as ‘adult education’.

With the emergence of industry in cities, properly trained engineers and mechanics could never have received the specialised training required without formal and structured courses. This was an inherent weakness in the Institute system where funds, provided by

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38 P Candy, op. cit., p.160.
fees as well as government subsidies, were always unpredictable, thus precluding long range planning of classes. Until that time the Board had been the peak of educational institutions but its cash flow was inadequate to maintain the structure needed for the increasing number of students. It had been well run by a dedicated organising committee and provided the most appropriate education available for the fast increasing numbers of technicians and mechanics in Sydney, as well as those with more diverse interests.

In *Sweet Road to Progress*, Cobb writes -

As enrolments increased, men and women from a wide variety of occupational backgrounds enrolled in whatever courses took their fancy or served their ends….no attempt was made to steer students into courses relevant to their occupations. On the contrary, most students showed a fierce educational individualism which illustrated, if nothing else, how the college served the learning needs of a great many people.  

2.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter we have seen how a society that was relatively close to its origins as a convict settlement found expression in its desire for education, or perhaps the need to detach itself from its sordid beginnings, in the creation of schools for adults. These were staffed by people who were willing to share their knowledge with citizens of a new, fledgling society, remote from established centres of learning. A parallel can be seen here with the open universities set up by internees from the ship *Dunera* discussed in Chapter 9. The country’s isolation was responsible for the demand for education to match it’s needs, hence the emphasis on technical subjects. The growing middle class, however, also had a desire for aesthetic stimulation that, from the earliest days, included the study of drawing and painting, and this need was partly met by the tuition provided by the Mechanics Institutes and later the Board of Technical Education. Interestingly, adult classes existed before education became compulsory for children in 1880. A burgeoning population led to the next phase of Technical Education and only a century after the first settlement in 1788, a similar pattern of trade education to that existing in England was already firmly established. It is also remarkable that only 60 years after the first settlers arrived in this country, the country’s first university was established in Sydney. For a time it was closely linked to the Institute and the Board of Technical Education by the zeal of the Rev. Dr John Woolley, first Principal of the University of Sydney and a strong advocate for workers’ education. As the

39 J Cobb, op. cit., p.27.
population grew, so too was the need for a more formal system of teaching, which led to the dissolution of the Board and its replacement by the Sydney Technical College.
CHAPTER 3
The Technical College

This chapter will show how the disparate elements of technical education that, at the end of the nineteenth century included art education, were slowly consolidated and how the building program of the Technical College never matched the demand for placements. The importance of the role of art education is discussed, the effect of the rivalry between other art schools, and also the contraction of art classes due to the expectation of war.

3.1 The ambivalent status of art classes in a Technical College

Up until 1883, classes had been offered at an amateur level but by 1885 an award, called the Certificate of Industrial Expert, was introduced\(^{40}\). It was designed to give some prestige to the Board’s role as an educational institution. This award could cover several subjects, not just those specific to a course of study, but very few awards (perhaps four) were given.

The Committee of the Sydney Mechanics School had previously applied to the South Kensington (United Kingdom) Department of Science and Art to examine students, including art students, and eventually these exams were available in Sydney, Newcastle, Bathurst and Goulburn. The Kensington Certificates were recognised locally and were sufficient qualification for employment on the Board for teachers of art, drawing, science and women's handicrafts.

The fate of technical education rose and fell to reflect the rise and fall of the nation’s prosperity. The depression of the 1890s badly affected student numbers, and many teachers worked without salaries from the Technical College, accepting only the fees paid by the students. In 1893 several banks collapsed, and socially there was as much suffering as in the later depression of the 1930s. The building program at the Sydney Technical College was cancelled until 1894, and student numbers ‘dropped to a low 2,956’\(^{41}\) in 1894 from 3,858 in 1892. After fees were raised, student numbers fell again. Teaching equipment standards were poor except in affluent cities such as Goulburn and Bathurst and classrooms were

\(^{40}\) J Cobb, op. cit., p.54.

sometimes substandard in terms of light and heat. Teachers had to pay their own travelling costs, be it by horse, bike, train or river transport. Those who complained about low salaries were advised to conduct private classes to supplement their incomes. Many worked twelve hour days, which included face-to-face classes, preparation, interviewing and marking student assignments. Some travelled between colleges in outlying parts of the city. There was no parity in salaries, and Under Secretaries would not accept that these were inadequate. There was a belief that good teachers would generate larger classes, therefore more fees. The reverse would also apply, leading to the attrition of unpopular subjects and teachers.

The structure of courses changed over time, as was inevitable with the emphasis on trade education. Public lectures, popular as they had been, were phased out. Subjects such as lithography and stone carving were introduced, as well as plumbing, cooking and industrial arts. Drawing classes of all types continued to attract high enrolments.

From the beginning of the teaching of art by the Mechanics Institute, and later by the Board of Technical Education, there had always been a line drawn between Fine Art and Design, both taught concurrently. It was difficult for the proponents of each point of view to define this difference, but most agreed it existed. Often quoted, Ruskin proposed three stages of creativity. The first - ‘that made by hand automatically and as a result of practice’, the second - ‘the operation of the hand and mind together was art or perhaps creation functioning at a more utilitarian level’, but the third, when ‘the hand, the head and the heart of man go together’ was fine art. Topliss quoted Clive Bell, who in 1914 wrote ‘No one ever doubted that a Sung pot was a much an expression of emotion as any picture that was painted’. She went on to write - ‘He was expressing the Bloomsbury belief that excellent artifacts from all cultures could be appreciated equally’.  

3.2 Plans for a new College to be built in Ultimo, Sydney

By 1889 few questioned the value of technical education. Indeed, Joan Cobb describes some as having a rose tinted view of it, and quotes Edward Coombes, President of the Board since 1883, who believed that -

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by teaching art, manual and trade skills and scientific principles, supplemented by adequate workshop instruction, a special level of brilliance and happiness would be attained by almost everyone.43

With high hopes, the new Department of Public Instruction planned an all purpose Sydney Technical College to be built at Ultimo on land owned by the Harris cousins, John and George, now remembered by Harris Street. The original owner, John, had been granted thirty four acres in this area by Governor King in 1803. Harris had been charged with 'scandalous and infamous behaviour unbecoming to an officer and a gentleman', the charge actually being 'disclosing to others the opinions of members of the court while acting prosecutor at the trial of Captain Anthony Kemp.' Because of an error in the wording in his charge, reading ‘ultimo’ (the term used for last month) instead of ‘instant’ (meaning this month), he escaped prosecution.44 With some humour, he built a mansion with Greenway additions that he named Ultimo House. Bernard Smith45 says that there were 400 spotted deer from India in the grounds. The house stood for about 105 years until it was demolished to make way for college buildings. This site was considered the most convenient for the majority of students who came from West, South and South West of Sydney. In March 1891 the first permanent home of Sydney Technical College was opened at Ultimo. By September 1893 most of the technical classes were being held at the new Sydney Technical College and within twelve months all the property was being used to its maximum capacity.

The buildings, including the Museum, now called the Muse, are presently used as an exhibition space on the ground floor. They were designed in the Romanesque Revival Style by William Kemp, the Architect for Public Schools and James Barnet, the Colonial Architect. The buildings were similar in style to many school and colleges in vogue in Britain and Europe at the time although smaller in scale. They were made of ‘patterned brick set off with sandstone, in high Romanesque style, with imposing facades, elaborate windows and massive entrance halls’46 and two buildings originally intended as high schools were in the Queen Anne style. What was unexpected were the native flora and fauna carvings believed to have been produced by Gregory Macintosh and James Fillans. Both

43 J Cobb, op. cit., p.69.
46 J Cobb, op. cit., p.92.
had been pupils of Lucien Henry who was devoted to the promotion of Australian characteristics in Australian culture and one can see his influence in these distinctive buildings. The buildings also contain ‘some stained glass, rich in colour and relevant symbolism.’

3.3 The Art School and its range of subjects.

Art classes now began in the new building. Most of the art and design courses were adjuncts to the technical classes, although subjects like perspective, model drawing and antique drawing were of equal importance in the study of fine art. The emphasis shifted away from fine art for a time, and practical design and trade skills were so well patronised that a whole floor of the new building was dedicated to these classes. Drawing, geometry, modeling, design, art decoration and sign writing were taught but in 1892 a new Department, headed by Parnell Johnston was formed. It was called the Department of Industrial and Decorative Art and taught the trade related courses of house painting, graining and marbling, sign-writing and design. The Art Department was confined for a time to subjects such as mechanical and technical drawing, but by 1895, and through the activities of J R Wright, the head of the Art Department, and W.E. Woodhouse, Art Inspector in public schools, the range of instruction was broad and covered ‘plant drawing, flower, landscape and animal painting, still life, anatomy, antique and life drawing’. There was pressure for these subjects even though they were outside the ‘technical’ or ‘mechanical’ description, but the rationale seemed to be that the spread of instruction contributed to a broader knowledge of the craft of drawing. It seems that classes in 'Fine' art were always going to coexist with 'Applied' art. Pressures at student level may have ensured this combination. If a young woman enjoyed china painting for a couple of terms, it is reasonable that she would like to attempt water colour, then later oils. A sign painter in the era when shop windows and horse drawn carts were often splendidly decorated, might well carry his or her talents over to portrait painting as a hobby. To quote Cobb,

The pressure on the technical colleges for courses of greater variety and depth, whether they were directly related to an occupation or not, was increasing. Technical

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47 Cobb, op. cit., p.93.
48 p.157.
colleges, whatever else they did, offered a choice, and the hope of breaking out of a rut.\textsuperscript{49}

The Technical College was still, by tradition, the working man's School of Arts and the demand by both the public and teacher trainees still existed for water colour and oil painting. Parameters were extended so that such facilities could be given 'for the training of persons who intend to adopt Art as a profession, or to include it in their general qualifications as teachers in public, elementary or other schools.'\textsuperscript{50}

From the mid-1890s four awards were offered: a two year Assistant Teacher's Certificate, a two-year Teacher's Certificate that included additional courses, a three-year Art Master's Certificate, and a Diploma in Art, that included the Art Master's Certificate with First or Honours Grade in each subject, and one from the Applied Art Subjects.

By 1900 in Sydney, hundreds of students were studying art at several schools.\textsuperscript{51} Figures gathered from the \textit{Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art and Technology}, of students studying all types of art within the technical system were - 1897, over 600 students, 1898, 674 students, 1899, 752 students.\textsuperscript{52} Presumably this included technical art subjects as well as painting, drawing and modeling classes but no breakdown of the class subjects is given in the above Journal. It is possible that some students gravitated to the College because of the dissension between the two major art societies, the Society of Artists and the Art Society of New South Wales.

### 3.4 Rival Art Schools

The failure of the Art Gallery of NSW to establish art classes for advanced students brought a quick reaction from members of the NSW Art Students League who had for some time been agitating for a State-governed (i.e. National) Art School but the future of such a school hung in the balance. Because of this the Technical College continued to acquire a large number of students. The Art Students League believed that it was the State Government's responsibility to provide better art education than was available in Sydney.

\textsuperscript{49} Cobb, op. cit.,., p.171.
\textsuperscript{50} ibid., p.157.
\textsuperscript{51} ibid., p.158.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art and Technology}, 1897, 1898, 1898.
Classes were conducted by the two major art societies (the Society of Artists and the Art Society of NSW) and there were some private classes held by, for example, J S Watkins, who taught rather more commercial art than fine art, A Dattilo-Rubbo and Julian Ashton.

The Art Society of NSW was formed in 1880 as a response to the shortage of venues for professional artists to display their work. Its name was changed in 1903 to the Royal Art Society of NSW, in which form it continues to the present. The Society of Artists was founded in 1895 by a breakaway group from the Art Society of NSW. It rejoined the parent body briefly in 1902 but separated again in 1907. In 1923 the State Government of NSW gave the Royal Art Society a grant that was used for overseas scholarships. The Spring exhibitions of both societies gave members the opportunity to show and sell their works. These exhibitions became social events in the Sydney calendar.

Julian Ashton (President of the Art Society of NSW and President of the Society of Artists from 1907 to 1921) taught at the Art Society of NSW school from 1892 to 1896. A trustee of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1889 to 1899, he was a vigorous agitator and art teacher, described by Cobb as outstanding and opinionated, by others in less flattering terms, and in 1889 had prepared a report on art education in Adelaide and Melbourne. He sensibly proposed that the Gallery follow the same system as these cities. With the Technical College trying to restrict its fine art courses at that time in favour of trade courses that were urgently needed, such a Gallery School would be to the advantage of the public.

In late 1902 a conference was organised at the Sydney Technical College to discuss the teaching of art in Sydney. It was chaired by the Minister for Education, Mr John Perry, who hoped to bring together the antagonists and protagonists. A list of notables representing the Art Gallery included George E Layton, Secretary and Superintendent, Eccleston du Fauer, President, and John Sulman, a Trustee. The Department of Public Instruction and Sydney Technical College were represented by Mr J. Wright, the Head of the Art School and W. Lister Lister and Julian Ashton represented the combined Art Societies (united in 1902 but separated again by 1903). The Art Society and the Society of Artists wanted the prestige and control of a major school of fine arts. The opportunity was certainly there but they seemed unable to establish an organisational level professional enough to serve the growing demand.

Each group at the conference had its own grievance. The Gallery was still interested in teaching but wanted or needed more space to do so. Lister Lister believed that the Gallery's role was to collect pictures and set up an exhibition centre, not teach. In view of
the success that the Victorian and South Australian galleries had made of the combined roles this seems short sighted of Lister. His solution was to leave teaching to the Art Society and the Technical College. Wright, speaking as the voice of the Branch of Technical Education, had changed his previous view that the two Societies and the Technical College amalgamate their courses, and stated that they, the Tech, had sufficient difficulties overseeing the classes they already maintained. Ashton, always vociferous, objected to the Tech having any credence as a school of fine art and indeed maintained this attitude until as late as the 1930s.

In his document - *It was a damn good school*, E A Harvey (later a teacher at ESTC) comments that when considering teaching art as a career at the Tech in 1935, he was told by an angry Ashton that -

> this man Rayner Hoff is going to make the full-time fees three guineas a year. He will take the bread and butter out of your mouth, and what the devil has a Technical College got to do with Art?\(^{53}\)

Sadly, Ashton began to lose his perception of colours early in his forties and had lost most of his peripheral vision in his seventies, but he continued teaching and published his biography at ninety years old. He may have been irascible, but he was indomitable. In spite of his views on Technical education, he joined an Advisory Committee on Applied Art at the Technical College as the representative of the Society of Artists.

Mr F. Woodhouse, the Superintendent of Drawing of the Department of Public Instruction, appeared to have the broadest view of all the professional artists present on the subject of art teaching. At the Conference in 1902, he maintained that—

- In any place where art is taught it should include modelling (i.e. sculpture) and design.
- It is undesirable that when a student is designing in one place he should be sent to another to become a draughtsman.\(^{54}\)

The distinction between art and fine art was what he wished to ‘uproot from the popular mind’, this being a direct contradiction to the Ruskin model widely held art world. At a final meeting in December 1902 he further expounded his views on separate

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\(^{53}\) EA Harvey, *It was a damn good school*, 2 Vols, typescript prepared for intended publication. Sydney, undated, p.9.

\(^{54}\) J Cobb, op. cit., p.160.
departments. Although believing primarily in the application of art teaching to industry, he also saw the need for fine art education for the wider community.

The Trustees held meetings and reviewed various reports up until 1915 but nothing was done to resolve the question of classes to be held at the Gallery for advanced students. If a Gallery School had been established there would have been less impetus for Ashton to set up his own school, the Acadamie Julian at the Beaumont Chambers, 88 King St. Sydney in 1896. He changed its name to the Sydney Art School when he moved, with Sydney Long, to the Queen Victoria Building, George Street in 1907. The art historian Nancy Underhill suspects that the name change reflected the post-federation growth of nationalism. She also comments strongly regarding Ashton's attitude to a national school not administered by the Gallery. 'I have no doubt that Ashton's opposition to the formation of a national art school arose rather from his egomania than his stated philosophical belief in the merits of private enterprise’.

However, his incisive and commanding personality successfully energised his schools for many years and produced students such as Elioth Gruner, George Lambert, John Passmore and William Dobell. His school attracted fine students and gained the position of a specialist art school that would traditionally have been held by a Gallery School of Fine Art as in Melbourne and Adelaide. The Ashton school still exists and is run by his descendants in the Rocks area of Sydney where it moved, as far as can be determined, in the 1930s. To his credit, Ashton also applied strong continuing pressure to the AGNSW for the purchase of Australian works of art.

A pamphlet, titled *A Plea for the establishment of a National Art School*, was issued by the NSW Art Students League in 1903, and it protested vehemently about the inadequacy of art teaching in Sydney. The complaints were comprehensive.

1. The subsidy paid by the State Government to the Royal Art Society went to increasing its capital, and not to providing more and better teachers and classes.

2. The Council of the Royal Art Society is composed chiefly of professional art teachers and artists, whose interests are antagonistic to any State-aided classes which would either compete with the first mentioned, or lead to competition with the latter.

3. That by comparing the quality of teaching in Sydney with that available from the Victorian National School of Art (associated with the Victorian Gallery) the Sydney artists were clearly less proficient. As a result of this, prices paid to artists by State

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Galleries reflected that situation. These prices were – the highest, to British and foreign trained artists resident in Sydney, then Melbourne trained artists, and lastly Sydney trained artists. Furthermore they claimed that Sydney trained artists were almost unknown outside NSW.

4. The proposal to transfer classes from the Royal Art Society to the Technical College was condemned by the League as it thought it would be ‘exchanging one evil for another’. Their conclusion was that art instruction should be delegated to the Trustees of the National Art Gallery (later the AGNSW), and be free of the control of local professional artists. A subsequent Minister E G F James agreed with the Art Students League and suggested that the grant of £500 to the Royal Art Society could be dropped and applied to a Government Art School.

The Art Gallery School Scheme (to be funded by the Government) was doomed, but the Technical Art School, or as it was often called, the Government Art School (already funded by the Government) was still stable and growing. The term National Art School may have crept in here; one can imagine that it might have been used as an alternative to Government Art School. The usage of the term National Art School is discussed in Chapter 7, Section 6.

A similar of the use of the word ‘National’ occurred when, in December 1883, the Art Gallery of NSW changed its name to the National Art Gallery of NSW. It reverted to its present name, the Art Gallery of NSW in July 1958.

3.5 Growth of the ‘Government’ Art School and the Minerva Club

While the Gallery and the Society of Artists persevered, the Branch of Technical Education remained detached from other Schools’ ambitions and went on developing its own style of teaching as the Government Art School. Although described as a School of Design, the fine art classes attracted good numbers of students who were so dedicated that they organised their own group called the Minerva Art Club. References to this club occur in *The Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art and Technology*, published by the Branch of Technical Education, from 1896 to 1901 and again in 1905. In 1896 there were twenty-six members, rising to around thirty in most years. There is no indication of why the name Minerva was chosen, but the Roman goddess of that name was revered among other things for wisdom, weaving and crafts, and the name was a popular choice for many institutions of learning at that time.
The Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art and Technology covered a broad range of topics ranging from geology, sewerage, engineering, plumbing, narrow gauge railways and for some years, articles on the Arts and the activities of the Minerva Club. The last mention of the Minerva Club was in 1901 but a reproduction of a painting by Ada Wright, a collaboration between three departments, appeared in the 2 January 1905 issue.

Hints were given for passing exams including Art Examinations. Mr J R Wright, Head of the Art Department wrote-

‘On techniques, e.g. Plant drawings - drawing should be delicate and crisp. Perspective - Endeavour to form an idea from plan and elevation of the appearance your problem should present when finished.’

The articles written about Fine Art were by various authors, and were largely concerned with classical and European art. They were knowledgeable and authoritative and must have been well received by the students. Other topics such as ‘Value the School and the Workshop, (training of an apprentice to a successful conclusion)’ in July 1897 showed that the School was concerned with the conditions of apprenticeship some years before a Commission was formed to investigate these in 1911.

Parnell Johnson, head of the Department of Industrial and Decorative Art wrote comprehensive articles on subjects covered in his Department including,

May 1897 ‘The Art of the Poster’
June 1897 ‘Stencils and Stenciling’
July 1897 ‘The Utility of Design’ The value of good design in household necessities.
October 1897 ‘Graining and Marbling’
November 1897 ‘Decoration’ The true meaning of the word including colour and embellishment, interiors of rooms.
May 1898 ‘Wall Coverings’ [He gave the origin of the word slapdash as a decorating technique, now known as stenciling. Usually the upper section was done in watercolour and the lower in spirit colour, with stencils applied overall, repeated until all the original detail is lost giving the effect of wallpaper].
August 1898 ‘Paperhanging’
September 1898 ‘Lace Making’
December 1898 ‘Art Needlework’

Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art and Technology, George Robertson for the Technical Education Branch of the Dept. of Public Instruction of NSW, October 1897.
At the monthly meetings of the Minerva Club, topics were given for the next month’s competition when they were exhibited, criticised and awarded a prize. There were two sections, one of which was usually a figure study but occasionally landscape with a choice of medium, the other a flower study. In May 1900 it was stated that ‘The figure subject, ‘Lot’s Wife’, was not a success, the works shown being of a low standard were not placed,’ so obviously criticism was quite serious. In the same issue Mr Stanley Armstrong’s oil of ‘A Portion of Sydney Harbour seen at Sunset’ took first place in the landscape section. The comment made was that ‘this member’s work shows steady progress’.

The figure studies included subjects such as Desdemona, Prince Henry and Falstaff, Grief, Rosalind, Hope, Titania, Meditation, Slavery, Revenge, Industry. Flower studies included Violets, Native Heath, Chrysanthemums, Jonquils, Cosmos, Roses, Poppies, Flannel Flowers and Anemones.

Some of the students’ classes were held at the Art Gallery, drawing from the classical sculptures displayed there. Even though the work of the Minerva Club did not always compare favourably with other private schools, it was welcomed by the Gallery exhibitions and competitions. Because of the competition existing between the schools, the Technical College students pressed for more classes in fine art.

Rivalry between the Society of Artists, the Art Society, the Technical College and the Art School of Melbourne was occasionally viperous. In 1900 an exhibition of works from these Schools was held at the National Art Gallery. The following was printed in the Australian Technical Journal of Science. Art and Technology in May of that year.

As usual, the exhibition has called forth many harsh words from those who are hostile to us, but a few things which have been said both in the press and privately by those who know, might not be out of place if stated here.

It has been said:-
‘That the Technical college students need not be ashamed of their school.’
‘That relatively the ‘Tec’ stands well to the front in every way.’
‘That the work is honest and even in art honesty is the best policy.’
‘That the mare and foal painted by Miss W.G. Elliott from the bronze figure in the Gallery is the best work shown.’
‘That there is more clever drawing and artistic feeling displayed in the one figure by Miss McLeod from the marble bust of Othello than can be found in the nine works combined in the same section exhibited by the two local societies.’
‘That the Art societies wisely refrained from showing paintings, and would have much wiser for themselves had they refrained from showing anything.’
‘That the Melbourne School must have had a difficult task to raise a representative collection of drawings as some of the sheets are yellow with age.’
‘That the painting section from the same school has had to go back as far as 1893 for its collection and this too under “two clever directors”.’ (p.125)
It seems apparent that the ‘Tec’ students suffered from some sense of inferiority or an excess of criticism from the other Schools. However, Mr Wright, head of the Art Department, had strong faith in them. He made the suggestion that work done by the Minerva Club be exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in 1900 then be sent on to the Walker Exhibition in London. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any further reference to this enthusiastic scheme nor is there any record of the Club’s existence after 1903. However, it served its purpose in welding the students into a strong social group, as witnessed by reports of a Christmas Evening, which featured Music, Singing, Recitations and Tableaux, and a Christmas Picnic that involved taking a steamer to the Lane Cove Bridge.

As an indicator of the importance that arts and crafts held in society at that time, over 16,000 examples of women’s art and handicrafts were displayed in the First Australian Exhibition of Women’s Work held in Melbourne in 1907, including work by Theodora Cowan who had studied sculpture under Lucien Henry.

3.6 The importance of teaching of art in society, and its role in other countries.

In 1909 two significant events for art students occurred in Sydney when an exhibition of students’ works was held at the College in Easter Week and a monograph, *A Quarter Century of Technical Education in NSW*, was published by the Technical Education Branch. In this the Superintendent of Technical Education in NSW, J.W. Turner wrote a stirring overview, which, apart from strengthening the position of technical education in trade, gave importance to the place of art in society. His introduction stated –

Technical Education is now a world wide movement…large funds are annually devoted…to the purpose of making Technical Education easily accessible to all classes irrespective of age, sex or social position. For not only in technical education does a nation secure industrial supremacy…etc.\(^57\)

Turner was overwhelmed by the supremacy of German technical education and its institutions, and impressed with the superiority of technical education offered elsewhere in the world. He praised German training for twenty-seven pages while that of the USA received fourteen pages. He extensively noted the shortcomings in England and compared the poor standard of Australia and South Africa with England. Italy, as would be expected, was well invested with art schools with ‘a large number of Industrial Schools of arts and

crafts, several Higher Schools of Art Industries, a large number of Elementary Art Industrial Schools and Industrial Drawing Schools’. 58

He discussed the methods of education in German schools all of which showed why Prince Albert had been concerned about England's poor performance in 1870. Commercial Industrial Schools were not restricted to the exclusive instruction of men; women were also able to avail themselves of these educational advantages. Instruction was free in classes such as Correspondence, Commercial, Science, History, Geography, Law, Professional Drawing, Modelling, Trigonometry, Calligraphy. Small charges were made for Languages, Book Keeping, Singing, Choir Singing and Gymnastics. Classes ran every day of the week and Turner noted that Drawing was a predominant subject in all continuation schools, and was taught Sunday mornings from 9am to 1pm. Other art subjects were Professional Drawing for upholsterers, decorators, joiners, turners, engineers, locksmiths and Freehand, Perspective, Compass and Ornamental Drawing. In spite of the diversity of trade subjects, Turner 59 says 'the expressed official view does not encourage the idea that these schools exist exclusively to serve for technical education'. However Turner commented that such regimented training seemed to have the effect of producing fine craftsmen but fewer innovators than would have been expected.

The monograph offers an excellent description of the classes available for art students of that time at the Sydney Technical Education Branch. Teachers were believed to be zealous, Drawing classes were described as having a fine 'esprit du corps', the Industrial and Decorative Art classes were 'well supported'. Courses available included-

**Drawing:**
- Plane and Solid Geometry
- Perspective
- Model and Object
- Freehand from the cast
- Plant drawing in outline and colour
- Black and white (Pen and ink and wash drawing)
- Antique
- Life Drawing (Ladies)
- Repousse Work
- Sciography

**Painting:**
- Flower Painting
- China Painting
- Glass Painting
- Landscape Painting


59 ibid., p.11.
Animal Painting
Still-Life Painting
Life Painting

Modelling: Antique
Ornament
Casting
Life

According to *A Quarter Century of Technical Education in NSW*, the total art classes offered each week was 112 hours, and one can imagine the importance of them in the student's lives. Each class ran for two hours, and as Sydney did not have the complex transport system of modern days, there must have been much motivation needed for students to attend summer and winter, year after year, for no recognised award and only the pleasure of self expression and perhaps the social contacts. A description of the landscape painting class shows the depth and seriousness of the courses.

Landscape painting. This is a two years' course of study. In the 1st year the instruction given is made as plain and direct as possible, dealing only with the simplest medium of outdoor study – the pencil. Sketches are made from buildings etc, showing the practical application of linear perspective, studies of rocks, trees and their growth, skies, foregrounds, values, and composition. In the 2nd year the student paints direct from nature in oil or watercolours, receiving instruction in aerial perspective, shadows, reflections, processes and manipulation, as glazing, impasting, scumbling, etc.  

A photograph of the Practical Geometry and Perspective Class, which was a three year course, shows that about one third of the group were young women. The first year of the course was viewed as an art course, and the second and third were useful to the engineer, architect and constructional trades.

As a student of the 1970s, when whatever one decided was art, could be deemed to be art, the Perspective and Sciography class (described below) is awe inspiring to me.

This subject – whilst not so technically useful as geometry, is nevertheless indispensable in a course of Art; coupled with geometry, it is the basis of all object drawing... In the 1st year simple problems are given in parallel and angular perspective, together with examples of the use of accidental vanishing points; problems, working from plans and elevations of objects without the use of vanishing points. In the 2nd year more advanced problems are given, showing its application for everyday use. Placing in perspective crescents of buildings, arcades, groined ceilings, parts of machinery, delineation of the shadows of objects cast by the sun or by luminous points, the colouring of drawings, etc.  

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61 ibid p.149/50.
These short extracts offer brief insights into the monograph. It is full of detailed
description of all the courses given by the Technical Education departments. In 1909 it was
reprinted in a facsimile edition and in 2010 became available online through Trove on the
Australian Libraries Gateway website.

According to Turner, life classes were considered ‘important beyond question’. As early as 1885 a life class for women was conducted by Constance Roth, the first woman to teach life drawing at Ashton’s School for the NSW Art Society. The first records of study from the nude at the Technical College are awards given in 1898 to Mina Coghlan for Modelling from Life, Winnie G Elliott, Life Drawing black & white, Claudine Lauat, Modelling from Life, Mary A Slade, Drawing from Life in Oils, and Louisa Spark, Drawing from Life in Oils, all mentioned in the *Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art and Technology* of 30 April 1898. A photo on page 144 of *A Quarter Century of Technical Education in NSW* contradicts the old story that men and women were segregated in life classes. This photograph, at the Technical College, shows men and women painting from the life model, with Mr Wright, the lecturer in charge of the department, in the background. The number of women in this photograph of the life class taken is four, with only two men present apart from Mr. Wright, the teacher. (Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 4) There may be other students outside the frame of the photograph.

In her book *Model Wife*, Rose Lindsay describes her experience of posing for the life classes at the Technical College c1900. ‘The students worked in a hush and their work was criticised by the teacher in whispers’. Other schools were not so constrained, Ashton expected decorum, but the Watkins school was known for its cheerful and exuberant style.

The photograph mentioned above and another of the modelling classroom also show the casts used in antique drawing classes that had been imported by Lucien Henry and that are still used at the National Art School. The Antique (drawing) class was considered to be ‘closely associated with that of life’. Most students passed through this class before entering life drawing, but could do both simultaneously. It was a prerequisite of the painting class that the student study model drawing for two years. Both oil and watercolours were studied. The modeling classes were divided into ornament, antique and life and were not strictly limited to fine art as they were intended for ‘modellers, plasterers, carvers, terracotta

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63 R Lindsay, *Model wife: my life with Norman Lindsay*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1967, p.158.
workers, also painters, decorators, kindergarten teachers, jewellers, architects and confectioners’ etc.

The casting class used 'waste moulds, wax, sulphur and plaster, piecemoulds, and they cast the human figure, hands, feet, fishes, reptiles and the full figure'. Turner assured the reader that many youths benefited largely by attending these classes and went on to hold good positions in different parts of the colony.

In this golden age the city of Sydney already had its artistic heros. *The Bulletin* employed many artists who specialised in black and white art for printing, the Societies were active in classes and exhibitions and there was a fine feeling of comradeship and rivalry.

### 3.7 The effects of the War on Art Classes

By 1913, Mr Peter Board (Director of Education) foresaw the technical education that would be needed in the anticipated war, and intended to set up trade schools, five sections for male students and one section called women's industries. Classes not fitting into these groups were to be closed.

Another of the ongoing problems from the start of technical teaching had been that of training apprentices. Apprenticeship to this time had been an ambivalent term, often an excuse for cheap labour, and without standard curriculae. In spite of different expectations from employer and employee groups, Mr Justice Higgins in November 1909, summarised the situation very simply:

the boy should not get his certificate of carpentry as a tradesman unless he shows that he has gained the necessary practical experience at factories, and the necessary general training at college. 

In 1911 a commission into the decline of apprenticeship of boys to the skilled trades found that it was due to an attempt to use a medieval system in an industrial era. This problem was not solved adequately until 1944 when day release from work for instruction was instituted. These and other factors confirmed Board's opinions on trade schools, and pressure from industry for training in the principles and practices of various trades made it inevitable that Art should be relegated to 'hobby' status rather than a practical course. In

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64 J Cobb, op. cit., p.195.
1914 art materials and antique casts were disposed of except for those retained by the Sydney Technical College, later sent to the East Sydney Campus. Art students, stalwarts since the days of the Mechanics Institutes, were not re-enrolled. Hobby and interest courses were eradicated. Board made the astounding statement that 'it was questionable whether art classes have been ever instrumental in developing any artistic taste in the community'.

Times were changing, war clouds were looming and voluntary enlistment in the war lowered enrolments. By that time industrialists could anticipate that they would need engineers, trained tradesmen and scientists for the war effort. By 1913 almost all teachers were college based, and technical and manual arts teaching was now considered a career. For some years after 1915, the College consolidated its programs, eventually imposing entrance conditions to the courses it offered, which led to trade certificates, higher trade certificates and diplomas.

Board's reforms covered a period affected by drought, low wool prices, strikes, depression, the emergence of federation and votes for women, serious economic problems, and also the growth of manufacture of goods for local usage and the need for trained employees to staff these manufactories. He had restructured the educational systems from primary through to university entrance in a straightforward manner that served for a further half century. Cobb summarises the great benefits of his endeavours.

Technical education was also, for the first time, used deliberately as an instrument to solve problems connected with unemployment, labour shortages and the need for industrial know-how.

Nangle instituted correspondence courses and in spite of Board's reforms, art correspondence courses commenced in 1913 and ran until 1922. Enrolment numbers were unexpectedly reduced when the pneumonic flu epidemic in 1919 caused doctors to advise people to avoid crowds. Four times during that year deaths were thirty a day, so these precautions were well founded. This epidemic may have contributed to the popularity of the correspondence classes. The scope of fine art courses broadened and by 1920 enrolments rose to 526 and continued to rise.

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65 J Cobb, op. cit., p.199.
66 ibid., p.198.
68 J Cobb, op. cit., p.247.
3.8 Re-training following WW1

In the post-war years rehabilitation was the imperative and overseas precedents suggested a model whereby ex-servicemen were accepted into appropriate courses, trained until they were acceptable to employers, and in certain courses, given tools for their trades. Planned in 1917, the original scheme was to provide training only for those 'in absolute need of it'. The Technical Education Branch assumed responsibility for the training scheme and ultimately, in all states, was the 'principal retraining authority'. This scheme was called the Repatriation Vocational Training Scheme and was the precursor of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme instituted after W.W.2, which I discuss in Chapter 10.

James Nangle was appointed as Director of Repatriation Training throughout Australia and undertook the responsibility to provide four training schools in Sydney and one in Newcastle. At the end of 1918, 30,000 service people were returning each month, and the scheme became available to incapacitated soldiers, students and apprentices whose courses had been interrupted by war service, certain widows, and others who had enlisted under twenty years of age. Soon after the courses went into effect it became obvious that the scheme would have to be broadened as the numbers grew and training operated five to five-and-a-half days each week. Significantly, due to demand, the training scheme included vocational courses including art, still considered inappropriate at a technical (i.e. trade) college. Nangle's predicted number for applicants to re-train in applied art was 632. The ramifications of this made it easier for the Art Department to justify its expansion for a few years.

The inevitable outcome of the expansion was a chronic shortage of suitably trained staff, premises and equipment. As early as 1902 total student numbers at the Technical College had grown to 5,903 and accommodation was at saturation point so by 1920 the situation was critical. Maintenance was urgently needed in all areas and every avenue was explored to find suitable classrooms within the limitations of the college budget. The Ultimo property was extended, but the overlapping of daytime classes (for trainees) and evening classes (for apprentices) caused great inconvenience. Fortunately, Minister W J McKell responded to the request from Minister T.D. Mutch to acquire the Darlinghurst Gaol, which was officially dedicated to Technical Education purposes in February 1921 and occupied after renovations in 1923. (See Testimonial of Appreciation, Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 5)

69 J Cobb, op. cit., p.220.
Women’s Handicrafts, (already moved off campus in 1917), Domestic Science, Art and Bakery were transferred from Ultimo to the Gaol. Later Motor Building, Aviation, Modelling, Tailors Cutting, the Departments of Sheep and Wool and Sanitation joined them. At this time there were few women enrolled at the Sydney College and when the above classes were moved, Ultimo became virtually a man's domain.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has revealed that until 1921, art classes occupied a borderline position in the Technical education system and were typically contracted when external pressures such as war or drought occurred. It was due to advocates such as Henry, Turner and Wright, that classes continued until the point when demand was too great to be ignored. This was aided by the inter-dependence of technical and fine art components. Rival art schools argued that the Tech took students from them, but the enrolment numbers and subjects offered showed that it was an acceptable alternative to the traditional art schools. The re-training program after the end of WW1 offered art subjects as an option for study. Placements were offered for 225 students to be retrained in applied art in NSW.  

70 Placements were also required in many other technical subjects, putting pressure on the limited space in the Harris Street complex. This was the main reason that additional premises became necessary and the Darlinghurst Gaol was a solution to this problem.

70 J Cobb, op. cit., p.237.
CHAPTER 4
Darlinghurst Gaol

This chapter details the history of Darlinghurst Gaol and the refurbishment needed to convert it to a Technical College. If a gaol seems an unlikely location for an educational institution, it only followed the tradition mentioned earlier of the siting of classes in locations such as shearer’s sheds and hotels in the Mechanics Schools era, and similarly much later when, as Alexander Mackie, the re-formed Art School was housed in substandard and inadequate buildings. Despite its unusual character, the location suited quite a number of them, being just outside the city limits of those days, with access to public transport. It needed significant alteration in order to make it suitable for occupation, which would not be permitted in our conservationist era. It has links with one of city’s most revered colonial architects, Francis Greenway.

4.1 Darlinghurst Gaol - an unusual choice for an Art School.

At the opening of the exhibition 50 Years of the National Art School, A Retrospective Exhibition of major works by past students and staff at the National Art School, held at the Bonython Gallery on 21 June 1974. the architect Neville Gruzman summarised the unusual atmosphere of the old Gaol complex ‘the particular charisma of this school is due to all who have worked within its walls and indeed the walls themselves! The unique environment of the Tech, the delight of the buildings and the spaces between have in their own way made a contribution to what the school has produced. We hope this atmosphere, unrepeateable in Sydney, unusual anywhere in the world, will be able to continue to exert its influence on future generations of those involved in art.‘

As someone who attended the College when it was based in the Gaol, it is difficult to verbalise the affinity one feels with the complex, but it is almost tangible and few escape its attraction. Sufficient to say that since the 1920s, art students have recalled with great affection the time they spent at the old Gaol. It is a curious collection of buildings, cool in summer, much colder in winter, with odd unlit corners, deep shade in the alleys between buildings and a definite sense of remoteness from the rowdy, harsh, city outside its gates. There is great charm in the honey and oatmeal coloured sandstone walls that absorb warmth through the

71 Catalogue, ‘50 Years of the National Art School’, 1974.
day. The vivid purple of the jacaranda in flower, the interesting angles made by the juxtaposition of buildings, and the elegance of the roof of the old chapel are a delight to drawing students. In every conversation I’ve had, or document or history that I’ve read during my research, the fascination of the complex and the loyalty that it generates is emphasised.

4.2 Francis Greenway and the Building of the Gaol.

In 1814 in Bristol, England, Francis Greenway (1777-1837) was convicted of forging a clause on an architectural contract thus giving him additional payment. The sentence for the crime was death but this was commuted and instead he was transported to Australia for fourteen years. In 1816 Governor Macquarie appointed him to the position of Acting Government Architect and on the day that the foundation stone of the South Head Lighthouse was laid he received a conditional pardon. His absolute pardon was granted on 20 May 1819 on the official opening of the Hyde Park Barracks, one of the eleven buildings still existing of over forty he designed.

In 1819, while Macquarie was still Governor in Sydney, Commissioner John Bigge was sent from London to investigate the administration of the city and report on any aspects of the colony, particularly financial affairs, that he considered noteworthy. He raised objections to the type and scale of Macquarie’s public works, many of them designed by Greenway and considered that a greater imperative would be ‘a new jail calculated to meet the demands of a rapidly increasing population and providing means for separating and classifying the prisoners’.

Prisoners at that time were housed in a badly built and rapidly deteriorating lock-up on the corners of lower George and Essex Streets, that had been condemned in 1819, and later in a hulk in the harbour. Bigge advised that money be spent to improve the security of the lockup, which was so poor that most inmates had to be kept in chains. The details of the transfer of prisoners from this appalling gaol on 7 June 1841 varies in different documents. Beckett reported that 257 men were in chains and the women were put in carts and Henry Keck, the new Gaol’s administrator made a diary entry that said the transfer was accomplished in one day.

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Bigge wrote that more important than the completion of St Andrews Church was that the new gaol be built at East Sydney ‘towering on Sydney's highest point which the Governor and Mr Greenway had selected to be the site of their citadel.’

Macquarie ordered Greenway to draw plans for the new gaol choosing Woolloomooloo Hill as the site because of its visibility from the city of Sydney, which hopefully deter the rowdy population. In 1821 Major Ovens, the Chief Engineer and Surveyor, surveyed and pegged out the gaol site of between three-and-a-half and four acres without Greenway’s knowledge. The sandstone blocks for construction were cut by the convict masons at a quarry on the corner of William and Forbes Streets, adjacent to the site.

In 1822 Greenway was replaced by Mortimer Lewis, the newly appointed Colonial Architect. Bigge believed that Greenway's work was too grand for an infant colony and Lewis refused to work to Greenway's earlier design. Greenway only measured and valued work at the Gaol and under Governor Brisbane's administration supervised the laying of the foundations and the construction of the entry gate and the outer walls, which were up to twenty two feet high, and two feet thick. These were built between 1822 and 1824. The walls became known as the Woolloomooloo Stockade during the decade before the next phase of building began and were used to house gangs of convicts. Macquarie returned to England and Governor Brisbane took office in December 1821. In 1826 Greenway asked for 5% payment for the supervision of the foundations and labour at the gaol but this was not granted by Macquarie, Brisbane or Frederick Goulburn. Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) George Barney was an experienced military engineer who was responsible for much of the building of Sydney town. He built the Victoria Barracks and reclaimed Circular Quay using 10,000 tonnes of stone taken from Pinchgut Island. He also owned Admiralty House on Kirribilli Point for a time. Lewis sent Barney to investigate plans of gaols in other parts of the world. They chose a panopticon style as being suitable for the site and worked together during the design phase, preparing designs and specifications based on an radial design by George Ainslie Esq. with a combination of three-man rooms and solitary cells. The original plan for the gaol was published by the English Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline (SIPD) in a 1820 booklet. However, James Kerr argues that no genuine panopticon was

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75 ibid., p.196.
ever erected in Australia although the name was loosely applied to a cruciform or radial gaol.\textsuperscript{77} Built by both free and convict labour, construction began in 1835 but was not completed for fifty years. The design was for eight buildings radiating around a central, round chapel/bathhouse, plus smaller service buildings, enclosed within walls with a watchtower at each corner of the whole area. These towers provided sight lines between the buildings as a security measure. Only one now stands at the south-western corner. The Y-shaped building on the north-eastern corner was an addition to the original design by Barney and Lewis and was built between 1864 and 1866. The first cell block completed was a male block, then a female block (the current Cellblock Theatre) and the Governor's residence, for a time the NAS administration building. The Chapel (the Roundhouse) had a bathhouse on the ground floor and above the first floor was a mezzanine level with tiered seating so that women prisoners could be separated from men during church services.

In 2003 friezes coloured indigo blue and brown were discovered under paintwork during paint removal from the interior of the Chapel. There is also a decorative panel over the stained glass window in the same colours. Beck\textsuperscript{78} believes that they were probably executed by Harry Bertrand (the Demon Dentist of Wynyard Square) and Frank Pearson, (a bushranger known as Captain Starlight) prisoners circa 1870. Julie Whittlam carried out restoration of these friezes c. 2000.\textsuperscript{79} (Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Figs. 6 & 7). The stained glass windows from the chapel, (Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 8) reported to have been made by those same two prisoners were sent to Long Bay Gaol but fortunately in 1981, with the assistance of a librarian named Lorraine Purcell,\textsuperscript{80} were returned and reinstated.

Frank Pearson presented one of the Sisters of Charity with a book of his drawings and paintings of those times. This interesting little book is still held in the Archives of the Sisters of Charity and shows that Frank had talent enough to be part of the above projects. The Sisters who established St Vincents Hospital, a near neighbour of the Gaol, visited prisoners both in the first gaol in the Rocks and later at Darlinghurst. Pearson was released after sixteen years internment, and died by accidental poisoning while drunk in 1899.

There is an underground passage that connects the bathhouse with the Governor's residence and another that communicates with the court house on the south side. B and B

\textsuperscript{77} JS Kerr, op.cit., p.1.


\textsuperscript{79} ibid., p.99.

\textsuperscript{80} ibid., p.96.
Kennedy note the tunnel system beneath the Courts confirming that another tunnel connects with Victoria Barracks, some distance from Taylor Square.\footnote{B & B Kennedy, \textit{Subterranean Sydney: (the real underworld of Sydney town)}, Reed, Sydney, 1982, p.10.}

Some of the convict mason marks can be seen on blocks of the southern boundary wall. There is a generally accepted story that once a convict had completed his allocated tasks he was permitted to be hired out and earn money for supplies of tobacco, rum, candles or food. This is a curious concept given the need for strong security, but it would explain how convicts were able to find the wherewithal to pay for the services of prostitutes. The Gaol’s first governor, Mr Henry Keck, was an opportunist of high degree. He organised vegetable gardens, dairy and poultry farms and a piggery within the Gaol, and used convicts to attend them. The produce was sold and Keck kept most of the profits. He began the manufacture of clothing, hats, boots and matting which became the main industry, and also sent out fishing groups. There was a bookbinding shop to provide further income and he apparently also established a small orchestra that was available for hire in the city. And as well as these profitable enterprises, he arranged for prostitutes to visit within the gaol and there was a story that the neighbouring courthouse was accessed through the underground tunnel for their use. It is not known how much he pocketed from them, but no doubt he earned a good sum as a pimp. A roistering group of convicts who had been acting in a play in the city was apprehended and enquiries about their freedom led to an investigation. In due course it was found that Keck had forged his credentials, and after eight years, rumours regarding his behaviour were confirmed and he was removed from office. He was replaced by John McLerie, a man believed to be incorruptible.

By the 1860s, the buildings were massively overcrowded to more than double their intended capacity, leading to problems of drainage and security (authorities would not install underground pipes believing that they would be used for escapes). Disease must have been rife - with killers such as smallpox, typhoid and diptheria being rampant in that era.

On 10 March 1866, an article appeared in the \textit{The Sydney Mail}, calling for more accommodation for prisoners because of overcrowding. The following week in the same paper there was an article describing the new building proposed on the north side of the present gaol to give an additional 126 cells that was finally finished in 1886. Wings A and D were built by free labour circa 1840, Wing B by Norfolk Islander convicts and Wings C and E by prison labour. In 1870 it was proposed to connect the round ends of the wings to the church by light iron bridges thirty two feet long, three feet high and three feet wide, these to
be made in the gaol. The chapel was commenced in 1870. The foreman said that his best mason was Billy, an aborigine from the Namoi, who had served eight years of ten, and was engaged on the cornice and the fine work of the church. The church, now called the Roundhouse, is considered to be one of the finest of its type in the world. The excellent quality of the workmanship throughout the complex has often been commented on.

In 1870 a school was held at the top of B wing for two hours each day except Saturday. It had few students but some made fair progress. An average of twelve younger inmates learned to read and write, but the matron reported that there was not much interest from the older ones. By this time the gaol had a library of 500 volumes of which two to three hundred were let out to prisoners every Saturday.\(^\text{82}\) This report seems to suggest that the inmates had a higher rate of literacy than indicated by the matron. The library operated for fourteen years, the schoolmaster acting as the librarian.

Many notorious criminals were confined here including bushrangers, Edmund Farrel, (sometimes called H.J. O'Farrell) the man who, in 1868, attempted to shoot the visiting Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, and also Henry Lawson, gaol for not paying alimony among other misdemeanors. Lawson’s poem, *One Hundred and Three*, written in 1908, eloquently tells of the misery and degradation experienced in the Gaol. In 1900 Henry Parkes tried to improve conditions there and succeeded insofar as some of the windows in the women’s cells were widened and some facilities for cleaning were introduced.

The buildings were used as a gaol for seventy two years. The Long Bay Gaol was opened in 1912 and prisoners were rehoused with some improvements in their conditions. The East Sydney buildings became an internment camp and detention centre during the First World War 1914-1918, then remained vacant for some time.

### 4.3 The Gaol is acquired by the Sydney Technical College

At the end of WW1, Thomas D. Mutch, the Minister for Education, suggested to Mr William J. McKell, the Minister for Justice, that the Gaol be used as an educational institution. McKell recommended this and the Gaol was handed over the Department of Education in 1921 for use as a college of Technical Education. It was colloquially referred to as 'the Tech' with many still calling it that to this day.

According to Brewster and Luther\textsuperscript{83} a rumour prevailed that all the old instruments of torture were gathered together and thrown down a well in the gaol grounds and concrete poured on top of them when the renovations began. There is probably as much truth here as in the stories of ghosts wandering the corridors. Old buildings with unsavoury histories tend to attract macabre fictions.

The courses that were transferred from Ultimo were basically those that did not require heavy machinery or equipment, i.e. art, women’s handicrafts, agriculture, baking, sanitation etc. Because of the separation from the main College, some Schools developed an unintended degree of autonomy. The East Sydney College was in fact an annex to the main Technical College, even if not perceived as such by the Schools that resided there.

Alterations to the Gaol commenced soon after the College took over the site and were necessary for adaptation of buildings for use as a teaching institution, but they were not always done as sympathetically as could be desired.

James Nangle, in particular, was a man who should have shown more sensitivity. In 1898 he lectured at the Art School, and in time became famous for his textbook on construction in building, used by architecture students until the 1950s. In 1919 he introduced Pottery into ESTC as one of the courses considered suitable for ex-servicemen. The course survived until the teacher retired in 1929. Nangle was a remarkable man and the destruction of the historic architecture of the Gaol, regrettable though it seems to us in the twenty first century, was an indication of his extraordinary organisational skills. Expediency was his aim, and as Cobb says, the alteration was not a job tackled with any particular delicacy. Cells were rendered to rubble, stonework was sold on contract and some of it was used to repair the external walls. Old fittings were auctioned, old marble mantlepieces removed and sold.

The Roundhouse lost its gallery and became two storied. Upper storeys were removed from other buildings. One legitimate reason for the alterations in floor levels was the fire regulations of the day. Certainly there were no outside staircases at the time for egress in the event of fire. Harvey's document \textit{It was a damn good school} reveals some interesting facts. The connecting bridges between the Roundhouse and cell blocks disappeared, one only was left in 1935, but Nangle may not have been responsible for this. He appointed a member of the Building Branch, Mr F. Connelly to be in charge of the conversion, and perhaps his enthusiasm infected Mr Connelly to proceed without caution.

\textsuperscript{83} HC Brewster & V Luther, \textit{Kings Cross Calling}, Mastercraft Print & Publishing Co, Sydney, 1945, p.86.
Harvey also writes of a tower, commonly called the pigeon loft, which topped the Y Block, i.e. the north-western corner building formerly housing the hangman's gallows. This was declared to be a hazard during war years and was removed by the Department of Technical Education. A truncated version now stands in its place. When Harvey commenced work in 1935 the ceiling of the Roundhouse was still unpainted cedar. The Department of Technical Education decided to paint the ceiling after the building became used as a library around 1957, but the Art School rebelled against this and it remained unpainted.\textsuperscript{84} There is reference to a College Crest showing a chanticleer on bands of purple and blue, obviously derived from the weathercock that was damaged beyond repair, some say by practice firing by soldiers who guarded the internees between 1914 and 1918.\textsuperscript{85} It was replaced in 1970. The College motto is 'Ever Dawn', inspired by the chanticleer.

A peal of bells was brought to Sydney by Governor Hunter in 1795 as a gift to the Colony from the Duke of Clarence and was first hung at St Philips Church Sydney. In 1843 only three remained and as they were government bells, one was donated to the gaol in Bourke, the second to the Sydney Harbour Trust and the third was possibly given to the Darlinghurst Gaol. A photo on page twelve of Deborah Beck’s book ‘Hope in Hell’, taken in 1871 shows the Gaol bell. It is very similar to a bell hanging at St Judes Church Randwick, that is now occasionally rung as a ‘service’ bell, announcing that service is about to commence. This bell was cast in 1794 according to Elaine Phillips, the Bell Captain of St Judes, and could possibly be the Gaol bell, removed during the 1920s renovations and purchased by or more likely donated to St Judes. Joan Cobb\textsuperscript{86} believes that the peal of eight bells was a gift from Governor King to the settlement of Sydney. However, King returned to England in 1807 and died in 1808. As the Gaol was not occupied until 1841 it seems unlikely that he had anything to do with the donation.

Early alterations included the widening of windows and the demolition of cells. In 1957 the Women’s Cell Block was converted into a theatre, used nowadays as exhibition and function space. In the booklet 'Restoring the Fabric of History'\textsuperscript{87} an outline was given of the alterations and restoration expected to happen in forthcoming years. Much of this work has been done. It was intended that where buildings had been changed to two storey, they would

\textsuperscript{84} EA Harvey, op. cit., p.209.
\textsuperscript{85} D Beck, op. cit., p.10.
\textsuperscript{86} J Cobb, op. cit., p. 267.
\textsuperscript{87} Restoring the Fabric of History 1980, p.15.
be restored to their three storey status and temporary buildings would be removed. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 July 2004, three architectural firms who had contributed designs for a purpose built gallery were named. The preferred design, by Alec Tzannes, was to be inserted into the campus in the triangular space previously occupied by the student cafeteria, (2008) but at the time of writing there has been no further mention of this proposal. Building 23, previously occupied by the library has been refurbished to be used as an art exhibition venue. In 1980 it was also suggested that the bridges formerly connecting the roundhouse and the radiating buildings be reconstructed, and also that the mezzanine level in the Roundhouse (Chapel) be rebuilt if documentation was available. In late 2004 renovations in the Roundhouse were completed and it is now being used for office accommodation on the ground floor without however, the mezzanine level changes.

Even as late as 1935, Drummond was investigating the feasibility of selling the Gaol, moving the students back to Ultimo and using the funds from the sale to improve facilities in the trade buildings. Generations of art students should be grateful that this scheme fell through and that they had the opportunity to study in such evocative surroundings. In 1971, speaking at a 50th Anniversary Celebration of the East Sydney Technical College, the Principal, Mr J. Provost said that more than anything else about the College, the pleasure experienced by all working there was what had impressed him most. He thought ‘it could be attributed to working within an area totally enclosed and somewhat apart from the busy world outside the walls.’

William (Bill) R Crisp, (appointed first Principal in 1956) seemed to have shared the devotion to the Gaol that arose in most of the voluntary inmates. Beck\(^{88}\) says that in the early 1950s he started looking for financial support to convert the women’s cell block into a dramatic venue. He invited Kathryn Hepburn and Robert Helpman there on a promotional visit and in 1957 continued his campaign to fund the restoration by organising performances of the ‘Trojan Women’ and ‘The Midsummer’s Nights Dream’, both produced by Jean Stuart. Students acted and printed programs and the reviews were excellent. In time the refurbishment was completed and from 1959 to the present time there have been notable musical, ballet and dramatic performances there as well as numerous art exhibitions. The theatre is used nowadays as exhibition and function space and the occasional student ball.

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\(^{88}\) D Beck, op. cit., p.49.
4.4 Chapter Summary

The Gaol had a colourful history before its occupation by the National Art School, but this added to its attraction to students. The enclosure of its high walls set it apart from the city and encouraged a sense of community. Even though it was originally shared with other disciplines, art students felt a certain possessiveness that has endured for 90 years. The degradation of its early alterations has long been forgotten, and repairs and alterations that have been made in the recent past have enhanced its historic aura. In terms of dollar value, the worth of the complex is incalculable. One wonders at the pressures that might be put on occupancy of the site in the future, as they have been in the past.
CHAPTER 5

Historical and social issues affecting the development of art teaching between the wars.

This chapter will trace the historical and social movements that largely determined the outcome of the careers of students trained at ESTC in the decades between the two World Wars. The pictorial record of the exploration and settlement of Australia made the early realistic genre popular but was still in the style of English painting. This style continued in the work of both men and women but by the mid nineteenth century artists started to paint the Australian landscape without such a European lens. The Australian Impressionists managed to depict the country closer to an Australian reality, albeit a romanticised version. A number of men were selected as war artists and on their return to Australia, further enhanced the genre of the ‘lyrical landscape’. Women found it difficult to promote their work as equal to that of men, even though the number of women in art schools usually doubled the male enrolment. This problem was largely related to the role that women were expected to play in the home and society. The popularity of modern art gave many women the opportunity to bring their work to the public, and opportunities for travel gave them insight into movements outside Australia.

5.1 Art styles and methods in the 18th and 19th Centuries in Australia.

Australian art of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was mainly a topographic record of the terrain for the benefit of officials and explorers. It was a carefully delineated style that was factual and precise that can be seen in the work of John Eyre and Joseph Lycett. This style was also used also by women painters such as Georgiana McCrae (1804-1890) and Susan Fereday (1810-1878), and it suited the intimate studies they did of flowers, interiors and portraiture. This generally comprised women’s repertoires since they were mostly confined to their homes. Because of its convenience, watercolour was the medium most often used but its perishable nature was one reason why so few works of the time exist. When the camera was invented, the need for specific geographic and botanical records diminished. The first daguerreotype photograph was taken in Australia in 1841.

Painting could be carried out in a studio from field sketches, and oil paint was used in preference to watercolour so paintings became more durable. The works grew larger and even when the subject matter was landscape, tended to be portrayed at its most romantic, lyrical and atmospheric. William Strutt painted Black Thursday in London from sketches he made travelling through the Australian countryside after the cataclysmic bushfire of February 1851.
Following movements popular in England, the nineteenth century was also a time of the moral, sentimental and historical schools.

Pioneering men had little time for the arts in colonial days. Perhaps this attitude prevailed because of the harsh endurance that had been needed in the exploration and settlement of the country, ignoring the fact that women often worked alongside men. In time the male explorer/artist became less important and ‘men who wanted to follow the arts as a career were placed in the invidious position of compromising their sex role identity.’ The male artist found himself to be losing, in modern parlance, his macho image, at a time when ‘men were expected to repress those qualities which were associated with femininity’ because ‘art was seen as an effeminate activity more suited to the drawing room than the board room.’

However, Australia still regarded England as ‘home’ and even though art was considered a hobby for women, there were English and European precedents of art produced by men. New wealth was required to be exhibited. The symbols of wealth in the home were furniture, carpets, glass, china and ornamental or nostalgic art, therefore there was a market for paintings not only of European but Australian origin.

5.2 Art as historical record and the male aesthetic

Portraiture provided an assured income in a newly wealthy era but paintings of landscape were a reminder that men had pioneered the country. Almost without exception such paintings showed cleared land and fertile plains, land that men had conquered and tamed, like the denuded acres pictured in Arthur Streeton’s Near Heidelberg. By the nineteenth century Australians were basically city dwellers and paintings with rural images such as Shearing the Rams by Tom Roberts were a reminder to the buyer that he or his forebears had been men of action. The painter confirmed this concept for them. Male artists rarely painted interiors, flowers or children, leaving these subjects to women.

Smith summarised the early painters of Australian landscape. He said paintings such as Roberts Bailed Up—

are important historical records; they show an important aspect of Australian life during a significant phase of its development. Perhaps the phrase ‘frontier painters’ is a better description of the genre work of Roberts and McCubbin. These records

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90 ibid., pps. 29-30.
preserved important aspects of the time, the breaking and taming of the land, the pioneering of the country, and have retained their value.\textsuperscript{91}

To affirm the painter’s masculinity, a male aesthetic was proposed by Meldrum (quoted by Ambrus)\textsuperscript{92} which contended that an artist ‘becomes great only by exerting himself to the limit of his strength the whole time’... and that artists needed such admirable qualities as ‘courage, strength and endurance’ in the face of hostile attitudes society had against them. She goes on to say -

No doubt however, the appropriation of these human qualities by the male sex, effectively denied women the option of following art as a career. These exaggerated claims by male artists were an attempt to prove the masculinity of their calling and served to illuminate their gender insecurity.\textsuperscript{93}

World War 1 offered an opportunity to reinforce the masculine image of painters when artists were appointed to paint battle scenes for the Australian High Commission in London. Henry Fullwood, George Lambert, Arthur Streeton and John Longstaff were all established and influential artists who worked in Europe and on their return eulogised in paint the Australian countryside and its difference from the bloody battlefields. They savoured the pristine cultivated acres, the unsullied bushland and revelled in the bright light that gave colour to everything, different at every hour of the day and quite unlike the smoky, hazy, charred scenes of war that people like Septimus Power (\textit{Bringing up the Ammunition, Flanders, Autumn 1917}) had shown. Eagle and Jones say of the post World War 1 era-‘for some years afterwards Australian painters expressed themselves most feelingly when portraying the landscape’, and also –Australia... found her national identity in landscape and specifically in the light that gave colour and atmosphere.\textsuperscript{94}

5.3 The growth of nationalism and art in the war years

The Heidelberg School is generally accepted as the first white Australian art movement. According to Smith\textsuperscript{95} ‘it was not until the 1920s that the Heidelberg School came to be identified by critics and the informed public alike as a purely national expression in

\textsuperscript{91} B Smith, op. cit., c.1979, p.232.
\textsuperscript{92} M Meldrum, \textit{The Mail}. Brisbane 23 January 1939.
\textsuperscript{93} C Ambrus, op. cit., p.33.
\textsuperscript{95}B Smith, op. cit., 1945, p.120.
painting’. The artists were concerned with the frequent changes of light, shadow, atmospheric colour and the immensity of the landscape. In impressionism they found a method of quickly transcribing the elements they wished to capture, aware that within hours, even minutes, the view would have changed. The essence of Australian landscape painting seemed to be its scale, weather and translucent light.

Eagle and Jones\textsuperscript{96} also point out that the struggle between nationalism (read conservatism) and modernism occurred in most of the countries that had been involved in the war. Fear of change seemed to be the common thread and fast changing technology contributed to this terror.

Speck\textsuperscript{97} says ‘some male artists represented peace symbolically by a return to pastoral imagery – the peacefulness and healing qualities of the land symbolising a new order’. I would query the use of the word symbolically; perhaps sentimentally is more appropriate and I find it hard to interpret a land ravaged and denuded of its natural vegetation as having healing qualities. The idealised landscape would surely have been an obvious subject choice for artists who had witnessed the European battlefields and would have found an appreciative buyers market. Even in peacetime, an extended absence from one’s homeland arouses nostalgia. Nostalgia for the past (as in before the war), is a belief that yesterday was better and tomorrow is a worrying unknown.

Eagle and Jones state that-

There was scarcely a family untouched, either by the death of a son, husband or brother or by the responsibility of caring for those returned servicemen who had difficulty in adapting to civilian life.\textsuperscript{98}

There was a need, especially in older people, for time to re-establish themselves, to recover equilibrium. Thus, it is unsurprising that there were images made recalling a more ‘idyllic’ past.

In Australia no women war artists had been appointed. Women were not only excluded from national collections, but the work of those such as Vida Lahey and Evelyn Chapman, who painted war events close to the battlefront, were ignored at that time, although their paintings were purchased in the 1970s by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Iso Rae from Melbourne worked as a nurse on the front and painted and drew in her spare time. Some of her work was also bought by the War Memorial in 1978. As Speck\textsuperscript{99} says in \textit{Painting}

\textsuperscript{96} M Eagle & J Jones, op. cit., p.146.

\textsuperscript{97} C Speck, \textit{Painting ghosts: Australian women artists in wartime}, Craftsman House, St. Leonards, NSW, p.87, c.2003.

\textsuperscript{98} M Eagle & J Jones, op cit. p.150.

\textsuperscript{99} C Speck, op. cit., p.24.
Ghosts, women’s works were omitted from the developing National Collections of the Australian War Records Section in London. She also points out\(^{100}\) that Charles Bean, in his official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 focussed largely on men’s roles, presenting the bushman as the typical Australian and ignoring women’s contributions. Bean created the legend of the bronzed Aussie male and mateship that was so enthusiastically adopted and enshrined, by the selective use of images and records in his history. To clarify this myth I contacted the Australian War Memorial Research Centre and was told that only one in five Australians who served in the first World War came from country regions and one in five soldiers had been born overseas, mostly in the United Kingdom.

Eric Carpenter, researcher from the War Memorial Museum, in a personal communication in 2007 added that:

- these figures actually forced the historian and journalist C. Bean to re-evaluate his mythology that Australians were different because they were all independent bushmen types. He ended up claiming that it was the influence of the bush that affected the majority of soldiers, who were city based industrial workers. In fact, one could more rightly argue that city based workers were as imbued with the freedom and openness of the newly settled country as were agricultural folk, and that a metal worker from Newcastle was as representative of the self-reliant, independent Australian as a drover from the west.

Eagle and Jones make the point that the maimed and embittered soldiers who returned from WW1 represented the realities of war, rather than the mythical ANZACS. They say ‘they were at odds with society, an unwelcome reminder of suppressed realities.’\(^{101}\) A particularly biting painting by James Montgomery Cant (1911-1982, student ESTC c. 1920s) shows an amputee with a crutch, standing in a bleak landscape with his hand raised in fury and mouth open in a silent scream. It is titled *Returning Volunteer* and was painted in 1938 when Australia was at the brink of another war.

Women made significant contributions in WW1, not only as artists but as nurses, drivers and members of the Red Cross. War has a strong support industry close to the battles but also stretches back to women like *The Sock Knitter* by Grace Cossington Smith (1915). This painting depicts a woman engaged in typical women’s war time work which entailed knitting, rolling bandages, sewing and packing ‘comfort boxes’ of food, cigarettes etc. Civilian women as well as nurses were vital in both world wars. Artist Jessie Traill worked as a nurse in the battlefields at Rouen. Hilda Rix Nicholas’ work *Desolation* was powerful enough to receive what, at the time amounted to a rave review of a woman’s work, but was rejected by the Director of the Australian War Memorial as being ‘too intimate of character

\(^{100}\) C Speck, op. cit., p.24.

\(^{101}\) M Eagle & J Jones, op. cit., p.150.
for inclusion in a public collection. ’ Given the images in Specks’ book, this could be regarded as a blinkered decision. If war is to be recorded, it should be done so in its entirety, not just the battlefront gore and gallantry. This fact was recognised much later in 1945, in the *Australians at War Exhibition* at the AGNSW. A category was included called ‘Home Front Section’ and was won by an ESTC student, Margaret Cilento. This was a significant achievement given that of the 187 exhibitors, only twenty-five were women. Roderick Shaw, an ex-ESTC student won a first prize in this exhibition and was also a prize winner in the Open Section, and the section ‘Front Line Sketch’ was won by Fred Jessup, also a student at ESTC.

5.4 Women’s ongoing struggle for acceptance in the art world.

In peace time as in war time the same repressions applied. The struggle for women artists to find and maintain their position in mainstream art has been well documented by Caroline Ambrus in *Australian Women Artists - First Fleet to 1945*, Janine Burke in *Australian Women Artists: 1840-1940* and Helen Topliss in *Modernism and Feminism*, who all demonstrated the excesses of male chauvinism that women endured. One of the most domineering and prejudiced of men was James Stewart MacDonald, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria and later the National Gallery of NSW. Ambrus describes him as ‘sexist, and aesthetically chauvinist’ and says that ‘it was a matter of public record that MacDonald was prejudiced against women’. Regrettably, as Director of two Galleries he was able to influence policy decisions in the purchase of women’s art and also shape attitudes because of his lofty position. In 1941 his appointment as Director of the National Gallery of Victoria was not renewed by the Trustees, the reason given as ‘personality conflicts’.

The question is often asked - ‘why did so many women artists emerge between the wars?’ in spite of opposition to their demands for recognition as equals. Eagle suggests that:

The reason women artists working in the modern style were prominent and successful post-war probably had more to do with male and female roles than with the war. Women painters were free of an obligation which inhibited many landscape painters between the wars.

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102 C Ambrus, op. cit., p.137.
103 ibid., p.167.
104 ibid., p.141.
This does not completely explain the success of women artists. The answer is likely that there had always been women capable of working at professional levels, but until emancipation and increased social mobility, their talents were diverted into more mundane areas of creativity such as embroidery, china painting, sewing, poker work and minor art works in watercolour. While such works were considered inferior to painting and sculpture, Heather Johnson argues the following point.

Why should a painstakingly crafted tea-cosy, put into daily use in the centre of family interaction and communication that use along with a richness of evoked memories be less an expression of the human spirit than an abstract colour-field painting that communicates little if anything, to the viewer? Why should not we, like the Japanese, honour the humble day-to-day practice of living as the epitome of spiritual life and culture.\textsuperscript{106}

Of the 16,000 items shown in First Exhibition of Women’s Work in Melbourne in 1907, most were probably utilitarian, but even domestic objects when they are reworked and redesigned with imagination, sensitivity, skill and affection, may become art objects as was shown in the National Women’s Art Exhibitions in 1995. [Mitsuo Shoji, a ceramicist, in a personal conversation, told me that his work as well as being beautiful, must also be useful which reinforces Johnson’s point]\textsuperscript{107}

5.5 Women’s role in society in the 1920s

In the 1920s the man was typically designated the head of the household. His daughters usually remained at home to help their mother with household duties or care for indigent or incapacitated relatives. Sons were educated towards a working career. There were constant rumblings by female emancipists and some women entered the work force as secretaries or shop assistants. A census in 1918 showed that 20% of all women worked all their lives, at least a third of these as domestics. It was not considered appropriate for the daughters of middle class and higher income families to consider employment outside the home but hobbies were acceptable. Art, like music, was considered a genteel and inoffensive pursuit for women but a little effete or bohemian for men (although condoned as a weekend hobby).

\textsuperscript{106} Cited in J Kerr & J Holder, \textit{Past present: the national women’s art anthology}, Craftsman House, North Ryde, NSW, c1999, p.44.

\textsuperscript{107} Personal conversation at Balmain Sydney c. 1973.
Only affluent families could afford to send their daughters for training, with items such as transport fares and equipment being beyond the reach of the lower middle class even at a school that charged low fees like East Sydney Technical College. This applied even more so after the fees were raised in 1933. Female students and graduates listed up to 1935 included Ethleen Palmer, Jean Appleton, Jean Isherwood, Jean Broome, Dorothy Thornhill, Barbara Tribe (all later teachers at ESTC) and Elaine Haxton, Sheila Farquharson, Marjorie Fletcher, Una Foster, Freda Robertshaw and Eileen McGrath. All of these artists received local or international recognition but they generally chose the option of remaining single or childless to pursue their careers. The same trend appears in the statistics from the first exhibition of the Society of Women Painters in 1910. At this exhibition only fourteen of fifty-seven entrants were married (24%). Topliss notes that in the 1919 exhibition fourteen of fifty-one were married (27.5%)\textsuperscript{108}, while she does not comment whether she believed the women chose to remain unmarried in order to pursue their art careers or whether unmarried women had more leisure to do so. Undeniably, many women remained unmarried because of the huge loss of young men in WW1. A total of 60,000 Australian men were killed in this war, leaving a great number of women bereft and facing the future with a diminished expectation of marriage and children.

Those women who continued to paint after graduation needed the leisure time and approval of their families or husbands. Both married and single women were largely dependent on men for financial support - most single women received an allowance from their fathers, or in some case brothers, and most married women were dependent on their husbands. Those who hoped to support themselves by their sales soon found that the art world was equally biased, working in a similar way to families. The male appointed as the head of the Gallery made the rules which were generally unquestioned.

It is debatable whether most of the women students enrolled at ESTC were capable of and sufficiently committed to art to accept the obvious difficulties of a professional career. For example, most girls of the time were also taught to play a musical instrument with no intention of becoming concert performers. Then as now, and any art teacher will confirm this, a large number of students will have a strong interest in a subject but will not intend proceeding to professional standard. It may remain an interest throughout life, or be abandoned at the end of the course, but only a few, male or female, will take that interest to career level.

\textsuperscript{108} H Topliss, op. cit., p.40.
Nevertheless, the disparagement and lack of recognition of their talent made it more difficult for women to take the step up to professionalism. As Ambrus says, ‘the social conditioning of women prepared them for traditional marriage and motherhood’.109

Catriona Moore, even as recently as 1994, noted that ‘women’s domestic growth and familial experience is often at odds with the demand for progressive development’.110 Because of the perceived inferiority of their art, women never achieved the same sales figures that men did. Men held power in the gallery systems throughout Australia, controlled purchases and the award of prizes. Ambrus111 cites Jane Sutherland (now regarded as a major artist) selling for £20 at the same time that a McCubbin work brought £200. In 1918 the Trustees of the Art Gallery commissioned Florence Rodway to paint a posthumous portrait of General William Bridges – one of only a few commissions awarded to women in this era. Her fee of £100 was only a quarter of that paid to male artists undertaking similar commissions. ‘Regardless of the quality of women’s work, the reality was that their professional status was determined by men of questionable authority.’112 Ambrus quotes an incident which occurred in 1907 when several professional women artists resigned from membership of the Royal Art Society because they objected to having their work judged by men holding a Government or business position during the week and painting little gems on Saturdays and Sundays.113

Maryanne Dever in her Introduction to ‘Wallflowers and Witches’ says-

…understanding the specific role played by women in the formation of the literary and visual culture of the interwar years involves much more than simply ‘putting them back’ in order to complete the overall picture or isolating leading individuals who can compete alongside their male counterparts for professional status. It demands a radical revaluation of the established standards of historical significance in this area, giving value to previously ignored experience and arguing for female agency….but also of a further failure to recognise that women may occupy and speak from different positions within culture.114

109 C Ambrus, op. cit., p.61.


111 C Ambrus, op. cit., p.38.

112 ibid., op. cit., p.45.

113 ibid., p.49.

114 M Dever, Wallflowers and witches: women and culture in Australia 1910-1945, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, Qld, (p. xi), 1994.
By the 1920s women were challenging many standards such as clothing, appearing in public without an escort, driving motor cars, smoking and gaining employment outside the home. Traditional art was being reconsidered and women took to the new vogues in art and decoration with enthusiasm. It should be remembered that the word ‘modern’ in the 1920s was often used as a term of disparagement. Women were accused of being ‘modern’ when they cut their hair and did other such unfeminine things. If the question was asked ‘are you one of those modern women?’ it had the same contemptuous implication as the question of only a few decades back ‘are you one of those feminists?’ They were also called ‘Mad Modernists’. Thus the term modernism automatically had a damning inference even before the movement gathered strength.

5.6 Enrolment numbers of women in art schools

Philp\textsuperscript{115} says of that time (the early twentieth century) that ‘the most popular schools for women artists were the Julian Ashton School in Sydney and the National Gallery School in Melbourne’.

As mentioned earlier, in 1897, there were over 600 art students at the Technical College, in 1898, over 674 students, in 1899, over 752 students but these figures probably include technical art students. Cobb says ‘the scope of the courses changed much in that time as requests for training, especially in commercial and applied art, increased’.

Photographs of art classes at the Technical College in the 1910/20s show that women outnumber men in a ratio of at least two to one, often more. The few art student numbers I have been able to confirm from incomplete enrolment records for 1920 to 1929 are women, 49, men, 23 and unable to identify 17. This seems to agree with the photographic record of two women to one man in art classes at that time. Enrolments had risen from 393 in 1918 to 526 by 1920 and continued to rise.\textsuperscript{116} If the ratio of two women for each man was applied, this suggests that 356 women were enrolled in 1920 alone. The number of female enrolments for the Victorian Gallery School for the period 1900-1920 was 341 but this number cannot be compared to NAS figures as it does not differentiate between continuing students and new


\textsuperscript{116} J Cobb, op. cit., p.247.
enrolments. From these figures I conjecture that the Technical College trained more women students than Ashtons School, and at least equal to the number at the National Gallery School during the early part of the twentieth century.

After WW1 there was a proliferation of journals on art, dissemination of reproductions and the increased speed of travel which meant that Australian artists were taking note of European developments more than ever.\textsuperscript{117} These factors, combined with women’s enfranchisement, created a feeling of optimism in the generation that had not actively been part of the war. Because of their recent emancipation, women were able to travel overseas, (sometimes alone, sometimes with a companion), and join art classes in foreign countries where they witnessed firsthand the new movements in Europe. Overseas travel became almost obligatory. Eagle says that between 1910 and 1921 almost one million Australians [i.e. about one fifth of the population] travelled abroad.\textsuperscript{118} While this figure included 331,000 service people in wartime, it is still an incredible number. Women tended to travel independently of scholarships and were able to choose where they wanted to study. Paris was the choice for many and they were impressed by the colour in modern painting. Topliss says about the travellers-

Female artists who travelled during the period 1900 to 1940 were particularly receptive to external influences and considered it part of their vocation to spread the latest developments to Australia. Margaret Preston wrote numerous articles and gave many lectures; Anne Dangar wrote copious letters about Modern art; Dorrit Black formed the Modern Art Centre in Margaret St Sydney and taught in Sydney. Thea Proctor was instrumental in the formation of the Contemporary Art Group and wrote a number of articles on Modern Design in all its manifestations and she also taught students.\textsuperscript{119}

Printmaking, pottery and craft were popular choices of study overseas leading to a divergence from the academic traditions of student days. In many cases artists changed from the heroic to the personal style, that is from large landscape and the nude to intimate still lifes. Representation of pattern and texture was important in their work without laborious construction. Bessie Davidson, Kathleen O’Connor, Margaret Preston and Jean Appleton all painted table top still lifes that exemplify this style. (Examples are: Davidson, \textit{Still Life} 1913, O’Connor, \textit{Still Life with White Tulips} 1935, Preston, \textit{Native Flowers on Striped Cloth} 1932, Appleton, \textit{Red Cannas} 1948.

\textsuperscript{117} H Topliss, op. cit., p.13.
\textsuperscript{118} M Eagle, op. cit., p.20.
\textsuperscript{119} H Topliss, op. cit., p.27.
As women and women’s art became more ‘visible’, they flocked to the Sydney Technical College Art School at East Sydney when it moved there in 1921.

Eagle says that –
The ‘New Woman’ had become a symbol of modernism in post-war society and women were the primary target of advertising. At a practical level, modern artists, male and female, found a ready source of income promoting modern commercial goods.¹²⁰

Certainly the graphic style of modernism suited advertising, a growing market aimed at the young and forward looking woman. Commercial artists may have used the graphic style, the reduced palette and the simple forms to indicate their up-to-dateness. To portray the essence of a subject was an attempt to clear away the clutter of the past and achieve simplicity. Again this was a post-war reaction. Eagle and Jones said that ‘Colourful clarity was the hallmark of the advertising art of the times.’¹²¹ An excellent example of this is the cover of Home, 1 October 1928 by Adrian Feint and Hera Roberts, showing an abstract painting of a plane, train and steamship, advertising the Travel Issue. During the 1920s history art, architecture, design and fashion were almost synonymous.

Commerce and fashion were identified with women, commerce held out money-making opportunities to artists: and in these was a conundrum, not necessarily apparent at the start, whereby women’s art, commercial art and modern art became identified as virtually one thing.¹²²

Representing the views of many, Max Meldrum claimed-

Social decadence brought with it a slackening interest in tone and proportion and an increasing interest in colour – modern art with its distortions and excessive interest in colour was a supreme example of social decadence.¹²³

5.7 Courses offered to students from the beginning of the 20th Century

From 1898, the stated aim of the Technical College art educators was-

to develop in the students under their care self-reliance, individuality and originality; to assist those who desire to make a knowledge of Art a part of their general education; also to give facilities for the training of persons who intend to adopt Art as

¹²⁰ H Topliss, op. cit., p.18.
¹²¹ M Eagle & J Jones, op. cit., p.144.
¹²² ibid., p.115.
a profession, or to include it in their general qualification as Teachers in public, elementary, or other schools.\textsuperscript{124}

In the early 1900s, several courses were introduced that reflected the changing needs of the workforce. including in 1910, Decorative Design, 1916, Window Dressing, Black and White (Commercial Art & Illustration) Trade, 1917, Show Display Window, Trade, 1921, Commercial Art, 1933, Drawing and Illustration Diploma, 1935, Advertising Art Course, Commercial Illustration Diploma.

A teacher of Show Window Displays was appointed in 1917, reflecting the changes in society. The subjects being taught in 1920 were not very different from those taught in 1896 and they included lithography, stained glass and leaded lights, pottery, jewellery, modelling, stone masonry, wood carving, furniture making, wrought-iron work, dressmaking or any of the many vocations where the ability to make a descriptive sketch, or drawings qualified to fill particular trade. The rare periods when the art and hobby classes were given less funding and importance were during times of national crises such as the two depressions (in the 1890s and between the late 1920s and 1930s) and the two World Wars, but even then classes were not totally disbanded. The emphasis on craft oriented courses was stronger during more stringent times but the Technical College Art School was considered the best available during the 1930s, following Ashton’s retirement from teaching. Douglas Dundas wrote-

‘The degree is as high as its staff of experienced and knowledgeable artists can make it; the scope is incomparably wider than that of any other school in the Commonwealth’.\textsuperscript{125}

During the 1920s, full-time and part-time courses were offered. By 1925, Samuel V. Rowe had replaced J. R. Wright as Lecturer in charge. As mentioned elsewhere, throughout his time at the School Rowe argued constantly for the appointment of lecturers of high standard. Rowe himself was not an artist but a designer of talent (represented in the Powerhouse Museum). Douglas Dundas, Head of Painting 1938-1960, believed that Rayner Hoff who joined the staff in 1923 as Teacher of Architectural Modelling and Sculpture, was ‘the actual power behind the throne’.\textsuperscript{126} By 1925 there were seven full-time and two part-time teachers of art. Hoff’s success as the teacher of a remarkable group of young women was showcased in an exhibition in 1999 at the AGNSW entitled Rayner Hoff and his School. The Curator, Deborah Edwards says that Hoff ‘became responsible for perhaps the only instance

\textsuperscript{124} J Cobb, op. cit., p.157.
\textsuperscript{126} ibid., p.30.
of coherent (European) group production in the country’. The buoyant atmosphere of the times and the high visibility of Hoff and his circle that included Norman Lindsay, were also drawcards for potential students. Hoff’s teaching was not strictly modernist, drawing rather on Greek and Roman ideals, and his students’ work remained conservative although polished. His own work, at its pinnacle in the Anzac War Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney, combined both the classic tradition and his own interpretation of the reduction of unnecessary detail as in the art deco movement.

The work of Hoff and his students was linked to post-war reconstruction ideals, the ‘return to order’. The theory of Vitalism that so imbued Hoff’s philosophy was a combination of mysticism and pragmatism. The definition of vitalism is:

1. the doctrine that phenomena are only partly controlled by mechanical forces and that they are in some measure self-determining (opposed to mechanism)
2. the doctrine that ascribes the functions of a living organism to a vital principle distinct from chemical and other forces. The belief was that humans could control their own destiny by stripping away repressions and the veneers of sophistication, to promote growth, sexuality and energy, and use their ‘life force’ as a regenerative quality. This school of thought was appealing to those who had seen the body treated as a cheap and disposable element of warfare. When life seemed worthless, there was obviously going to be a reactionary movement, and it took the form of valuing the body as an instrument of pleasure and creation.

5.8 Male art students at ESTC in the 1920s and 1930s

The reasons for the low number of male art students in the 1920s and 30s ranged from the need for men to be educated to provide an income as ‘head of the household’, to a more covert implication that art was mainly a feminine activity and of society’s perception of men who didn’t pursue active, assertive occupations. Also, few men had the leisure time for a hobby that might not lead to a career although night art classes always had a significant male enrolment. It must have been an unusual and strongly committed young man to enrol in day classes with such a preponderance of women. The Ashton School had a similar imbalance to East Sydney Technical College. When Edmund Harvey (later a teacher at ESTC) became a

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127 D Edwards, *This vital flesh – the sculpture of Rayner Hoff and his school*, AGNSW, Sydney, 1999 p.116.

128 ibid., p.11.

129 Macquarie Dictionary, Macquarie Library Pty Ltd. McMahons Point NSW 1982.
student at Ashton’s in the early 1920S he said there were only four other men attending the
day classes, Ray and Philip Lindsay, Tom Hubble and Herbert Ironside. According to
Harvey, there were about twenty or more girls in his year and all were beautiful, sophisticated
and charming. We can assume that these girls came from privileged backgrounds. Anne
Dangar wrote to Ashton, ‘I have never met so many interesting, intelligent young people’
referring to students at the Sydney School. Her letter was published in Undergrowth, a
magazine started by Nancy Hall (b.1900) in 1924 when Hall was a student at Ashtons, and
edited by Dore Hawthorne until 1929. Later it was known as the Sydney Art School Magazine.
It contained articles, sketches and poems by people associated with Ashton’s school.

In time Harvey met the night students, ‘young men who earned their living by day and
devoted their evenings to the study of art’. They were certainly talented, among them were
Douglas Dundas, Jack Kilgour, Herbert Badham, John Breckenridge, Arthur Freeman, Harold
Abbott, William Dobell, John Passmore and Fred Coventry. Most of these men later became
teachers at ESTC.

Some time prior to 1930, Harvey attended night time life drawing classes at ESTC. The
moral standards were carefully monitored and nude drawings had to be left in the classroom.
The Head Teacher of Dressmaking was so careful of the models’ virtue that she made them
‘little decorative aprons’ to wear around their middles. Harvey says it was to Samuel
Rowe’s credit that he resisted this suggestion. Even as late as 1937, when Charles Meere
became a teacher of life drawing, anatomy and composition, morals were still guarded. Meere
however ‘advocated that both male and female models should be totally undressed and
requested that male models remove their tights which was not common practice at that
time.’ Meere is represented in the Art Gallery of NSW by a painting, Australian Beach
Pattern, in which he was assisted by one of his students, Freda Robertshaw. Robertshaw
painted her own version of this work called Australian Beach Scene in 1940. It sold at auction
in 1998 for $475,500. Robertshaw is represented in the student collection by two paintings,
one a female nude believed to be of Rita Young, made famous as a model in paintings by
Norman Lindsay and the other also a very competent painting of a female nude.

130 E Harvey, op. cit., p.3.
131 ibid, p.3.
132 ibid, p.54.
Trust of Australia (NSW), 1987. p.4.
In the 1930s, another teacher from the ESTC, Norma Carter, worked extensively on stained and painted glass windows, including those for St. Stephens Church, Macquarie Street, Sydney. Harvey worked for Carter on this job and found it a challenging but valuable experience.

5.9 Chapter summary

From the foregoing it can be seen that the period from the beginning of the twentieth century to the start of the Depression in Australia was one of enormous social change. Not only were there changes in art styles, but in fashion, architecture, music, communication and transport. Changes in social mores made it easier for women to move from the shelter of home, to the competitive working world and to travel with or without a companion. The next chapter considers how these changes affected art in the twentieth century.
CHAPTER 6
The influence of Modernism in Australian Art

The many changes that swept the world from the beginning of the 1920s, often labelled modern, moderne or modernistic, reflected changing attitudes that largely resulted from the horrors of WW1. Women who had contributed to the war effort were not happy to return to a constrained domestic role. Women artists began to speak more freely about their expectations, joined art classes and women’s art clubs. In this chapter, I use the specific example of the Cazneaux family, illustrating the role that Harold Cazneaux’s daughters played in assisting his career. While contentious at the time, precepts of modern art were introduced into the ESTC curriculum. As this chapter details, a number of students from the art school won Travelling Art Scholarships and took the opportunity to travel overseas to expand their knowledge and experience.

6.1 Modernism in Australia and the Emergence of Women’s Art Clubs

Bernard Smith has said that Sydney was the Australian centre in which modern art first made its presence felt.

‘It began with the study of photos in newspapers and of prints of works by Cezanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin on the eve of the 1914-18 war’. 135

Norah Simpson, sometimes referred to as the mother of Australian modernism, brought photos and books related to Cubism and Post-Impressionism from Europe on her return to Australia in 1913, showing them to Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo with whom she had been a student in Sydney. Roland Wakelin136 said that Dattilo-Rubbo gave the ‘most sympathetic encouragement and braved alone the storm of criticism which greeted the appearance of modernism in the Art Schools. Humphrey McQueen however contends that an adequate account of the growth of modernism in Australia cannot be given, since ‘the most exotic transplant cannot survive without tapping some source in its adopted environment.’ 137 This

136 A Stephen, A McNamara, P Goad Modernism and Australia, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, Vic. 2006 p. 64.
137 H McQueen, Black Swan of Trespass: the emergence of modernist painting in Australia to 1944, Alternative Publishing, Sydney, 1979, p.xii.
could be understood to mean that the ground had been prepared for modernism by the social changes that had affected Australia as well as Europe.

An exhibition of French and British Modern Art significant to the growth of the movement was brought to Australia in 1939 by Keith Murdoch of the *Melbourne Herald*. The travelling exhibition contained over 200 works including paintings by Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Leger, Matisse, Picasso, Braque and Dali. Smith 138 said this exhibition was one of three major events, ‘which led to the collapse of the authority of the academic establishment in art in Australia’, and that its influence ‘upon Australian art in the visual arts’ was difficult to exaggerate. These paintings blew up a storm of opposition and interest and started people thinking that perhaps art had not ossified in the nineteenth century.

The period from the end of WW1 to the Depression was fuelled by public debate regarding modernism that can be looked at from two viewpoints. Either the Art Establishment disparaged it because it was embraced by women, or women embraced Modernism because their eyes were not as focused on the traditional schools, painted by artists reaching their later years and unwilling, in a more affluent post-war market, to risk losing sales by changing their pastoral style. The buyers in this market would also have been reluctant to accept new directions, the value of their paintings depending on the perceived superiority of the artist. Who would want a Matisse painting - an unknown artist, odd subject matter, with no status in Australia, when a Streeton showed the owner’s affluence and connoisseurship?

At the opening of the International Art Exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW in 1936, Proctor made this comment.

I am sure that in no other country would it be possible to read in a newspaper that compared with a certain Australian landscape painter, Monet, Pissaro and Sisley were mere fumblers or that Augustus John was a charlatan.139

One reason for the slow response to world wide movements in art was the usual one in Australia - distance. Isolation from world centres of culture in itself engenders insularity, and the lack of fresh ideas and a wider critical audience caused stagnation in the Australian art world at a time when change in tradition was not a high priority in a nation struggling to retain stability. Challenging the conservative generation however, was the younger group, eager and willing to embrace the new, the different, even the startling.


139 *Sydney Morning Herald*, p.11, 31 August 1936.
Also, since artists are frequently the antennae of society and have always been so, the feminine modernists were surely predicting and responding to social movements whether these were obvious or still subterranean. Topliss quotes from *The Impact of Modernism* by S.K. Tylliard, who said that it was the first time a large number of women had been involved in a major artistic movement and that the number of women who responded to Post-Impressionism took men by surprise.\(^{140}\)

Later Topliss comments that ‘the significant change in modernist aesthetics’ to women was that mundane objects became favourable as subject matter, since ‘the insignificant details in still-life…was their domain’.\(^{141}\)

This of course was not new to art. Dutch painters had rendered food, game and flowers so literally that they asked to be lifted off the canvas and indeed created an entire genre devoted to domestic detail. Topliss also says -

> ‘The revaluation of the decorative object as being worthy of aesthetic contemplation became part of the modernist reinterpretation of the meaning of art.’\(^{142}\)

Modernism was a title encompassing a range of schools and styles. In Australia it was applied to any art that did not conform to the traditional schools. Contemporary artists adopted elements of modern art to suit their particular style without adhering strictly to European Modernist Schools. Light was the main preoccupation of early twentieth century painters. Although much of the painting of that period was labelled ‘modernism’ most painters had a distinctive style of their own that was defined almost from student days. The common thread was the use of colour. The analysis of the colour wheel at College showed that all colours had equal validity. This influenced the interpretation of light and shade (for example artist Grace Cossington Smith, who was admired for the way she expressed form with colour).

It was generally conceded in the 1930s that women had traditionally been associated with decoration and interior design ‘with a finer instinct for the use and arrangement of colour’.\(^{143}\) Bimler Kirkland and Jameson\(^{144}\) have undertaken studies that compare male

\(^{140}\) H Topliss, op. cit., p.100.

\(^{141}\) ibid., p.17.

\(^{142}\) ibid., p.100.

\(^{143}\) ibid., p.161.

and female use of the colour lexicon showing that early in life women have a larger repertoire of words describing colour, a trend common from childhood in different cultures and languages. However they point out that this may relate to an earlier grasp of language skills by females or that ‘divergent patterns of socialisation for males and females instil a greater awareness of color among women.’ They also stated that results by other workers regarding advances in molecular biology found that a subgroup of females possess ‘more than three distinct classes of retinal photopigment, by virtue of X-chromosome inherited opsin gene dimorphisms. This group could perceive a ‘greater number of distinct bands’ in a colour spectrum indicating that a small group of women actually see more colours than the rest of the population. Such women are described as tetrachromats.

These findings may suggest a possible reason for some women’s enthusiastic response to Modernism, if they are in fact more sensitive to colour and its glorious potential.

At the core of Modernism was the rejection of traditional representation in many creative areas, and in art it was combined with an emphasis on colour and design. It was therefore an ideal way for the post-war generation to express the feelings of youth, vitality, and optimism.

6.2 Formation of Women’s Art Clubs

One of the results of the struggle by women for recognition as professional artists was the formation of women’s art clubs. They believed that forming clubs gave solidarity and a stronger voice. While this resulted in mutual support and reinforcement it may also have weakened their position in mainstream art.

It would be a normal expectation that a higher number of women than men would enrol at an art school, at a time when there were no schools of interior or fashion design. It would be equally valid to suggest that a large proportion of those students would not have professional expectations at the end of their courses. This could account for their interest in women’s clubs in which a range of talents would have been tolerated and the friendships and support important as ends in themselves. Philp notes that club membership ‘is an area that has

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145 Bimler, Kirkland and Jameson, op. cit., p.128.
146 ibid., p.128.
been previously excluded by feminist art historical emphasis on the professional', also that the members ‘chose to maintain a tradition, different from professionalism, which was a strong part of the lives of middle-class Australian women’, and ‘they certainly cannot be placed within the moral imperatives of a 1970s feminism oriented towards individualism.’

The Society of Women Painters (SWP) was formed in Sydney in 1910 by Lillian Chauvel, Lady Chelmsford, wife of the Governor of NSW, and other painters. A stated objective of the Society was the promotion of a ‘spirit of camaraderie amongst women artists’ and ‘a broad range of social activities’.

The Society had rooms on the third floor of the Queen Victoria Building from 1919 to 1931. Julian Ashton also had his Sydney School of Art on the top floor on the George Street side of the same building. Harvey describes the location in his memoirs.

‘Continuing along from us was a similar area so clouded in mystery and seclusion, that none of us ever found our way in. This studio housed the Society of Women Painters.’

We can presume that there was little interaction between the students at Ashtons and the Women Painters, although a number of members trained at the Ashton School.

In Vol. 2, Appendix 1, I give the names of twenty four STC and ESTC graduates or students mentioned in documents of the time who exhibited with the Society of Women Painters. There may be others who studied part-time whose names I have been unable to trace.

Over the Society’s history, 298 women exhibited at the annual shows, including twenty-four Ashton graduates, three from the Hobart Technical College, four from the Brisbane Technical College, one from Hornsby Technical College, and fourteen from the Sydney Technical College/East Sydney Technical College. While Philp gives the number as eight from the Technical College, I was able to identify twenty four names on her list as sometime students of the Technical College. Exhibiting in 1913 was Mrs George Aurousseau, the wife of a painting teacher at the Technical College. Whether these women considered

\[147\] A Philp, op. cit., p.2/3.
\[148\] ibid., p.8.
\[149\] ibid., p.111.
\[150\] ibid., p.24.
\[151\] EA Harvey, op. cit., p.3.
themselves professional or amateur, the club exhibitions could have been useful markets given the climate of slow sales in the 1930s.

Similar clubs exist today. In country towns and suburbs in cities, there are art societies where men and women gather, express themselves in various media and exhibit a couple of times a year and hope for sales. They consider themselves dedicated amateurs, and enjoy sharing a common interest and the friendships that form. The clubs provide a locus for hobbies or leisure activities, just as they have always done.

Philp makes a similar point about the different strata of art for the elite and domesticity.

The people who bought the works of the Women Painters were not seeking the leading names of the art world...Their [the works] destination was the living-room of the middle-class family home...sited in their ‘proper’ place. They confirm the individual’s status as someone of taste and sensibility.152

Many of the members of the SWP probably did not aspire to professionalism, perhaps regarding the Society as a club, and enjoying the social activities and the ‘camaraderie’. Smith discusses the levels of art in society, although not specifically in context with women’s art.

It needs to be stressed that the emergence of one group dedicated to...a metropolitan-type culture and another seeking national identity through art are both based upon real-life situations. The one...highly mobile elite group, the other...older, suburban and rural groups which expect to live out their lives in Australia, draw some cultural sustenance and a sense of identity from its legends and history...The emergence of these two kinds of art, reflecting two kinds of life...testifies both to the growth of civilization in Australia and to a stratification of the artistic culture grounded in different living conditions and different cultural aspirations.153

The minor and occasional major works created by members of the SWP and its counterparts in other cities, were bought over a time span of fifteen years by people wanting to decorate their homes with evocative and sentimental reminders. The works of the SWP resonated with the large middle class of the time, and satisfied a need for comfort and familiarity.

Ambrus takes the view that –

By preferring to exhibit in their own societies rather than risking rejection from their male peers, women artists laid themselves open to all manner of criticisms using a sexual rather than an aesthetic criterion.154

152 A Philp, op. cit., p.9.
154 C Ambrus, op. cit., p.60.
Male criticism would rarely have been anything but patronising but peer group criticism could have been easier to accept as valid and constructive.

Womens societies, as Philp says –

might be seen historically as a transitional stage for the peripheral rear-guard artists who attended patiently to the continuities of their cultural experiences while their social situation was subtly and irreversibly changing.\(^{155}\)

James MacDonald expressed himself patronisingly in the *Bulletin*, 24 January 1934 saying,

For two generations women have flooded the schools and because they were women received intenser instruction than men got from the same masters. They cannot put paint of different shapes together on canvas to express something effectively any more than they can compose music.\(^{156}\)

In response a Mrs Muscio said that women needed enormous courage because they take the ‘tragic risk of cutting themselves off from love and material security’ if considering expressing themselves in creative art.

The battle continued. Ambrus quotes from *Talk (Sydney)* September 1946

The production of a major work is beyond the makeup of women. No Streeton, no Meldrum, no Dobell, no approach to art that was likely to have either a good or bad influence on Australian Art. It was but a looking glass reflecting the various influences of Australian and European personalities and ideologies.\(^{157}\)

The continued pressure against women by the male establishment produced its desired result. By withdrawing from mainstream art, women virtually confirmed the impression that they were unable to stand shoulder to shoulder with male artists. Membership of the SWP peaked in 1922 at 118, but by 1934 was down to eighty-four and the following year only fifty-six remained. Another factor contributing to the diminishing numbers was the poor volume of sales by all artists in this depression period, not just women artists. As historian Nancy Underhill states, ‘The Depression in the early 1930s meant that just when Australian art had begun to find a steady market among private collectors it became harder to sell works’.\(^{158}\)


\(^{157}\) C Ambrus, op. cit., p.151.

\(^{158}\) N Underhill, op. cit., p.44.
Equipment was sold to bolster funds, and Mrs E Irvine 'proposed that the women painters consider commercialising their talents to earn some money using their art'. The SWP was disbanded in 1935. In its place the Women’s Industrial Arts Society was formed in 1936 and it operated until WW2, with Lady Gowrie as Patron. Its first exhibition was given much support by six Art Schools including ESTC, magazines and commercial houses. This exhibition included work by Margaret Preston, Grace Crowley, Grace Cossington Smith, Thea Proctor and Hera Roberts. Grace Crowley had never exhibited with the Society of Women Painters but perhaps now felt it important to show her support of the new society. NAS associated active members were Jean Isherwood, Jean Broome, Margel Hinder, Barbara Tribe, Loma Latour, Treania Smith, Mary Soady, Phyllis Shillito, Mary Cooper Edwards (Painting No. 218 held in NAS collection) and Jean Bellette. The revised society showcased a greater number of talents in both the arts and crafts fields, ranging from sculpture to newspaper art. Later, men joined the Society renamed the Industrial Arts Society, and exhibited with it.

Philp says that 30% of the members had received a professional art education and that the society ‘provided much needed practical assistance to women working in the commercial art fields, including finding jobs for some of them’. Industrial Art was understood to include any art or craft that could be put to commercial use. A painters only exhibition was held in August 1936 and was well reviewed. The Society had rooms in the Victoria Arcade, Castlereagh Street, opposite the Hotel Australia and it provided a venue for social meetings, luncheons and lectures. In 1940 the rooms were moved to Rowe Street. In its heyday the Society held quite a prominent place in the social life of Sydney as had the SWP before it.

Blamire Young, Ashton, Longstaff, George Taylor and certainly Rayner Hoff were among the few men that recognised that women had artistic talent. The art schools had many women students but until much later, few graduates who had the combination of talent, determination, financial backing and the ability to withstand social pressures to conform to their pre-ordained roles as wives and mothers.

Ambrus says, ‘Unfortunately most women succumbed to the type of propaganda which reinforced their natural desires for a home and family and which proscribed any thoughts of a career’. Ashton was very supportive of women and employed more women teachers than

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\[159\] C Ambrus, op. cit., p.146.

\[160\] A Philp, op. cit., p.6.

\[161\] C Ambrus. op. cit., p.61.
men. He may have been influenced by his wife who was a prominent female emancipist. Edmund Harvey, regarding the talent of male and female students, wrote in his memoirs -

It is an extraordinary fact that for the first three years the males [referring to students at ESTC] were not in the race with their female counterparts. It took that long to catch up. It was then that the girls levelled out and the young blokes went on. Of course some of the girls went on to practice with distinction and make their contribution to Australian Art. The fact that so few did was not their fault, rather the structure of our society and the role that society expects them to play. A teaching experience covering 36 years, and dealing so much with girls from their mid teens to middle twenties has given me a very healthy respect for their ability, their intelligence and their honesty.162

6.3 The Cazneaux Family

It was common for relatives, husbands or wives to attend the Technical College at the same time but it was an unusual occurrence when five sisters had enrolled virtually simultaneously. They were Rainbow, Jean, Beryl, Carmen and Joan Cazneaux. Harold Pierce Cazneaux and his wife Winifred lived at ‘Ambleside’, Dudley Ave, Roseville with their five daughters and one son. After an illness around 1919, Cazneaux began his business as an independent photographer working from the family home, which led to the involvement of his daughters as assistants. The girls grew up in a supportive, energetic and creative atmosphere and all five attended ESTC, the first four as part-time students but Joan as a full-timer, circa 1930. An interesting incident is quoted in The Cazneaux Women. It was said that the Communist Party was predicted to cause riots on May Day 1931, but in her parents’ absence, Joan attended College on that day. ‘When she arrived she found tension so strong between students that some grappled with one another over the policies of the Prime Minister, J.T. Lang.’163

‘As young women all five daughters worked closely with their father in the studio and darkroom. Their contribution was certainly behind the scenes, but they were nevertheless regarded by contemporaries as part of Cazeaux’s success and dubbed ‘the Cazneaux family of photographers’ by Spencer Shier, a leading contemporary photographer.164 (From the front cover of ‘The Cazneaux Women’)

162 EA Harvey. op. cit., p.163.
163 V Hill. The Cazneaux Women, Craftsman House, St. Leonards, NSW, 2000, p.82.
164 ibid., [from the front cover]
Expert co-workers in the studio and all its processes, their empathy and skill ensured that Cazneaux’s role as creator was never compromised.\textsuperscript{165}

Excerpts from Rainbow’s personal diary written between February and October 1931 reveal her involvement with her father’s day-to-day photography and processing. She assisted him with the arrangements for photography and darkroom processing of Dr. Bradfield and the Harbour Bridge in February, made prints of Dame Nellie Melba after her death in February, made prints of ‘The Anderson Wedding’ at Government House in May and in June went to the Springwood home for photography of the Norman Lindsay family and house. In July she assisted in photography at the Czechoslovakian Consul General’s office and in the same month went with her father to judge the Kodak International Salon competition in Sydney. Again in July they went to the office of the Italian Consul General, Mr Grossadi and later that month Miss Grossadi’s portrait was taken. Her note for September was satirical. ‘Went to Bondi in afternoon and photographed a few silly idiots of society girls on the beach’.\textsuperscript{166}

During the war, Beryl became a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment and subsequently worked in radiography. Carmen worked for De Havillard in the Plan Department and after the war resumed assisting Cazneaux in his work. Beryl later returned to art, and drawing became her main interest when she joined life classes. Joan became a printmaker at Joy Ewart’s newly established Workshop Art Centre at Willoughby, and held a number of solo exhibitions. (Joy Ewart was also an ex-student of ESTC). Carmen who had revelled in art school, worked for a time in photography but later on also became a printmaker. The sisters spent some years sorting and organising Cazneaux’s life work and ultimately much of this was donated to the AGNSW and other galleries and museums. Their record at ESTC follows.

\textsuperscript{165} V Hill. op.cit., p.17.

\textsuperscript{166} ibid., pps. 81-84.
6.4 Modern Art at ESTC

George Lambert (1873/1930) was an indirect influence on the ESTC Art School. He trained at Ashtons and was a close friend of Sydney Ure Smith, a significant supporter and publisher of Australian art for over thirty years. On Lambert’s return from England in 1921, he became important in the Sydney art world and President of the Society of Artists in 1921. He emphasised observation and drawing, strongly influencing Douglas Dundas and Arthur
Murch, who, when they became teachers at the NAS, passed on the same instruction to further
generations of students.

Arthur Murch, John Passmore, William Dobell and Eric Wilson were some of the
painters who took Lambert’s lesson in the strict organisation of tone and colour either
direct from the painter or from his ex-assistant, Henry Gibbons, teaching at the
Sydney Art School from 1923.\textsuperscript{167}

Grace Crowley attended a demonstration by Lambert on the need for a unified method
of painting, where he limited his palette to three or four colours mixing few tones, with a few
colour accents. Abstract paintings by Crowley and Balson expressed this system. Crowley
(1890/1979) taught at Ashtons, then left Sydney and studied in England and at the Lhote
School in Paris. Here she studied painting and drawing constructed on a geometric abstract
basis, the principles of construction by Cezanne and later Cubism. Her work was respected in
France but was too advanced for Sydney when she returned in 1930. From 1932 she taught
with Rah Fizelle at the Crowley/Fizelle School in George Street Sydney. She promoted and
was influenced by Ralph Balson although other artists such as Margel Hinder thought her a
better artist. She combined the multi coloured approach with the flattening of form, which led
her to abstract painting.

Eagle says -

that the strongest line in modern painting through the 1930s into the 1940s was
formed by a group which included Adelaide Perry, Arthur Murch, William
Dobell, John Passmore, Eric Wilson, Jean Appleton, George Duncan, Donald
Friend, Paul Haefliger and Jean Bellette.\textsuperscript{168}

Of these artists, Murch, Dobell, Passmore, Wilson, Appleton and Bellette taught at
ESTC. Grace Crowley, Frank and Margel Hinder and Ralph Balson also taught there from the
late 1940s. These modernist artists were to influence two decades of students at the School
without however producing many artists who could be specifically called ‘modernist’.

Frank Hinder joined Fizelle, Crowley and Balson in working from the model. Hinder
was criticised for his lack of extremes, emotion or passion, was considered intellectually
brilliant but accused of creating designs not art. His work also received criticism from
Howard Ashton, the following quoted from the Renee Free catalogue of 1980.

‘In any case an art of which the canons and conventions are obscure to the average
human intelligence does not matter. It can have no permanence and no significance in
human culture. Mr Hinder’s sub mathematical abstractions make good cover designs
for modern art magazines but they mean nothing to any but the few satellites who

\textsuperscript{167} M Eagle, op. cit., p.79.

\textsuperscript{168} ibid., p.152.
follow his particularly two penny halfpenny theory, which has faults...that blind their commonsense if ever they had any commonsense.’

Painters such as John Coburn, Tony Tuckson and Guy Warren (students in the 1940s), developed very distinctive styles, but I doubt that they would relate their early teaching to their mature paintings. Perhaps the biggest deviation from traditional work occurred in the School of Sculpture, where Lyndon Dadswell introduced more modern materials and techniques to his students. The reason for such changes would possibly be ‘the broader process of modernisation, which involved a fundamental reconstruction of the conditions of life and the workings of society. The inter-war years were a period of unprecedented technological change’ and the same conditions applied post-war. Dadswell was one of the most influential teachers at the NAS, being dedicated to the betterment of art education. The school gained a national reputation because of his diverse approach. Even so there was little exposure to modern movements from overseas and this was a disappointment to some students such as Flugelman and Klippel, students of the CRTS era. Edwards says that the course proceeded under the premise that sculpture was ultimately aligned to figurative and symbolic concerns.

His strength seems to have been his ability to inspire the novice with confidence in his/her ability. Students later commented that his empathy with them created a tremendous swell of confidence, surely the greatest gift a teacher can give.

Harvey, who believed that Dadswell was a born educator and experimenter, wrote this.

Dadswell returned from his Fulbright in the USA and proceeded immediately to re-organise the Sculpture Diploma Course. Three Dimensional Design became the order of the day and involved the whole of the first and second years. Everyone of my students was required to do four hours a week in 3.D. Lyndon’s hard work and enthusiasm completely changed the traditional concept of sculpture and released it from what had been, almost solely, clay modeling...students used every imaginable material and were taught to design for that particular material, whether it be wire, piping, wood, plaster or whatever you can think of. This gave them great freedom of expression...Discussion followed towards the close of the class...Over the years the subject developed to such a degree that a proper workshop was required, with power tools.

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171 ibid., p,126.

172 EA Harvey, op. cit., p.222.
6.5 Travelling Art Scholarships

After a lapse of 23 years the Society of Artists Travelling Scholarship had been renewed in 1923. In 1934 the NSW Government took over this scholarship and it became the NSW Travelling Art Scholarship, awarded biennially. In 1996 the Scholarship was augmented by funds from the Estate of Keith Wood, husband of artist Helen Lempriere (1907/1991) and was renamed the Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship. Artists associated with the NAS who won these Scholarships were - Arthur Murch 1925, Douglas Dundas 1927, William Dobell 1929, Harold Abbott 1931, Arthur Freedman 1933, Barbara Tribe 1935, Jack Carington Smith 1936, Eric Wilson 1937, Wallace Thornton 1938, Doug Watson 1940, Lorna Nimmo (Landscape) 1941, John Wilfred Peisley (Landscape) 1943, Fred Jessup 1944, Anne Wienholt 1945, Fred Jessup 1945, Ena Joyce 1948, Olif Richmond 1948, Earle Backen 1954, Elizabeth Cummings 1960, Michael Taylor 1962, Robin Norling 1964, John Montifiore 1964, Richard Dunn 1966, Peter Pinson 1970, Ian Howard 1974. The influence of the College teaching was strong over a period of many years. Most of those mentioned above became teachers as well as artists and contributed to the more progressive teaching policy the Technical College offered from the time of Rayner Hoff’s employment.

6.6 Chapter Summary

The term ‘modern’ applied to many of the technological and societal changes occurring across the whole spectrum of daily life the 1920s. While ‘modern’ art was not the prerogative of women, it found wide acceptance with them. Although ‘women only’ art clubs provided support to their members, external forces compelled the SWP to not only admit men but convert to the Industrial Art Society in 1936. The IAS finally closed at the beginning of WW2. Harold Cazneaux’s employment of his daughters, while perhaps familial in origin, showed that he considered their input equal to that of men assistants. The Technical College Art School, although conservative in its teaching, instigated classes in modern painting by employing some of its leading practitioners, without however, producing any derivative artists. The school provided traditional teaching until the 1920s when a broader range of classes was introduced to match industry needs. Many students from the College were awarded Travelling Art Scholarships, and when they returned prior to the beginning of WW2, were engaged by ESTC. It was a common practice of the School to offer teaching positions to ex-students from its earliest days.
CHAPTER 7
East Sydney Technical College

This chapter considers ESTC during the years between 1920 and 1950. Samuel V. Rowe was Head of the Art School between 1922 and 1933 and was considered a demanding man to deal with, but used his position to agitate for the best teachers available. After 1920 the art school contracted and classes were reduced, but the growth of the commercial art field ensured a demand for classes of that nature, and Rowe managed to keep the fine art classes intact. Entry to courses was by exam or scholarship, not by formal qualifications and some Technical College scholarships became available to art students. During this time Norman Lindsay became a vocal advocate of the College, reversing his previous opinion after seeing the work of Hoff’s sculpture students. The chapter also discusses the origin of the name ‘National Art School’, a title that is now used officially.

7.1 The Art School at East Sydney Technical College

In 1916 James Nangle, the Supervisor of the Technical Education Branch, appointed Mr Samuel V Rowe as head of the Technical Art School. Rowe, previously chief designer for Wunderlich’s, restructured the Art Department and its courses and kept the school on a firm footing in spite of his irascible personality. He was apparently a difficult head of school. He succeeded in having G A Thomas, a teacher of long standing, dismissed simply by reason of personality clashes. Thomas is mentioned previously as the teacher of the Northern Shore Academy of Art, acquired by the Department in 1885. He had been associated with the School for over thirty years at the time of his dismissal, which led to a Public Service Inquiry. As others before him, Rowe engaged in acrimonious discussion with Ashton regarding the presumed trespass by ESTC on the teaching of fine arts, while doing precisely that by extending the fine art components of the Art Diploma course. He maintained that he was not competing against the professional art schools with his courses but was obviously offering something similar. He also continued to press for ‘the appointment of a teacher of painting of the highest rank’. After 1920, courses were once again scrutinised and

173 J Cobb, op. cit., p.248.

174 From the ‘Historical Sketch’, Exhibition of Art by the Students of the East Sydney Technical College, 4-11 December 1926.
regrouped and art classes were pruned. The Art Department became the Department of Elementary and Applied Art and was advertised as providing basic instruction, specifically for trade students. The Industrial and Decorative classes went into the group labelled building trade courses but wallpaper design, china painting and ceramics were retained by the Department of Elementary and Applied Art. This was a definite swing away from the concept of Fine Art but as always, public pressures for art training resulted in expansion of classes. The advertising of products for sale was a growing marketing tool and Commercial Art obviously fitted into the vocational stream. It could benefit by life, antique and design classes, so the line between fine and applied art was still blurred. The beginning of the depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s saw changes in the enrolments in art classes. There were long waiting lists for places in preparatory and commercial art and also in electrical trades and correspondence courses but enrolments fell in other trade courses. During the depression years both men and women wanted to join the preparatory and commercial art classes. On 29 November 1933 it was reported that of 180 students had applied for entry, thirty-nine were admitted to the course and there was a waiting list of 400 people for entry to various other courses.

From 1924 courses became more flexible and moved further away from the stated 'vocational only' classes. This was made easier because the National Art School argument had still not been resolved. In 1924 Lister Lister made the suggestion that a Fine Arts Committee should be considered, perhaps finally recognising that a National Art School attached to the Gallery would not eventuate. Advisory committees were set up and by the end of the 1920s a sub group named the Fine Arts Committee of the Art Advisory Committee emerged.

### 7.2 The introduction of Diploma Courses

In 1926 diploma courses were introduced. The ultimate award held in the highest esteem for many decades was the ASTC (Associate of Sydney Technical College) and diploma courses were offered in drawing, painting and sculpture that could be entered by way of diploma entrance exams. The first art school graduate to hold this award was Eileen McGrath in 1930. The diploma course from 1926 took only three years but required as high a standard as the longer diplomas. Students had to complete Introductory and Intermediate levels and stringent examinations in Drawing, Painting and Sculpture. Unlike other courses held at the Technical College, Pre-Diploma and Diploma Art did not require Matriculation as an entry requisite. Over the decades, students had varied qualifications for entrance; some had the Intermediate
School Certificate, some the Leaving Certificate, some no academic certification but portfolio of drawings by which to indicate their talent. In the 1950s the Aptitude test for new students consisted of a two hour drawing of a still life group then another two hours of a composition.

7.3 Technical College Scholarships

As far back as 1913, Peter Board was looking for means of encouraging young people to attend technical schools. He instituted a Scholarship scheme of –

‘sixty fee-paying scholarships for students from junior technical and domestic science schools...twenty to students from Technical high schools. Thirty to Leaving Certificate holders going into diploma courses and six to diploma holders proceeding to the university’.

By 1952 the Department of Art offered –

Twenty scholarships of three years to students of the Intermediate Certificate Exam, five scholarships of three years to students of the Leaving Certificate Exam.

The applicants were to sit for special tests conducted by the Department, and the results were combined with results of the two Certificate exams to choose the successful students. Fifteen scholarships to enter a Diploma course were awarded on the results of the Leaving Certificate exam to students who qualified for entrance. A curious proviso was attached to these scholarships.

‘Applicants must be employed in a calling associated with the course they propose to follow or be able to obtain such employment in the event of gaining a scholarship.’

It is hard to predict what employment a fine arts student might expect to find, but obviously they worked around this problem.

Five scholarships were also available, tenable for two years in day classes, to students who had completed the Introductory course in the Department. Applicants were to be under twenty one years on the first of January of the year after they completed their course. These scholarships exempted the holder from paying instruction fees for the whole of his/her course unless they became unsatisfactory in certain ways. Clause (j) in the conditions stated that they would be awarded ‘in order of merit as shown by the highest aggregate marks in (6) papers,

\[175\] J Cobb, op. cit., pps.197-8.


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including those specified for the particular scholarship’, and in (k) ‘that the day course scholarships could not be transferred to evening courses’.

Special Scholarships, tenable for three years in day classes only in the Department of Art, ESTC were awarded each year. Applicants were not restricted to students of the Technical College and were required to sit for a special exam conducted early in December.

The allowances were to be £52 per annum to students residing away from home and £26 per annum to students residing at home.

These scholarships gave great credibility to students, and were highly prized.

7.4 **Norman Lindsay alters his opinion of the School**

Norman Lindsay had earlier been prejudiced against the Technical College teaching art but following an invitation to join an Advisory Committee, his feelings changed to such an extent that he wrote a strong letter regarding 'The Technical College and its Critics'. (Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 9) He lauded the achievements of the College and in particular the work of Vic Cowdroy, Eileen McGrath and Joan Morrison. The letter was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 December 1926, and the main thrust of his praise is that even though their childhoods had been overshadowed by a particularly brutal war, these young women were able to look forward with confidence and courage to a better future and, by the medium of their art, shape civilization in a positive way. His final paragraph must have stirred coals in the art world.

'And as for that general demand that has been going round of late in Art circles for a national school, that, also, like certain other movements in Australian Art has arrived a little too late. The national school is already here.'

One can partly understand Lindsay's earlier prejudice against the college. In July 1918, in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* responding to Ashton's criticism of courses’ content, Rowe had scathingly replied that it would be fatal for the technical college to redirect the training from commercial and applied art to portraiture. He maintained that if he got a Lindsay, Streeton or Lambert in his classes he would teach them to design wrought ironwork.

'A young Lindsay would leave us with the knowledge of the structural necessities of wrought iron design, and an elementary cognizance of the elements of drawing, neither of which would do him any harm.'

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177 Norman Lindsay, *Sydney Morning Herald* 18/12/1926.
But perhaps this was part of the game of attack and counter attack played frequently in newspapers in those days. Lindsay could well have been amused, secure in his self esteem.

7.5 The Kennal

Even though he didn’t teach at the College, Sir Edgar Bertram MacKennai (1863-1931) made his contribution to the history of the School when the studio he used there was named The Kennal. The Kennal is now part of the Sculpture school, and few modern students know why it is so called. Premier Lang was so impressed by MacKennai’s sculpture that he commissioned him to design The Cenotaph for Martin Place. A space was offered to him at East Sydney Technical College and it was here that the design for the plinth and the servicemen was conceived. In 1927 MacKennai returned to England where the bronze figures of a soldier and sailor were cast and then shipped to Australia in time for Anzac Day 1929. For these sculptures he was paid the amazing amount of £10,000. The working man’s average weekly wage at the time was around £3.15.0 or annually, £195.0.0.

7.6 The National Art School as Title

The Art Department of the Sydney Technical College was first referred to as the National Art School in 1928 when the National Art Students Club was formed at the College. In 1929 by Rowe called it by that name, as did Drummond in 1934. In 1935 and 1936 the name was used in the Technical College Handbook, and between 1939 and 1945 again by Medworth. From 1948 to 1961 R.L. Davies was designated Principal of the National Art School. In 1956, 1957, 1958 and 1960 through to 1974 in appeared in handbooks but not thereafter until 1985.

Other art schools have used the term 'National' in the past. The first claimant was a school formed in 1870 in Melbourne attached to the Art Gallery of Victoria, called the National Gallery School. It held this name until 1972 when it became the Victorian College of the Arts.

The concept of a National Art School in NSW grew out of the wrangling during the late 1890s for a teaching school to be attached to the Sydney Gallery, later the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Eccleston Du Faur saw such a school as a Royal Academy but this did not eventuate. The hundreds of art students in Sydney at this time wanted a National Art School and a group called the Art Students League was active and vocal but this led to nothing.
The Technical College, as a government organisation with its increasing status as a tertiary teaching institution and already administering a School of Art, grew into the title almost by default, being occasionally called the Government Art School as the only government funded art school, or the National Art School. In 1926 the Department of Technical Instruction (NSW) held an *Exhibition of Art*. In the Historical Sketch (foreword) of the catalogue there is a comment by Rowe, a designer of great ability, who soon realised that-

‘if the Art Department was to function properly, and fulfill its mission as the National Art School, it must obtain young teachers of outstanding ability.

In a monograph on Eileen McGrath, B J Waterhouse, President of the Board of Architects of NSW, talked about The Sydney Technical College, ‘in effect the National Art School of New South Wales’ as being deserving of a Travelling Scholarship for talented students. This was written five years after the School became established at East Sydney and was still designated the Art Department of the Department of Technical Instruction, NSW.

The term ‘national’ is misleading, since the School never claimed to represent the entire nation. It was just a grandiloquent title that hung in the ether from the turn of the century until it was attached to the School of Art in the Sydney Technical College. Marguerite Maloney (née Banner) who enrolled in 1929, remembers wearing a badge comprised of a maroon ground with a palette on it and in yellow the initials N.A.S for National Art School. It is not known who appropriated the title although it first appeared in the 1935 and 1936 handbooks under the heading Department of Art, when Rayner Hoff was Acting Head Lecturer. The name disappeared until 1939 for reasons unknown. There may be some clue to this in a type of grudge campaign that was waged against the Art Department by D.H. Drummond, the Minister for Public Instruction. Drummond believed there was something irregular about its financial operation. There had been complaints from the Sydney art community including Ashton who argued that the fees of $1/1/0 per term were too low. In one of Drummond’s letters of 1934 he complained that the National School of Art might force private schools out of existence because of its low fees.179

During the war years 1939 to 1945, Medworth, the Head of School decided he would again call the School the National Art School because he didn't like the term Art Department.


179 J Cobb, op. cit., p.282.
E.A. Harvey\textsuperscript{180} says that sometime in the 1960s Technical Education officially adopted the name.

Roy (L.R.) Davies, (1897-1979), taught at the School from 1947-1961, was Head of School and designated Principal of the National Art School 1948-1961.

In 1973 when the Gleeson Committee was considering the case for Colleges of Advanced Education, it noted that the 'National Art School' of the Department of Technical Education was not really a physical entity but rather, ‘a very large institution with a wide range of courses and students and an administrative body responsible for providing art courses at Technical Colleges throughout the State of NSW.’\textsuperscript{181}

The Gleeson Committee also wrote in its report, as part of Section 6.7: that ‘all Sydney District advanced education courses and students within the Fine Art Division of the National Art School become courses and students of Alexander Mackie College on 1st July, 1974...’

Its identity waned but emerged with militant fervour in 1985 when the school was yet again threatened with extinction.

7.7 Chapter Summary

The decade 1920-1930 was possibly the most difficult in the history of the art school, with constant threats to its curriculum. However, public demand for classes strengthened its position, with long waiting lists for the commercial art courses. The introduction of the Art Diploma in 1926 gave the school, often called the Government or National Art School, long-awaited prestige. Technical College Scholarships made it possible for talented students from low income families to study at the Art School. The reputation of the School was strengthened by the advocacy of people such as artist Norman Lindsay, thus enhancing its status as the National Art School. Following the Depression years, war was again looming and the number of men students decreased as conscription took effect. The following chapter gives details of life at the School during the difficult years from the early 1930s to 1945.

\textsuperscript{180} EA Harvey, op. cit., p.151.

CHAPTER 8

The effects of the Depression, WW2 and the ensuing decades on the NAS

The buoyancy of the early 1920s was extinguished by the world wide depression following the collapse of the American stock market in late 1929. In Australia unemployment reached 29% in 1932, and the country was particularly hard-hit because of its reliance on agricultural and industrial exports. Sales of luxury items like art plummeted yet the numbers of people applying for entry to art courses remained high. The growth of the commercial art market was reflected in the number of students taking these courses. The country remained in a depressed condition almost until the beginning of World War 2. It took many years for people to find jobs, repay debts, and improve their housing and domestic arrangements. This chapter describes life at the College during this time.

8.1 Student life in the Depression from the Minute Books of the Clubs

Reviewing some Minute Books from 1926 to 1944, found in the School Archives, gives a snapshot into student life at NAS during during the Depression and the early War years.

An arts students club, known as the Paintraggers Club had been formed as early as 1923 at the College. In 1926 the Club Store began as a private concern by two enterprising illustration students, Misses Purdy and Sotheran. In 1928 it was taken over by Miss Bourke and Miss Joyce Illidge. In May of 1928, Miss Gwyneth Williams was appointed secretary for the Store Committee and became a paid employee in September. An assistant was employed in the store in 1929 as it was found unsatisfactory to have students acting in a voluntary capacity. In that year the National Art Students Club was inaugurated with funds from the previous club. There were ninety-seven members listed in the minute book of the year 1932.

After 1931, painting and drawing materials, College badges, overalls and blazers with the Club badge were sold at the Store that occupied a room in the Round House. The materials supplied were to the specification of the teachers and sold at the lowest possible price. Thus, the students did not need to travel any distance or absent themselves from the College to get their equipment. Additionally, a student’s library was housed in the store, and books could be borrowed. The books were bought from profits made by store sales, and from contributions made from the profit of social events organised by the Art Students Club. Gwyneth Williams
herself advanced £100 for purchase of materials for the store, and this amount was repaid within twelve months. The store was still operating from the Round House in 1973 when the School merged with Alexander Mackie College.

At a staff meeting on 15 November 1927, it was decided that ‘certain works of the students not required for the Department’s Gallery be purchased and raffled to raise funds towards purchasing a piano or such other object as the committee decides’. There is no record of how much money was raised for this project.

At a Club meeting on 23 April 1928, it was decided that at least one dance per term should be held. Each dance had a theme, such as a Depression Dance, a Comic Strip Dance - a tradition that has persisted until modern times. Also at that meeting a motion was put for the design of a badge to which one of the students, a Mr Watts, objected on the grounds of the cost at the present time. However, on 22 May 1928 an order was given to MacDougalls for 250 badges, to be supplied at cost fee to members of the NASC. A choice of colours was suggested at the meeting on 19 June 1928. From 26 April 1934 minutes confirm that the badges were made by Amours Ltd.

The badge persisted as an identifying symbol of membership of the Club but by the 1960s was generally worn by all students. Elaine Odgers (G. 1961) has a photograph of her original badge, which has a bright red background with gold lettering. Through the efforts of lecturer Deborah Beck who located the original manufacturer, the badge has been re-produced and given to graduating students since 2005 and is being worn by teachers.

In 1930 there was a series of letters requesting a Club Room, a complaint about the lack of drinking fountains, the need for a double telephone booth, the unhealthy conditions in Building 3, and the bad state of the main pathway leading from the front office to the Art Department. The Club Room was requested because students ‘have to fill in time and are forced to sit out in the open, or else break rules and use class rooms as common rooms. We think it is a very just necessity especially during the present and past wet week.’ Ninety five names were submitted on the petition of June 27 1930. They were given a room in Building 27 to use as their Club Room. The club wanted the Art Diploma recognised by the Education Authorities as qualifying the holders for positions as teachers of art in State Schools. A draft letter said students of Dressmaking and Home Economics have already had this privilege granted.

‘The course of Art study extends over five years and is very exacting and comprehensive’.
At the meeting in June 1931 there were after dance complaints. Rowe (Lecturer in Charge) complained that people were unsuitably attired, i.e. in street clothes, and that the orchestra provided for the occasion was not up to standard. He said the Club Room was a disgraceful mess and for reasons not divulged decided to close the Club Room indefinitely. Three members were detailed to interview him regarding his reasons. At a special meeting held on 20 July 1931, Rowe said ‘he was not going to dwell on what had past but he held great confidence in the future activities of the club’ and the Club Room reopened in August.

Considerable discussion was given to the decoration of the Club Room. Mr Mannall, head teacher of the Window Display Department, kindly offered the services of some of his students to provide paints and materials. Miss Edkins (Painting No.137) submitted a colour scheme for the decoration and this was accepted. On 9 September 1931 the President reported that Mr Rowe had the colour scheme in hand and was not in favour of the one submitted by the Club. The Clubroom was painted. The Lecturer in Charge said the work had an ‘unpleasant effect’ and he gave a number of very helpful hints in room decorating.

Rowe obviously kept a stern and watchful eye on the students but did not always win in his passages of arms. For some time the students had been attempting to add amenities for student use including the latest fashion, a wireless (radio). It was recorded in the Minute Book for 1931 that on 31 October 1931 Rowe sent a very terse letter to the Club, asking -

"by whose authority was the wireless set installed in the room now used as a Club Room, who gave permission to use the College electric current for the working of the wireless set and if Club or Store funds were used for the purchase of this wireless set."

On the third of November the Secretary replied.

"No authority has been given to install a wireless set as none has been purchased for installation. Permission has not been applied for to use electric current since no extra current has been consumed. If a wireless were purchased it would be with club money."

The Dramatic Club held regular performances at the college and students participated wholeheartedly. These were deep depression days and entertainment was made and enjoyed where-ever possible. The College provided the venue for a strong social life at reasonable cost.

From the minutes of a ordinary meeting on 26 July 1932, we read that Mr Rowe had received an account from the Principal, Mr Sussmilch for some damage done to a water pipe on the occasion of the last dance. There was an unfortunate incident when some person or persons tore a pipe from the ground, causing the water to flood the grounds in the vicinity of
the Art Students Store, (cost 12s11d). The culprit was found in August, one Henry Fisher of Wool Classing. A letter was written to him asking for recompense but no reply was ever received. In August 1932 the School held a dance in aid of the Tennis Court, long since removed from the grounds. These dances and those of other schools were held on Saturday nights and tickets cost 2s6d. The funds raised by the Art Students Club were (in part) donated to the library for the purchase of books. In September 1932 the subject of a missing book *Lysistrata*, valued at twenty four guineas and donated by Norman Lindsay was raised at a meeting. It was believed to be in the hands of Mr Walters (a teacher and later acting Head of School) and it was suggested that the club should send a written request for its return. It was then said to have been given to Mr Rowe by Mr Walters. The matter was referred to Mr Hoff in September 1932. There is no mention of this book in following minutes. Was it ever returned to the library? It is not in the present collection which is to be regretted, as it was probably signed by the translator Jack Lindsay and possibly the illustrator, Norman Lindsay and its current (2009) value is approximately $800.00.

The next dance, called a "Depression Dance" was run on 17 September 1932 and tickets were 2/- each. The previous dance made a loss of £4/15/7d. It was decided that if this dance made a profit that amount was to be paid back to the club and profits above the loss would go to the Stewart Homes Fund. Official approval was given for the dance but Clause 2 of the approval stated that no intoxicating liquor was to be brought into College premises. The quotes for menus received from Miss Bishop, Sargents and other firms suggested such refreshments as sandwiches, cream cakes, cocktail frankfurts and fruit punch.

Mr Rowe, as Lecturer in Charge, felt qualified to offer assistance to the organising committee and proposed that Mrs Olga Trumper of 236 Victoria Ave., Chatswood, the widow of Victor Trumper the cricketer, could give advice on running the dance. ‘Mrs Olga Trumper had attended a number of our dances and was of the opinion that much could be done to improve them.’ He believed she had suitable experience that would assist the students. He was thanked and allocated thirty tickets for her to sell to her friends. After the event it was found she had sold only two tickets and her help had been minimal so this didn't improve relations between the students and Mr Rowe. There was a special meeting on 20 September 1932 after the dance and great discord all round. Mr Rowe was very annoyed about noise, destruction and mess which was, as previously, highly exaggerated.

After holding the position of Head of School for seven years, Rowe retired in 1933 and Rayner Hoff was appointed as Principal Teacher in the School of Sculpture and Supervisor of Studies. The range and depth of fine arts courses continued to expand.
1933 was a busy year for the students. In June of that year a petition was organised and signed by seventy-three artists including the staff of the School and 198 students and was sent to the President and Trustees of the National Art Gallery of NSW requesting that money be spent on reproductions of modern works by artists such as Monet, Van Gogh, and Cezanne. This was in response to the lamentable shortage of works of ‘the vital art movements which have taken place during the last 70 years.’ (Petition). As a result £30.0.0 was allocated to be spent on prints, ‘purchasing twenty-two reproductions of work by Cezanne, Derain, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, Signac and others.’\textsuperscript{182} Regarding the general shortage of modern works in the Gallery, in 1935 a survey by the Munn-Pitt organisation for the Carnegie Corporation showed that Australia had the fewest free libraries of English-speaking countries and that its Galleries suffered from poor financial resources.\textsuperscript{183} The National Gallery of NSW was subsequently allocated approximately £3,000 to augment its collection and this was spent wisely by J S MacDonald in remodelling an area of the basement to exhibit a collection of prints bought with some of the money.

In 1927, David Henry Drummond was appointed Minister for Public Instruction. He served until 1930 and also from 1932 to 1941. He faced the unenviable task of keeping intact an educational organisation suffering from a cumulative shortage of funds, increasing student numbers, and inadequate accommodation and buildings. Shortages of trained teachers was a critical issue. Out of these desperate circumstances, there was at least one positive outcome. In 1937 a series of lectures had been given to assist trade teachers in their classroom management. Mr W J Weedon produced the first course to cover Educational Psychology, Motivation, Learning and Memory, Discipline and Class Management.\textsuperscript{184} By 1939 a more comprehensive course had evolved and in 1941 a teacher training committee was formed and the first lecturer in Technical Education was appointed at Sydney Teachers College.

Added to Drummond's other problems were constant complaints from country colleges that felt ignored and neglected. He had huge difficulties acquiring sufficient finance to fund the Technical system and was seeking ways to streamline an organisation, which by its very size, must have had inherent inefficiencies. It is difficult to compare values seventy years later but at that time his budget allowed 1s 5d per head for Technical students, when school students were costed at £1/15/5 that is, twenty five times more than his Technical College.

\textsuperscript{182} E Chanin & S Miller, Degenerates and perverts: the 1939 Herald exhibition of French and British contemporary art, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, Victoria, 2005, p.123.

\textsuperscript{183} ibid., p.111.

\textsuperscript{184} J Cobb, op. cit., p.319.
students. Drummond established several commissions to investigate different aspects of the education systems, and in 1933 three commissioners were appointed to investigate the technical education system in NSW. Nangle was a member of this committee, established as a result of his complaints that technical education was constantly under financed. There was dissatisfaction regarding funding for technical education overall between 1924 and 1933 but Drummond believed that the Art Department at the College was operating if not illegally, then deviously. An important factor that seemed not to have entered into this contretemps was that the College was offering Diplomas of Art from 1926, giving well-respected certificate accreditation after three years of intense tuition. In 1934 the College had 1,439 trade and fine art students enrolled and private schools may well have felt they were missing out on fees. Art teachers in the private sector who were not given industry recognition, complained that 'Tech' fees were too low and would lead to them losing students. (Ashton’s Sydney Art School was charging £9/9/0 per year at the time.) These laments were apparently given credence and contributed to the rise in ‘Tech’ fees to match those charged by private Art Schools. Drummond's mistrust of the Art Department led him to agree wholeheartedly with the private sector. He wrote that the National Art School showed all the defects of an institution that had grown without proper planning or organisation.

'It would be a calamity if a National School of Art were so conducted, having regard for the cost of instruction, as to compel private schools to go out of existence.'

A Special Meeting of the Art Students Club was held on 29 November 1933 and a Protest Committee formed, headed by E M Osborn. The object of this meeting was to organise an opposing body of students to act on behalf of day students who would be affected by the Minister of Education's proposed increase in Art Course fees from £3/3/0 per year to £15/15/0 per year. This would mean that Art School fees would be three times higher than those for other courses in the Technical College. Naturally the students responded with horror to the suggestion of a rise in fees. In response to a circular issued on 29 November 1933, thirty nine students stated they could not pay more, one was able to pay more and ten would pay from £2/2/0 to £9/9/0 if necessary, but not willingly. There were 240 full-time students and 457 evening students. Miss Williams (a teacher) said that the best students of the past ten years were the children of comparatively poor parents. Thirty-two city firms aligned themselves with the Student Protest Group.

\[185\] J Cobb, op. cit., p.283.

\[186\] Ibid., p.282. [Note by Drummond, 1/2/1934, in UNE Archives]

\[187\] Ibid.,p.287.
In the submission the Commercial Art Section stated that ‘the Technical College is the only school which admits solely on merit by general exam and provides a full art training to suit commercial requirements,’ and that the careers of 240 students would be jeopardised if the fee rise went ahead.

John Young, the proprietor of the Macquarie Galleries, was a strong supporter of a free art school, and had an energetic correspondence with Ashton in the newspaper. His daughter Beryl was a sculpture student at ESTC. In December 1933 when the fees rose 500%, Young resisted immediately. He wrote a strong and emotional letter to the Minister for Education. (Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 10) Unfortunately this was of no avail in the fight against the fee rise.

8.2 Graduation Figures, Fees and Student Achievements

From 1930 to 1939 when employment figures were slowly improving, most people were still effected by the depression because of their inability to overcome the backlog of financial problems. The graduation number for the decade 1930-39 was only forty four, of which three were men, (approx. 7%). These times were so bad that public servants (including art teachers) took a cut of 12½ % in pay and were grateful for employment. Through the war years 1940 to 1945 only two or three (4-5%) of the total (67) graduates were men. In the years following the war when the CRTS trainees were active (1946-56), 185 graduated of which 57 or possibly up to 59 were men (approx. 32%).

Results in handbooks do not accurately reflect the number of graduates in the next few years, since no records were published of the three-year graduates. Norm Neill in his work *Technically & Further* says that ‘by 1933 total enrolments passed the previous 1930 peak’\(^{188}\) and this included Art School figures. At the Fifth Meeting of Student Activities of the Sydney Technical College Advisory Council, 31 May 1937, the numbers of Art students was stated to be 800. This indicates that notwithstanding higher fees, students continued to seek entrance to courses. Apropos of the fee rise, Art continued to have the highest fees at £15/15/0 for three terms, to be paid in advance. The next most expensive was the Management and Public Administration Diploma at £15/0/0. Commercial Art, (Advertising) was £12/12/0 for three terms. By comparison the least expensive were Diploma Courses in other subjects ranging

\(^{188}\) N Neill, op. cit., p. 46.
from £4/0/0 to £6/0/0 in the final year. In 1953 the Art Diploma cost rose to £20/0/0, in 1955 – £24/0/0/ and in 1963 £30/0/0 but by then Accountancy cost the same as Art. (Figures are from Handbooks for the appropriate years). Since the original fee rise was a result of Ashton and other’s campaigns against the Technical College, it is interesting that the cost structure of the Art Diploma wasn't re-examined in relation to other courses that rose slowly until they matched Art.

8.3 High Achievers at ESTC

In 1934 the Commissioners could not see the usefulness of the refurbished Gaol as an educational institution. They appeared to be influenced by public opinion as to its value, i.e. the opinion of rival art schools that were still bemoaning the loss of potential students or depreciating the quality of the School's output when in fact Hoff was demonstrating that sculpture students such as Barbara Tribe, Lyndon Dadswell and Marjorie Fletcher were of world class. In 1930 a Student's Competition was announced by the Australian Watercolour Painters Society. The competition continued for four years, and those entering were mainly students from East Sydney Technical College, the Royal Art Society School, the Sydney Art School and also a group from Melbourne. In 1930 Joan Morrison (ESTC) won the Figure Subject section, Roslyn Edkins (ESTC) won the Decoration section, Eric Wilson (ESTC) the Landscape Section. In 1931 Gwynneth Stone and Delphine Stephens (both ESTC) shared the Decorative Award, in 1933 the only award given was to Betty Kopsen (ESTC, paintings missing from NAS collection), and Sheila Farquarson and Rex Julius (both ESTC) were highly commended. The Tech students showed up very well in competition. In 1930 Eileen McGrath had just been awarded a College Medal for Sculpture. On this occasion, Professor Leslie Wilkinson, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sydney said –

A striking and important feature of the Art Department at the East Sydney Technical College is the broadness of the training. A student studying art lays broad foundations and may find himself or herself in draughtsmanship, painting, design or sculpture...If any evidence of the soundness of the training system of the College were required, it is patently here. The work, though it be traditional, is individual...

Indeed, the stature of its 1935 Examining Board members, following, gives some idea of the high standards set and the reputation of the School.

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8.4 Financial Problems experienced at NAS

On the 25 November 1944, Clive Turnbull, art critic, wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that Sydney had the best artists and the worst art gallery of any major city in Australia. In the *Melbourne Herald*, 1 October 1946 he said that the East Sydney Technical College was vigorous and flourishing so the high standards appeared to be maintained into the 1940s.

Even as late as 1935, and despite public support to retain the site, the Commissioners and Drummond still believed that the Art School’s location at East Sydney was inappropriate and were investigating the feasibility of selling the Gaol, moving the students back to Ultimo and using the funds from the sale to improve facilities in the trade buildings. Their report said that ‘the gaol lacked every feature likely to inspire students with the desire for cultural improvement’.191

Commissioner Alex Hicks insisted on keeping the school as it was, and his influence prevented the move. Ultimately, the Commissioners’ report revealed that the shortage of funds over two decades, the lack of Government interest in providing adequate housing, and staffing levels were at fault, rather than the quality of teaching nor the student’s aspirations. Because of the low budgets allocated to Technical Education it had suffered more than any other educational sector. Full implementation of Drummond’s plans to improve the technical education system did not eventuate because of World War 2. One result of the report, however, was that a Principal, William R. Crisp, was finally appointed to East Sydney Technical College in 1956 to administer from the premises. It is interesting that the Technical College was controlled for almost forty years by Superintendents of the Department of Public Instruction. The first Principal at Ultimo, Mr Herbert J. Swain was not appointed until 1936.

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191 J Cobb, op. cit., p.288.
8.5 The War years and decade 1940-1949

Club membership had risen from six in the first term of 1940, to 140 in 1941 and student activities continued unabated but with more support and emphasis on wartime activities. In 1939 first aid classes were instituted. An Appeal Day was held to assist Student War Victims through the International Student Service. Funding was also needed for Prisoners of War in Australia, Interned Students, and students in Europe and China. There was a War Effort meeting in March 1942 and the main activity was netting. This activity was the construction of camouflage netting to be used by the Armed Services. The netting was hand made using twine, and was done by thousands of home bound people as their contribution to the War Effort.

An early student newspaper was called *DONK* (1940), presumably named for the donkeys or drawing horses used by students. Later newsletters were ‘*Palette*’, Vol 1, No.1, May 1959, (first editor Peter Gabelle, a first year student) followed by *The Arty Wild Oat*, (1962), and *EREBOS*, (1967).

Several special interest groups were formed including the Physical Culture Classes, the Fencing Club, and a Camera Club under the direction of Mr E Howell, a teacher. Play readings were held one night per week and dramatic performances were given at least twice a year. The Drama Scenery Painting Group provided backdrops and sets for those performances. Weekend sketch groups were popular and a sketching camp was held for five days at Norah Heads. Other social functions such as dances and theatre parties were held and one day hikes were popular. Mr Linares, (no record of whether he was a student or teacher), conducted a Swing Music Group and members from this group formed an orchestra for a term dance.

The Secretary of the NASC wrote to the Head of School saying that shower baths were needed because sporting activities were to be introduced (mainly tennis and basketball). The school buildings were inspected and No. 3 building considered satisfactory for three showers, dressing rooms and a hot water system if the old furnace was cleared away.

The club library continued to function and the Minutes of 25 June 1942 show that a letter was to be written to the Director of Education asking for a librarian to be appointed to the Art Department ‘so that students could obtain the benefit of the valuable references therein’. John Kaplan was appointed to ESTC as Librarian in 1949.
In the 1940s, holiday competitions were held and were a great success. Three prizes were given by Medworth in each of three groups. The categories were-

a) Animal or composition, birds fish insects.

b) Plants or composition, trees landscapes marine (with or without figures)

c) Portrait or beach workaday, sports, restaurants, theatre, war work.

In a report for 1942, Jack Horner, Secretary of the NASC, (John Curwen Horner, student 1940-42 and CRTS student 1946-1948), said that the year had opened with such unfavourable news in New Guinea that more than half the usual number of students both day and evening decided not to return to the Art Department and went instead to various kinds of war work. One perceived threat was the possible military invasion of the country. Lack of transport, brownouts, blackouts, and military call up all influenced class attendance. In a letter dated 22 April 1942 to the Students Club, Warrant Officer Bruce Usher appealed for books, magazines, a camp stool etc for a reading room at his camp. Harvey writes about an illustration student also called Bruce who wrote to his class from camp. In return he received twenty individual love letters from the girls students, making him famous in his Battalion. Humour played its part at the School in spite of the grim times.

The 1944 Annual Report by the Secretary, Marie Hogg, said that the NASC had a most active year. Delegates had gone to the People’s Council for Culture, Encouragement of Art Movement, International Youth Committee, Post-War Discussion Committee, the Sydney Technical College Union and the Printing Students’ Association. Applications had been made for improvements to the Life Rooms and a further report was to be compiled on disrepair to other Art Department buildings. Complaints were made regarding the Tuck Shop and Cafeteria, and a considerable improvement in the quality of the food sold was the result. Contributions were made to the Gowrie Trust Fund and the Anzac House Appeal. Goods were provided for the Technical College Stall at the Red Cross Fete held in Martin Place.

8.6 Wartime in Sydney and the Art School

Life during WW2 continued at the Art School, with the awareness that old students were now in the firing line. Roy Fluke, who studied part-time pre-war and was later a CRTS student, lost a leg in New Guinea. Robert Le Gay Brereton (born 12 September 1922 in Junee), was an active student, happily involved in extracurricular activities such as the

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192 EA Harvey, op. cit., p.145.
Dramatic Society. He enlisted 19 July 1941 aged 19, and, a Warrant Officer in the 460 Squad, was killed in air operations flying over France on 31 August 1944, just before his 22nd birthday. The Le Gay Brereton Memorial Drawing Prize was bequeathed by the Brereton family in his memory and recipients have included many National Art School students.

An immediate effect of the declaration of war was a crisis in accommodation at the Sydney Technical College. This was created by a huge increase in trainees. Apart from trade students, there were members of the services being trained to maintain equipment as well as civilians to replace tradesmen who had been conscripted. Women were also trained as ‘dilutees’, i.e. those who would learn only a small part of a trade, but enough to do repetitive tasks. Classes ran twenty four hours a day, in three different shifts and correspondence courses went to around 150,000 Australian and American service people in the Pacific.\(^{193}\)

This turmoil did not seem to penetrate ESTC to the same extent as Ultimo, although several teachers undertook correspondence work in addition to their usual classes. Dundas\(^{194}\) mentions one promising correspondence student, Able Seaman John Coburn who became a CRTS student after the war. Isabel Mackenzie, an artist who had also been the Secretary of the Fine Arts Club at Ashtons School, designed the correspondence courses for these service people. She also had considerable influence on the art curriculum for schools. Other teachers like Harvey joined the Volunteer Defence Corps and spent many hours after class each week and weekends doing their watches and military training exercises. Fire watching was a further activity for lecturers and teaching time was increased by two hours without a pay rise. Part-time teachers of call up age disappeared from the staff as well as students.

In 1925 William Dobell had been a draughtsman with Wunderlichs while he studied at night at the Ashton School. He commenced teaching at ESTC in 1939 but he and David Strachan were soon conscripted into the Civil Construction Corp as camoufleurs. James Cook (Paintings Nos. 41 & 61) worked with them as a builder’s labourer (not a camoufleur), because he had lived in Spain during the Civil War and was considered a security risk. Arthur Murch went to Slazengers as a draughtsman but both James and Arthur later became War Artists. Lyndon Dadswell was called up, injured, spent some time as a war artist then returned to teaching.

\(^{193}\) N Neill, op. cit., p.54.

\(^{194}\) B Stratton, op. cit., p.33.
The school was transformed, with air-raid shelters built in the grounds and concrete roofs covering courtyards. Harvey describes prefabricated igloos that appeared looking like huge tennis balls cut in half, with an entrance. He doesn’t state their function, but says they were an interesting challenge for the drawing classes. Other Technical Schools, Leichhardt being one of them, operated classes in such igloos. However in *Spanners, Easels and Microchips* these half domes are pictured and are captioned as air-raid shelters with a camouflaged painted surface. (p.91) They were never used as such and were dismantled after the war.

Sydney was a subdued city at that time, with coiled barbed wired on beaches, blackout cloth over windows, and little or no street lighting. Children carried air-raid bags that contained, among other useless items, a cork that was to be clenched between the teeth to prevent ear-drum damage in the event of a bomb blast. Luckier children had a torch although batteries were usually unprocurable. Adults and children were advised to hide under tables when the air-raid drill siren sounded. In many backyards, shelter trenches were dug, guaranteed to fill with rain and create after-dark hazards. Food, clothing, petrol, and essential goods were subject to strict rationing, a fact almost forgotten nowadays. Margaret Olley said she was not aware of any shortages of paints, which she usually bought at the Tech Store, occasionally buying second-hand canvases from a shop at North Sydney. Most student works of that time in the collection were painted in oil, on cardboard, and a few on inferior plywood or masonite. There are four paintings in the student collection by Olley and one attributed to Olley or Cilento. Of these one is on plywood, one on masonite, one on canvas, and two on cardboard.

The graduation numbers gave little reflection that a war had begun. The total number of female diploma holders who graduated between 1900 and 1938 was thirty-five with only two male graduates. In the years 1939 to 1945 there were seventy women and three men graduates. Again it must be stressed that records are impossible to access for the part-time and evening students who far outweighed the day art diploma students in number. Part-timers are rarely, if ever, mentioned in memoirs, yet many had illustrious careers in the commercial and cartooning world. John Endean, for instance, who worked at the *Smiths Weekly*, attended part-time classes for eight years. John Hetherington was a night student who worked at the ABC and became famous as the creator of the children’s television show *Mr Squiggle*. Later, Kevin

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195 E Harvey p.161, undated.
Connor also attended evening classes. The teacher trainee students performed creditably but until 1969 no mention was made of them in the Annual Handbook.

Harvey was given the last class of the week, still-life painting. It ran from 7pm to 9pm on Friday nights and became so popular that it continued for eleven years. The students formed a coherent group and after class would have supper then clean up the studio to the gratification of the watchman\textsuperscript{196}. Part-time students had equal loyalties and attended antique, life-drawing and drawing classes, taught by Douglas Dundas. Evening courses also included commercial art and lettering. The teachers had great admiration for the part-timers who would come from work to spend their evenings honing their skills. Dundas\textsuperscript{197} said he thought the evening students worked the hardest until the CRTS students began arriving.

Dundas (Head of Painting from 1938) avoided the modern teaching originating in Europe. In 1940, he taught design with Eric Wilson, and he admitted difficulty coping with Wilson’s ideas of expressive abstract design. Dundas complained that there were now two schools instead of the academic one, the more promising within the student group having gravitated towards Wilson. Like many Australian artists of the time, Wilson had hurried to finish training in England before war was declared in 1939. He returned feeling that Australian art was superficial and, influenced by the dire war news from England, began to take an interest in Surrealism. An important exhibition held by the Contemporary Art Society in 1940 showed abstract and surrealist work of a high standard, and a £50 prize was shared by Eric Thake and James Gleeson (an ex-NAS student). Several major artists experimented with surrealism, but Gleeson remained the major exponent. Smith comments: ‘What links Gleeson with the Surrealists is the spirit of defeatism and pessimism that belongs to the romantic gloom of the nineteenth century and the fatalism of Greek tragedy’,\textsuperscript{198} a morbid attitude that he and Wilson shared, induced by world events.

Frank Medworth, Head of School from 1939 to 1947, had a broad and sympathetic knowledge of contemporary movements and Olley thought that his teaching was distinctive and drawing classes inspirational. Like Harvey, Dundas thought Medworth was difficult, erratic and abrasive at times, but he rejuvenated the position of Head of School. Olley made comments on other teachers - Badham taught perspective and told students, ‘you learn it then

\textsuperscript{196} EA Harvey op. cit., p.152.

\textsuperscript{197} B Stratton op. cit., p.33.

\textsuperscript{198} B Smith op. cit., 1979, p.225.
you throw it away’. Jean Bellette who was born in Hobart and studied in London under Meninsky, was also an inspirational and influential teacher who taught students to ‘look’, with many ex-students confirming this viewpoint. Her classes were always crowded and sculpture students joined them to expand their craft. Her own style blended classic and contemporary. Her work seemed ‘grouped as if in a classical frieze’ Bellette’s works can in some ways be compared with a painting titled *The Dancers* by Duncan Grant, (c.1910), that shows a group of figures on one plane, engaged in an archaic dance. All the teaching was along traditional lines at the Tech but with a tolerance for contemporary art. Students were warned against an isolationist mentality.

Dundas reported that there were some really bright students at the school during the war years. The only man to graduate in 1942 was Ronald Forsythe Millen (1922-1989) who showed great talent and later became a distinguished art historian and conservator. After graduation, while working in a munitions factory, he continued attending night classes in painting. A portrait of him (No. 36) is held in the collection and also three of his own paintings, Nos. 8, 9 and 217. Only two students of that era are mentioned in AGA or Germaine, being Millen and Elsie Davidson Stewart. From 1943 to 1948 some of the more outstanding graduates included Margaret Olley, Margaret Cilento, Mitty Lee Brown (Nos. 88, 89, 312, 350), Anne Wienholt, Eulalie Stagpoole and Olif Richmond.

Reviewers were generally impressed by the standards the students attained. The rich variety of lecturer’s talents undoubtedly enhanced these standards.

An ‘Under 30’s Group’ was formed in Sydney to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to the arts and to provide an opportunity for younger artists to exhibit their work. They held an exhibition in 1944 at the Education Department Gallery in Loftus Street. Showing works at this venue were Weinhold, Zander, Millen, Cilento, Rickards and Francart. (Paintings held by these artists are (Olley or Cilento) 111, (Olley) 7, 112, 114, 123, 233, (Cilento) 113, 165, 311, 340, and (Rickards) 190, 207. The reviewer, possibly Haefliger, was

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200 ibid., p.132.

201 C France (ed), *Margaret Olley*, Craftsman House, St. Leonards, NSW, 2002 p.13,

202 B Stratton, op. cit., p.33.
not entirely overwhelmed but described the exhibitors as talented and enthusiastic, also mentioning the influence of Dobell and Drysdale.\textsuperscript{203}

In December 1945, the critic, \textit{Our Art Critic} (again presumed to be Haefliger), reported favourably on an exhibition by ESTC Diploma Students held at the Education Department Gallery. Four painters, Olley, Rickard, Cilento and Joyce were represented and Nancy Wells the sculptor. (Paintings held by these students are Nos. 49, 56, 125, 247, 303, 309) The ‘Art Critic’ was impressed with ‘a large nude by Ena Joyce.’ A painting that meets this description (No. 303) is held by the National Art School, and was shown in the ‘\textit{Studio Tradition}’ exhibition toured by Manly Art Gallery. The \textit{Daily Telegraph} reviewer, writing on 6 December 1945 about the Diploma show, said- ‘Student Art Shows Variety’, praised the women’s work noting that Olley’s painting \textit{Circus} had precision and vigour,\textsuperscript{204} but argued that men were lacking in talent. William Pidgeon reviewed the Diploma Students work in 1945, also praised the women’s work commenting on the ‘complete lack of male talent’.\textsuperscript{205} This is a misleading comment. There were, in fact, no men graduates that year.

Smith believed that the 1940s were a high point in Australian painting, arguing that its isolation during wartime stimulated artistic expression in both Melbourne and Sydney. Many prominent expatriates returned from overseas to the ultimate benefit of students at ESTC. They included Bellelette, Haefliger, Murch, Thornton, Boxall, Cook, Dobell, Thornhill, Kilgour and Wilson. Smith also says ‘During the 1940s, whether serving in the Forces or not, they [the returning artists] were able to effect a radical change in the theory and practice of art in Sydney. An international outlook replaced a provincial one, while the pressures and urgencies of war brought a maturity and depth to art in Sydney that it had not experienced before.’\textsuperscript{206}

For some during the war years, living in Sydney held a certain tension and the excitement of living ‘on the edge’, which seemed to stimulate certain artists. Views on the quality of the art of the time varied. Gleeson and Wilson’s Surrealist paintings reflected their melancholia but Smith writes -

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{203} M Stewart & M Olley, op. cit., p.129.
\item \textsuperscript{204} C France, op. cit., p.15.
\item \textsuperscript{205} ibid., p.15.
\item \textsuperscript{206} B Smith. op. cit., 1945, p.228.
\end{itemize}
The work of Dobell, Drysdale, Friend and Herman gave a special quality to the art of wartime Sydney….life was absurd: but it was also exuberant and worth living. If the temper of the art was often deprecatory and sardonic, that was but an aspect of its vigour and grasp upon life...its quality is also to be found both in the elegant and yet uproarious, piquant and dexterous art of Cedric Flower and the fine, decorative and colourful work of Elaine Haxton.207

An acidic Melbournian who was part of the Heide clique had a less kindly viewpoint of Sydney artists.

Sydney art has traditionally been decorative to the point of chi-chi. A group of artists lived in a Victorian mansion in Woollahra named Merioola. We used to refer to them as the Merioo-la-la group. In my opinion Sydney art has always been and still is meretricious. Russell Drysdale is little more than a caricaturist, Lloyd Rees two hundred years too late (after Turner) and Brett Whitely (God rest his tortured soul) an overblown poseur both in art and life. John Olsen is a little better but still vastly overrated. 208

This critic might have considered Smith’s comment that ‘a vital art can only grow out of its own time and its own place’. 209 Perhaps the art world in Sydney during the war and post-war years was more cheerful than Melbourne, as represented by painters such as Vassilieff, Bergner or Tucker. It certainly had some lively moments. Mary Edwards (1894-1988) was a talented student of the Technical College and a close associate of John Young of the Macquarie Gallery. Jean Campbell called her a ‘stormy petrel’ indicating that her personality was abrasive and anti-social and ‘often in trouble’. 210 Before she was twenty-one years old, her work had been hung in Paris and the Royal Academy of London. She successfully challenged the actress Nellie Stewart for non-payment of a portrait commission. This was a landmark decision and set a precedent for artists who (like architects) were frequently unpaid when their creative product did not coincide with their client’s expectations. Campbell says she was ‘one of the most controversy-prone figures in the history of art in this country’. 211 She was selected several times to be hung in the Archibald, was a member of the Australia Watercolour Institute and exhibited with the Society of Artists and the Royal Art Society and the SWP. In 1944 in a famous court case she and John Young lost

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207 B Smith. op. cit., p.271.
208 P Jones, Art and Life, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2004, p.120.
211 ibid., p.142.
212 ibid., p.141.
their challenge to Dobell’s 1943 Archibald Award, in which Mary was a finalist. The outcome of the case had unfortunate and long-lasting effects on Edwards, Joshua Smith (the subject of the painting), Young and Dobell (all associated with ESTC). Young became disillusioned in his belief in Australian art, Edwards and Dobell retired from the public and changed direction in their work, Smith became more reclusive but continued his career as a portrait painter and won the Archibald Award the following year, 1944.

Young’s support was acknowledged by many artists. Lloyd Rees, Edmund Harvey, Isabel Mackenzie, Ethel Anderson, one of the Turramurra Group, and William Moore, author of the first general work on Australian art called *The Story of Australian Art*, were all indebted to Young for his support, both financial and intellectual.

### 8.7 Women Graduates in the late War years

During the war, art was a luxury and sales were made by known artists through established galleries. There were, of course, exceptions. Recent graduates Anne Wienholt, Mitty Lee Brown and Jocelyn Rickards received publicity in *Art and Australia* but they generally had family connections or influence behind them. Wienholt, born in Leura NSW in 1920, was a student at ESTC from 1938 to 1941. She had a solo exhibition at the Macquarie Galleries in 1944 and in the same year won the NSW Travelling Art Scholarship and moved to New York. From that time she exhibited frequently in the USA but occasionally returned to Australia for exhibitions and to visit family. All three of these students found success overseas and, except for Wienholt, rarely returned to Australia. Wienholt told me that this group of women artists and others from that time including Margaret Olley and Margaret Cilento, maintained contact throughout their lives and across several continents, a time span now exceeding sixty years.

*The Lion Tamer* was one of her submissions for the NSW Government Travelling Art Scholarship. A reproduction of this painting appeared in *Present Day Art in Australia*, edited by Sydney Ure Smith, 1945, in which Smith states that the influence of William Dobell, one of Wienholt’s teachers at the time, appears in the painting and this comment can be accepted as valid. In the background is a smaller painting featuring a horse and circus. The subject of the circus is one that students at the time were given as a composition exercise, (see also reference to Olley’s painting in *Graduation Show 1945* (p.130). This painting, today sadly missing or possibly destroyed, was completed at night at the NAS after she had finished her diploma. It was common for students to do other day or night classes after graduation.

In *Heritage, the National Women’s Art Book*, Joan Kerr writes of Paul Haefliger’s review of Wienholt’s Scholarship submission of which there was some contention. One of the
judges disagreed with the decision that she should be the winner and the Minister for Education, Mr Heffron had to make the final decision. Haefliger stated that her presentation ‘was probably the safest all-round performance...both her drawing and colour are very ordinary and her conventions arranged to a formula’. 213

Kerr comments –

How had he not noticed the curiously positioned, totally inadequate hoop (for a pussy, not a lion), a clear indication that her apparent naturalism was anything but?

To focus on technique and ignore subject, particularly when this is a mysterious, knowing nude whose cryptic smile suggests that lions are by no means the only large creatures she tames, is a safe way of handling the ambiguity inherent in subversive art. 214

However, the model, Eileen Cramer (born 1914, also Kramer) a dancer with the Bodenwieser Company, appears in paintings numbered 89 (artist unknown) 111 (by Olley or Cilento), 207 (by Rickard), and possibly 222 (artist unknown). The nickname Lion Tamer was given to this model by the students because of her lithe grace and tawny colouring. Olley describers her as very strong and looking like a lion tamer 215. I was fortunate to be able to interview Anne Wienholt on one of her regular visits to Sydney. We discussed this painting, and another one titled Queensland Family. Wienholt said that the circus painting in the background of Lion Tamer was suggested by the nickname, and sexual innuendo was not a hidden agenda, as highlighted by Kerr. The same facial expression appears in the other paintings of this model and the ‘cryptic smile’ would seem to be her habitual expression. In a letter, Wienholt told me that the hoop was only used as a prop, related to the circus painting in the background. It was also stated by Kerr that Wienholt’s father had been killed by a lion. Again this is untrue, he had been injured by a lion in Africa 216 but died in WW2 in Ethiopia. 217 The Queensland Family painting met a sad fate. Anne liked one section of it so she cut it out. Later, when the child of a housekeeper at the property in Queensland expressed interest in it, she gave this remnant away.

214 ibid., p.28-29.
215 M Stewart & M Olley, op. cit., p.94.
216 R Siemon, The eccentric Mr Wienholt, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 2005 p. 73.
217 ibid., p.308.
8.8 Merioola

Haefliger possibly knew more about Anne and her work than critics usually did about scholarship entrants. He and his wife Jean Bellette were frequent visitors to the house ‘Merioola’, where Anne, along with many artists and designers lived in the 1940s. Also living there at different times were Mitty Lee Brown, Jocelyn Rickard, Peter Kaiser, Mary Edwards, David Strachan, Justin O’Brien, and Donald Friend. Frequent visitors were Dadswell, Klippel, Dobell and other influential members of the Sydney art scene. Student visitors included Bruen Finey and Colin Brown who visited Friend in company with Guy Warren, (Painting No.174) Rod Taylor, Lindsay Churchland (Paintings Nos. 29, 194) and Fred Jessup. While some of the artist residents had a group show in 1947, Merioola was not considered a group per se. However, an exhibition held in 1986 at the Irwin Gallery that showed work by many of its habitues, including Rickard, Olley, and Wienholt, suggested that a certain coherence may have led to the use of the slightly disparaging term ‘Charm School’ by Robert Hughes.

‘Merioola’ (21 Rosemont Avenue, Woollahra) had an interesting history. It was built in 1859 for John Manning, later purchased by Arthur Allen, of Allen Allen & Hemsley, Solicitors. On his death the house was leased to Chica Lowe who actively sought artists, writers, musicians, theatre people and dancers to live there because of her philosophy that artists should live in a community in order to facilitate cross cultural fertilisation of their talents. The Ballroom, scene of many memorable parties in Chica Lowe’s time, was added to Merioola in 1912. It was 18.3m x 9.15m and had walls of white lattice work and banks of hydrangeas and palms on each side. Dozens of hanging baskets of ferns and begonias were grown in the greenhouse for decoration.218 One big party was held there in 1920 which was attended by Edward Prince of Wales. Daniel Thomas219 mentions that Grace Cossington Smith attended a ball given for the Prince of Wales and this could well have been the same ball. After Merioola was demolished, Chica Lowe leased Elizabeth Bay House where Ann Thompson, Elaine Haxton and Wallace Thornton later lived as boarders. This house had been home to many artists for a long time before its acquisition by the National Trust. One of the first was Sir John Longstaff in the late 1920s.

Margaret Cilento went to New York with her family after her graduation, where friends Anne Wienholt and Elaine Haxton had already established themselves. She spent several

218 M Gifford, I can hear the horses, Methuen-Haynes, North Ryde, 1983. p.19.
219 D Thomas, Grace Cossington Smith, exhibition catalogue (Sydney, 1973)
years there then went to London and France. She joined Olley at Mitty Lee Brown’s rented farmhouse in Cassis. They were visited by Fred Jessup, David Strachan and Ronald Millen who were also based in France. In July 1951 Cilento returned to Brisbane but her work was never appreciated as well there as it had been overseas where she held several solo exhibitions. In 1983 a retrospective exhibition of her work, curated by Nancy Underhill, was held in Brisbane and an appreciation grew of her distinctive style. She was another woman, like Clarice Beckett and Yvonne Audette, who had developed outside the usual Australian landscape or realist portrait tradition. Yvonne Audette (born 1930) studied at the Ashton School, East Sydney Technical College and the Orban School between 1948 and 1951. Because of the lack of records it is not known precisely which year/s she attended the Technical College, but teachers such as Passmore, Crowley, Frank Hinder, Murch and Dobell taught there at that time and may have influenced her abstractionism.

### 8.9 Models for life classes at ESTC

Mention should be made of the many models who posed at the School for the life and portrait classes. This list is inconclusive, as the names were gained from sparse records and notes on student paintings. I am indebted to Edna McKenzie for the descriptive comments.
Amber (1930s)
Anderson, Mrs (Painting No. 37)
Armstrong, Mr
Bass, Tom (prior to becoming a student)
(Blackman, author) Barbara Patterson (Possibly Painting No. 304)
Bolton, Charity (Possibly paintings Nos. 2, 217)
Boyd, David (brother of Guy Boyd)
Claux, Moira (a dancer with the Bodenwieser Ballet Company and sister of Eugene Claux, a student at ESTC)
Cramer, Eileen (a dancer with the Bodenwieser Ballet Company who introduced Roland Robinson to modelling) (Paintings Nos. 89, 111, 207, possibly 222) This model was mentioned by Olley and Weinholt.
Docker, Eve Mrs, (Paintings Nos. 4, 24, 25, 132, 229)
Downes, Dawn (dark hair, blue eyes),
du Cressel, Kraus Mr (aristocratic)
Flowers, Mr (Possibly an older male model called Frank (also named Droopy Drawers because of his knitted codpiece).
Ford, Frank
Greene, Mr and Mrs
Hayes, Valery (Painting No. 33)
Hobson, Miss (Mentioned by Olley because her thighs flowed over the seat. She was in demand by sculptors)
Joass, Gwen (a fencer)
Kruder, Lucy (a poetic face)
Lena (very thin)
Mitchell, Frankie (b.1922, a model and friend of Olley, later a dressmaker in Queen St Woollahra.
Molly (1930/40s)
Morgan, Miss (Petite with a velvet ribbon with a cameo around her neck)
Norton, Rosaleen (so called witch of Kings Cross and artist)
Page, Mrs (Anatomy special)
Pinniger, Gretel (Madam Lash)
Prouse, Mr (Paintings Nos. 32, 149)
Rickards, Jocelyn (a student), (Paintings Nos. 19, 233, 38, 88)
Robinson, Roland (dancer with the Kirsova Company and author) (Painting No. 244, possibly 122, 389)
Roxon, Lilian (writer) (Paintings Nos. 3, 29, 91, 150, 241 possibly 103)
Scalone, Naomi (Painting No. 140a)
Scott, Monica (fulsome)
Sheldon, Jan
Smith, Frances (Paintings Nos. 139, 142)
Spencer, Iris (Mrs Dennis)
Taylor, Rod (Student later Actor)
Upton, Margot (Painting No. 15)
Whyte, Frank (dancer, doyen of models according to EA Harvey)
Willan, Barbara (Painting No. 147a)
Young, Rita (famous model of Norman Lindsay) (Painting No. 119)
Wheeler, Patricia
Yela (Helen) (Paintings Nos. 264 (2nd series) 390)
Little is known about most of their subsequent careers with some exceptions. Rita Young became famous as a model for Norman Lindsay. Roland Robinson became a well known Australian author. Rosaleen Norton, a one-time student gained notoriety as the Witch of Kings Cross. Gretal Pinniger became known as Madam Lash. Rod Taylor went to Hollywood and became an actor. Eileen Cramer was a professional dancer and costume designer. She toured Australia, NZ, South Africa and India with the Bodenwieser Ballet Company and later moved to America where she continued her dancing career.

Lilian Roxon was born Liliana Ropschitz in 1932 in Alassio on the Italian Riviera of Polish parents. The family migrated to Australia because of anti-Semitism. Lilian had a strong character and outspoken personality, was precocious, lively, very witty and academically brilliant. She moved from Brisbane to Sydney to study at the University of Sydney in March 1949 at seventeen years old and took a part-time job as a life model at ESTC saying it was different from restaurant waiting and shop assisting. She also introduced Barbara Blackman (Patterson) to life modelling. Margaret Fink described her as strikingly beautiful, having ‘phenomenal beauty, gentle flawless olive complexion with just a blush on those fantastic cheeks’ which can be seen in Tony Tuckson’s portrait of her, painting No. 150. She mixed with followers of John Anderson, the Challis Professor of Philosophy and became a member of the ‘Sydney Libertarions’ and ‘The Push’. She moved to New York and her profession culminated in the production of her ‘Encyclopaedia of Rock’. She was the subject of a documentary produced in August 2010 and her life has been well recorded. A film is to be made based partly on the book ‘Lilian Roxon: Mother of Rock’ by Robert Milliken. Regrettably she died at the young age of forty-one from a massive asthma attack. No doubt there are many other interesting tales about the models of the Art School who contributed significantly to the education of the young artists.

8.10 Post-war Art

It was James Montgomery Cant (1911-1982), an ESTC student in the 1920s, who in March 1945 ‘proposed a Studio of Realist Art’\textsuperscript{220} (SORA) as a school and artists centre. SORA’s aim was ‘to strive for the wider use of art in everyday life, and especially for its use in all public and community buildings such as schools, hospitals, town halls, community centres, etc. in the form of murals, sculpture and easel paintings’.\textsuperscript{221}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{220} B Smith, op. cit., 1945, p.238.
\textsuperscript{221} H McQueen, p.72, 1979 (quotes from SORA Bulletin August 1947).
\end{flushleft}
Some of the original members included Hal Missingham, Dora Chapman, Roy Dalgarno, and Roderick Shaw (an ESTC graduate) but according to Smith they did not achieve the same emotional depth as the Melbourne realist art painters, largely ‘avoiding direct political comment’. He says the post-war years did not favour a realistic approach to art, as in social realism. Like women’s fashion, art developed a softer, more sensuous look. Austerity gave way to post-war luxury and similarly the fashion in painting often became lush or neo-romantic (labelled Charm School by Hughes). A similar reaction had occurred in Victoria as the Heidelberg school moved into its later phase of painting when ‘they began to idealise rather than to see. The hard edge of reality was softened by romance.’  

The Sydney Group (1945 to the early 1950s) became more prominent in NSW and since many of its members were teachers at the NAS, students inevitably absorbed their influence. Several allegorical and other romantic paintings in the student collection point to this (for instance, No.167 by Don Mitchell), showing the influence of teachers such as John Passmore, Eric Wilson, Wallace Thornton, or David Strachan. (Other paintings held by Mitchell are Nos. 148, 167 & 196).

Jean Bellette, Lyndon Dadswell, Godfrey Miller, William Dobell and Robert Klippel as teachers influenced students to a greater or lesser degree, some certainly in the abstract genre. Coinciding with his appointment to the staff of NAS, Dobell’s work took on a greater richness. As Smith says, ‘his paintings often achieved a jewel-like surface... a newly-found elegance began to appear in his first portrait commissions’.  

This change in his work culminated in the 1948 Archibald Prize winning portrait of Margaret Olley, which was opulent, billowing and romantic; different from his earlier more realistic paintings. Olley was also painted by Drysdale, Friend, Kevin Connor, Fairweather, Brian Westwood, Haxton, Mona Drying and others, all of whom saw her differently. Smith argued that ‘Apart from Dobell, Australia produced during the 1940s one other portrait painter of note in the Tasmanian, Jack Carington Smith, who developed a personal style of refined distinction from a grey, tonal, neo-Whistlerian manner.’  

Jack Carington Smith studied at the NAS part-time in 1925 and later in 1936. His list of awards is impressive. In 1936 he won the NSW Travelling Art Scholarship, (the first part-time night student to do so), in 1949 the Sulman, in 1955 the Women's Weekly Portrait Prize,
in 1963 the Archibald, in 1966 the Helena Rubenstein Portrait Prize, in 1969 the Charles Lloyd Jones Memorial Prize and many others. (His painting No. 42a is held in the student collection).

Smith is scathing about the state of Australian art during the post-war decade, citing the lack of serious art publication, the influence of American abstractionism, the lack of maturing artists caused (he believed) by the few numbers trained during war time. He also saw the ‘Friends’ of various galleries as contributing on the one hand, to widening public appreciation but on the other, making art the background to hats and gossip. Not least, he deplored the standards of criticism in newspapers, written ‘for the most part by aging painters soured by lack of recognition or very vocal young ones clamouring for it’.

His comments are similar to those of Lloyd Rees who, in 1924, said that ‘the art was getting lost under a welter of women’s hats’. The number of art prizes offered increased greatly in the 1940s and 1950s, not only from large organisations but local councils across Australia, the winning painting usually being acquired by the council of the region. Missingham believes that these awards raised the status of artists in society. The system also led to strengthening of town bonds, similar to the days of the working men’s schools. As exhibitions became more frequent, local artists were energised to exhibit their works and Friends of the Gallery groups were formed, leading to a more active social life.

8.11 The Macquarie Gallery and John Young

The Macquarie Gallery was established in April 1925 by John Young and Basil Burdett, first located at 24 Bond Street then later at ‘Strathkyle’ 19 Bligh Street. The Gallery was named for Governor Macquarie, an early patron of art in the colony. This Gallery introduced a new system of art sales when one or perhaps a small group of artists showed their work and its policy was to have a new exhibition every fortnight. Two early exhibitors were Norman Carter and Fred Leist, both teachers at ESTC. As other Galleries opened, the Society of Artists Annual sale of works diminished and eventually ceased. ‘The Grosvenor


226 N Underhill, op. cit., p.44.
and Macquarie Galleries now provided real alternative exhibition spaces for artists, including non members who also used the Society.\textsuperscript{227}

Art became an unnecessary luxury as the Depression increased in the late 1920s but Young continued to promote new artists. Douglas Dundas had his first one man show at Macquarie in 1929, as did Dorothy Thornhill. Young took up the cause of the modernists with a vengeance (Underhill p. 32) and showed traditional artists as well as contemporary but made very little profit from his shows during the depression. In the mid to late 1930s Geoff Townshend, Dundas and Medworth also showed at the Macquarie. Rachel Roxborough, a fellow student at ESTC of Young’s daughter was an early assistant at the gallery. Roxborough continued her art studies overseas, and after returning to Australia wrote numerous books about Colonial Architecture.

Young was unusual in that he believed in the principle of droit de suite, then unknown, which meant that an artist retained a commercial interest in the work. In 1920 he paid Tom Roberts a sum of money, maintaining that the artist should receive a percentage on the resale of his works.\textsuperscript{228} In 1938 he was awarded the Society of Artists Medal for his services to Australian art, in both good times and bad. His managerial role at the Macquarie Gallery, which raised the standard of art in Sydney, was also acknowledged. He retired from the Gallery the same month that he received the medal and Treania Smith (an ESTC student of sculpture) and Lucy Swanton took over the management. Young continued his restoration work until his health deteriorated.

Commercial galleries, such as Rudy Komon’s, Barry Stern’s and Terry Clune’s, opened in the 1950s and increased to more than a dozen by the 1960s. The affluence of these decades led to increased spending on arts, to the benefit of artists attached to good commercial galleries. By then the Society of Artists exhibitions did not have the pulling power of the past. By 1962, it reported a decline of interest in the group exhibitions and poor sales figures. In 1964 it was decided to close the Society down. An alternative gallery system existed that supported artists who were not generally accepted by the larger commercial galleries. Large retail outlets like David Jones and Anthony Horderns, Prouds the Jewellers, John Sands and Angus and Robertson and other book and paper merchants held regular exhibitions. They made this practice feasible by drawing good numbers of people off the street without extensive advertising.

\textsuperscript{227} N Underhill, op. cit., p.116.

Since Smith’s statements in 1962 that ‘culture’ had become entwined with ‘gracious living’, the major galleries have capitalised on this perceived pairing and introduced complementary events such as musical soirees, lecture series, children’s events and popular blockbuster exhibitions designed to bring in the dollars. In short, they have used the advertising machine to draw crowds. The high turnstile figures show that even if the viewer doesn’t have the penetrating vision of a professional critic, he or she, (but usually she) has embraced art as a spectator event, which is precisely what art has always been.

8.12 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed student life at the school in the depression and war years. Life was simple and pleasures were inexpensive. Rayner Hoff was appointed as Head of School and the reputation of the sculpture school escalated. Through both decades, the majority of students were women. Drummond was suspicious of the management of the school and applied pressure to raise the fees but this did not deter student intake. The oppressive war-time atmosphere of Sydney seemed to act as a stimulus to artists and students alike. John Young of the Macquarie Gallery displayed a sincere interest in artists and also the National Art School. The last years of the war produced a talented group of women students, some of whom were connected to the house ‘Merioola’, a hothouse of talented and cultured professionals. These were the last years that the numbers of women students exceeded that of men. As the war came to an end the influx of CRTS students began, including some who had been transported from England as aliens. I will turn to a couple of these students in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 9

Dunera Internees and their Connection to ESTC

This chapter considers some students and artists from overseas countries, who were interned in Australia during the war years, and contributed to the intellectual enrichment of CRTS students during their training period. They are Klaus Friedeberger (Paintings Nos. 85, 86, 87, 173, 327, 377, 378, 379, 380, 382, 383, 384), Fred Schonbach (Paintings Nos. 47a, 47b), and Peter Kaiser, a teacher at NAS in the late 1940s. Because of their first-hand experience of major European galleries they were able to give knowledgeable insights on pre-war artists and movements. This added stimulus to class group discussions. Their arrival in Australia was caused because of a British panic regarding so-called enemy aliens whom they requested be sent to colonial countries. Australia agreed to accept a group of these men.

9.1 Internees sent aboard the Dunera for transportation to Australia

Some information in the following section was gathered from reading The Dunera Internees, (B Patkin), The Dunera Scandal, (C Pearl), Fred Lowen: Dunera Boy, Furniture Designer, Artist, (F Lowen), and numerous internet articles.

By the beginning of WW2, around 4,000 refugees from Austria and Germany, approximately 80% of them escaping from Jewish persecution, made their way to Britain. Many were waiting for visas to other countries, mainly the USA. Originally they were treated sympathetically but as the war intensified, attitudes changed. British authorities decided they were a financial burden in spite of the fact that most were maintained by Jewish refugee organisations. Countries within the Commonwealth were approached to accept the custody of a great number of them. In 1940 (Britain's darkest hour), a roundup was initiated of refugees suspected of Nazi sympathies, in secret raids and often at gunpoint. They were all interned in camps in spite of the fact that many had lived in England for years, and some were waiting to be called up into the forces. Almost all of them were C class internees, that is, those considered low risk, neither hostile nor enemies.

In early July, the Arandora Star with the first batch of internees, was torpedoed on the way to Canada and sank off Ireland. Some survivors of this tragedy were attached to the second group of 2,542 who sailed for Australia on 7 July 1940 on the Dunera. Among those deported were many of of Europe’s intelligentsia, artists, musicians, actors, scientists, lawyers and doctors. The ship was not only overcrowded, but the crew subjected the passengers to brutality, theft, and semi-starvation. The Captain, Colonel Scott, condoned these actions and treatment of the men was always below the standards of the Geneva Convention. Lieutenant Brooks, the medical officer and some of his assistants pressed for better conditions but made little headway. The ship arrived in Melbourne on 3 September 1940 and Refugee Council representatives were appalled by the condition of the men and the stories of their ill treatment. Five hundred and forty five men disembarked and were sent to a prison camp at Tatura. The ship departed the next day and arrived in Sydney Harbour on 6 September 1940 where they were met by fully armed files of soldiers. Four trains took the internees to Hay, 750 kms west of Sydney, where a camp had been prepared to receive them. Some detainees reported that they were grateful and touched by the friendliness of the Australian soldiers and the way they were offered food, drink and cigarettes on the journey. Once settled in, the internees organised a constitution and a system of self-government. Religious groups formed, civic amenities, such as banks, workshops and a camp newspaper were established and an unofficial university was set up. Those who were well educated had no hesitation about sharing their knowledge and skills. Every conceivable subject was offered including fourteen language classes. Drawing and printmaking classes were popular, the subject matter being largely ‘drawn from the internees surroundings’ and was often ‘imposed onto the barren Australian landscape’. Ludwig Kirschfeld-Mack ran a colour theory course and a class on monoprints, a process that he had explored with Paul Klee. Two of his students were Klaus Friedeberger (Paintings Nos. 85, 86, 87, 173, 327, 377, 378, 379, 380, 382, 383, 384) and Fred Schonbach, (Paintings Nos. 47a, 47b), both artists, although Friedeberger had little formal training. Schonbach produced a series of drawings of life in the camp, later reproduced by Schonbach Graphics. A class was held by Hein Helroth, who was interested in Surrealism and Cubism. He taught drawing from the model (quick studies) and basic design exercises, which would have been advantageous to Klaus and Fred when they commenced study at ESTC. Klaus designed posters that show a strong sense of graphic layout and worked on set

232 C Pearl, The Dunera Scandal, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, NSW, c.1983, p.45.  
and stage designs for camp performances. Keaney says that Friedeberger ‘was to leave the camps with a large group of works relating to his experiences, as well as knowledge of techniques’. One student painting by Schonbach, (No. 47a, held by the NAS), shows a man having his case taken by a uniformed soldier on a wharf. It can be reasonably conjectured that this is a representation of boarding the Dunera and having possessions searched and confiscated and as such, would be a very rare artistic record of the event. Another work (No. 47b) held by the NAS is an enlargement of painting No. 47a, ruled up to serve as a guide for a mural painting.

Conditions in Hay in summer would have been excruciating to people of northern hemisphere descent, 43° Celsius day after day, blinding dust storms, bare parched desert all around. The only visual relief was the trees marking the line of the Murrumbidgee in the distance. Added to the physical problems were psychological and emotional problems of men unable to contact their loved ones and the indignity of unfair internment. Several investigations followed and various aid groups did what they could to mitigate the misery in the camp but conditions didn't improve. Constitutional law and indifference in both England and Australia impeded a quick solution. The inmates used their great combined intelligence to survive the ordeal, even inventing their own monetary system, which precipitated a visit by the Criminal Investigation Bureau.

In early 1941, a court of inquiry was instigated by the deportees, into the allegations of the behaviour of the ships crew, but the findings were not disclosed and a 100 year ban was placed on the files. However, a court martial was held and Captain Scott was found guilty on one charge and reprimanded. Senior Provost Sergeant Helliwell, charged with four assaults pleaded not guilty and was found guilty only of disobeying orders and was reprimanded. Acting Regimental Sergeant Major Bowles was found guilty on only two charges and was given twelve months in prison and dismissed from the army. Some members of the House of Commons commented that the Court Marshall was a hush up.

Following the intervention of Major Julius Layton, a very experienced administrator of refugee organisations, approximately 800 internees returned to England from June 1941 to January 1943. Forty seven were killed by enemy action on the return journey. The British government agreed to pay some compensation to the internees and Layton interviewed and arranged payment, which amounted to £35,000 in total. Those still in Australia were relocated to Tatura in Victoria where conditions and the weather were slightly better, although they were still kept behind barbed wire. Schools were again set up. In May of 1943 the Tatura

camp produced the Christmas Revue, called Sergeant Snow White. (Vol. 2. Appendix 9, Fig. 11). Fred Schonbach and Klaus Friedeberger were among the set designers. Hirschfeld Mack was released in 1942 and became art master at Geelong Grammar School. One of the many boys he inspired was Daniel Thomas, renowned art critic and curator of Australian art.

In October 1941 a note of sanity sounded when Francis Forde, the Army Minister, raised five points regarding the plight of those still in camps. One of them was 'the utility of those released'. With the entry of Japan to the war, more men were needed at the various fronts and it was perceived that internees could be useful as labour units in non military service. Some men were made available to the Allied Works Council, not a sympathetic or tolerant body, and instances of victimisation were widely reported. Others more fortunate joined the 8th Employment Company under the command of Captain Broughton who gained the respect and affection of his troops. In this group were Erwin Fabian, Fred Schonbach, Klaus Friedeberger and Bim Meier, all artists. By 1944, when some of the internees had served for over two years in the 8th Employment Company, selected applicants were approved to remain permanently in Australia. Many groups challenged this approval mostly on xenophobic grounds. After a protracted struggle, twenty one men were granted the status of ex-servicemen and consequently became eligible for Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme benefits of training and allowances. Remarkably, two of the internees, Fred Schonbach and Klaus Friedeberger found themselves together in the same class at ESTC, studying art. They both became successful in their careers, Schonbach later returning to England and Friedeberger moving to New York. Another was Peter Kaiser, who became a teacher at the College in the 1940s although in the 1950s he and his wife moved to France.

9.2 Chapter Summary

Australia was ultimately the richer for those of the Dunera who chose to stay here. Ludwig Herschfeld Mack, who taught art in both detention centres, was offered a position as Art Master at the Geelong Grammar School in Victoria where he was a positive influence for almost two decades. Numerous others enriched the post-war cultural development of this country. It is hoped that Schonbach and Friedeberger regained some of their stolen youth in their student years at ESTC, where they continued the art training begun in the detention camp at Hay.
CHAPTER 10

The Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme

In Australia, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) had its precedent in the Repatriation Training Scheme (RTS) which had been put into effect following WW1. While not entirely successful, the RTS provided re-training assistance for ex-service people and was a held up as model for the CRTS. The criteria for eligibility was modeled on the RTS, with additional clauses. Nangle foresaw that the largest demand for retraining would be in the technical trades and was able to pre-empt many problems. Art was not mentioned as an eligible course but many hundreds studied fine, commercial and technical arts through the Technical Education system. In this chapter I use information gathered through questionnaires and interviews with former ESTC art students to define the difficulties they encountered, and they way the CRTS students responded to their vastly different new lives as ex-service people.

10.1 Eligibility for Retraining under previous Government Schemes

A scheme for eligibility for retraining had already been established in Australia. As far back as 1916, the head teacher of Dressmaking at Sydney Technical College made a request to James Nangle that ex-servicemen and their dependants be admitted free to technical college classes.\(^{235}\) Nangle passed the suggestion to the College, which acceded. A small number was in training by mid 1917. The second group of service-people to become eligible were those who were prevented by disabilities from re-entering their occupations or from continuing training in courses they had already commenced and later, those who were too young on entry to the war to have trained for any occupation. The Vocational Training Committee, including some medical officers and with Nangle as Chairman had no statutory authority and little experience. For guidelines they used overseas examples and (in part) post-Boer War experience of pensions and assistance to the disabled. Nangle foresaw the role of Technical Education in rehabilitation and the requirements of teachers, accommodation and finance. In March 1919 he was appointed Superintendent of Technical Training and National Workshops.

\(^{235}\) J Cobb, op. cit., p.217.
Prime Minister Barton sent him a telegram that reflected the confidence held in him…’we will give you practically a free hand’

Cobb provides a brief overview of his character.

He had by 1919 amassed 30 years association with technical education as both student and teacher. He was a member and office holder of a number of societies including the Institute of Architects, the Sydney Architectural and Engineering Associations, the Royal Society and the Town Planning Association. He served on the University Senate, became a member of the first Board of Architects, the Sulman Prize Jury and the State Committee of the Federal Council of Scientific & Industrial Research... In 1921 he was asked to reorganise the work of the Observatory and by 1927 he was Government Astronomer.

Nangle’s management and organisation worked so well that the Counselling Unit at the College that developed out of the Retraining Scheme was used as the model for the counselling of ex-service people in WW2.

Even as late as 1918 it was not intended that retraining should apply either to the able bodied or disabled if a soldier could resume an occupation without training assistance. However, at a Conference in February 1918, the Minister for Repatriation stated that his Department wanted ‘to ensure to every returned soldier an opportunity of earning a living’.

By August 1919 the scheme had expanded to cover many thousands more of servicemen. The final eligible trainees were –

Soldiers incapacitated from following their usual occupations
Apprentices with indentures interrupted by war service
Widows without children (or widows with children under certain circumstances)
Students whose studies had been interrupted by war
Those who had enlisted under 20 years of age

Under the Repatriation Training Scheme, some entrants undertook university and diploma courses, but the majority trained in trades including the applied arts. The Commonwealth Government supplied the funding, and panels of employers and employees interviewed servicemen advising as best they could on courses that might suit them. The trainees were known as Repatriation Vocational Training Scheme Trainees, and because of

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236 J Cobb, op. cit., p.228.
237 ibid., p.216.
238 ibid., p.222.
239 ibid., p.227.
the large numbers special Trades Schools were established as annexes of the College in several places throughout Sydney. The trainees studied full-time until 40% proficient, then worked in industry, receiving the minimum award wage. A large percentage of these trainees found jobs easily on completion of their courses and the scheme was far more successful than the soldier settlement scheme. Neill states that no statistics were kept of the rate of unemployment among the trainees, but it was 'at least low enough to escape public criticism'. In fact, programs were made available for a total of 30,454 discharged personnel and in June 1926 16,777 persons (approximately 55%) were recorded as having successfully completed courses and one would assume, found jobs (these figures vary slightly from Nangle’s but are similar to his graduation rate of approximately 50%. (see page 152)

An embryonic vocational scheme had been active since after WW1, prior to the more sophisticated tests introduced by the CRTS Counselling Scheme in September 1945. What were known as the Nangle tests, used after WW1, had evolved over several years and were based on what now seems an extraordinarily naïve basis for evaluation. Nangle believed in the significance of aptitude, education and general appearance...thought phrenology offered much and also the shape of hands.

If a trade called for an ability to deal with form and colour, the shape of the head was important, and had to be full on each side of the nose and under the brows. Phrenology was a fashionable study at the time, accredited even by criminologists and it was believed that one's mental powers could be indicated by the shape of the head. In Nangle's opinion, the importance of the shape diminished as the skills required lessened. The lowest grade of worker could have a loose appearance, indefinitely shaped heads and doubtful hands...Candidates for commercial courses got off even more lightly. They might have hands of any shape they pleased.

but as Cobb also says-

Such cheerful hit or miss counseling may have been as successful as any other; the scheme was considered to have admirably matched occupations to differences in temperament, inclination and capacity, at the same time meeting the needs of established industries...

240 N Neill, op. cit., p.33.
241 J Cobb, op. cit., p.234.
242 ibid., p.234.
243 ibid., p.234.
The post-war graduation rate at the Technical College in 1918 from Nangle's Table\textsuperscript{244} showed that 14,920 graduated out of 30,358 approved applicants, and from Nangle's amended table in 1926 there were 15,353 successful students (average approximately 50%). These figures can be roughly compared with the post-WW2 graduate rate, although data collection methods may have varied. By June 1953, 322,000 service people had applied for training country-wide, 239,714 were accepted and had participated in full-time or part-time training, 113,187 had completed their courses and 9,792 were still in training. If a small percentage of these did not complete their training, the graduation rate was approximately 50%, much the same as after WW1.

This then was the background to the CRTS and a valuable framework upon which to work.

10.2 Development of the CRTS

Australia’s involvement in WW2 commenced on 3 September 1939 when it declared war on Germany and by March 1942 all males aged between eighteen and sixty were required to register for full conscription. Whether the Government optimistically considered that the war would be of short term or, alternatively, that there were some excellent long term thinkers in the Australian Government at this time, as early as 1940, the first discussions were being held regarding post-war retraining of service men and women.

Gallagher quotes a recommendation submitted to Prime Minister Menzies in 1940 following a Labour conference, which suggested all men and women should be ‘satisfactorily repatriated into industry with a minimum of unemployment and dislocation of trade’ in the period of post-war reconstruction.\textsuperscript{245}

Menzies agreed that this was a priority. Political Science had advanced to the stage of forward planning and a lesson had obviously been learned from the aftermath of WW1 when, particularly in the UK, returning personnel found that their prewar jobs had been filled and few were available for older and often incapacitated applicants. Interestingly, Henry Moore was a student of sculpture in the post-World War 1 training scheme in the UK.

If a well grounded scheme was not in place, the Government would face not only the payout of demobilisation money but also potential dole payments to a large unemployed

\textsuperscript{244} J Cobb, op. cit., p.236.

\textsuperscript{245} H Gallagher, \textit{We got a fair go: a history of the Commonwealth reconstruction training scheme 1945-1952}. Kew, Victoria, 2003, p.4.
group similar to payments made during the 1930s depression. Another group seeking employment would be the munitions workers, redundant as soon as peace was declared. War time requirements in engineering and manufacture had led to the development of new trade skills, new technologies and a greater demand for technical knowledge, but industrial growth in Australia and essential national projects, restricted for some years by wartime needs, would require a labour force with new skills. These would have to be taught as quickly as possible in order to get the country back on a peacetime footing.

The CRTS was designed for application to Australian conditions and was not modelled on similar overseas schemes such as those in Canada, New Zealand, or the UK. It should be noted that the CRTS was based on wartime powers of the Government and on the precedent set after WW1 when the Commonwealth Vocational Training Scheme and the Commonwealth Soldier's Children's Education Scheme were implemented to assist returning WW1 veterans and their families. This precedent led to the free passage of the CRTS scheme through legislation and, along with the recommendations of the Murray Report of 1957, to post-war alterations to the autonomy of universities and wide ranging changes in tertiary education over the next five decades.

From the time of Federation, the government had no obligation to provide for education under the Constitution, this being each State's responsibility, but it had made grants and provided assistance by schemes such as those above. Briefly, in 1939, government grants made up 48% of income to universities but by 1974, after the abolition of tuition fees, 90% of income came from government grants and none from state funding. The differences between the 1960s and 1970s changes, initially fueled by full employment and high levels of production and consumer confidence and those of the late 1970s, when changes were made because of a serious contraction in the economy leading to falling employment levels, high social security payments, and ultimately the re-introduction of fee payments to teaching bodies in the early 1980s, are elucidated by the following statements by Anderson and Smith. Don Anderson, a Visiting Fellow from the Centre for Continuing Education ANU, at the National Conference on the future of Higher Education Policy and Research, in Canberra December 1998 said-

the CRTS of the 40s and the Secondary Teachers Scholarship Schemes of the 50s and 60s were among the most democratising interventions in Australian University history, bringing to higher education thousands of people from sections of society never previously associated much with universities; and making sure that they graduate... Both schemes operated with a total concept of what was needed for students success. As well as dealing with obstacles to participation by potential students... preparatory education where necessary, fees, living allowances, residential
needs, tutorials and moral support was provided. The practical use that evaluation of these schemes for informing current policies should be obvious.\textsuperscript{246}

I.C. Smith, was more cynical regarding reasons for change in educational theory and practice when he said

From time to time educational historians have asserted that the nature and structure of many educational institutions have grown out of political compromise rather than from a translation into practice of a clear statement of philosophy and objectives.\textsuperscript{247}

In 1941 a Reconstruction Division was set up within the Department of Labour and National Service, which was superseded by the Department of Post-war Reconstruction when Curtin came to power as Prime Minister in October 1941. In February 1943 an advisory committee under the Hon. W J McKell was set up to co-ordinate and advise the state government on post-war reconstruction and to collaborate with Commonwealth authorities. There were political philosphic differences that appeared in debate. Menzies (not Prime Minister at this time), apparently wanted to train men and women to the position they would have held had they not served in the armed forces. But the Curtin and Chifley Labour Governments envisaged the CRTS as leading to reform in the sphere of education with benefits extending beyond the immediate needs of the trainees. In short, a man who before the war may have hoped to become a car mechanic, might now, because of his maturity, wartime experience and training, and possible personality changes, aspire to become a mechanical engineer.

Chifley had a vision of a fair and just society. He held the vision of a just society in its broadest terms and in his time achieved social security benefits for previously neglected groups such as widows, unemployed, the sick and elderly. He also nationalised the banking system, introduced immigration, free health benefits and the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Watters quotes from one of Chifley's speeches concerning full employment.

It means improving everybody's environment by the provision of decent housing, decent town and country planning, modern transport and social services. Above all, it means... the realisation of some ambitions for personal development, and the opportunity of bringing up happy, healthy, well-educated families.\textsuperscript{248}


In 1941 he was appointed Minister in charge of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. The CRTS scheme paralleled his views on full employment, social security and Australia's international economic policy. He wanted reconstruction that would allow people the chance to achieve their potential and at the same time return benefits to the community through their achievements.

On 3 April 1943 Chifley presented War Cabinet Agendum 166/43, the Minute that set out the requirements and eligibility for training. These provisions were modified over time but the basic principles remained intact. The Minute is a model of concise, clearly thought out policy in plain English without equivocation or obfuscation, using a minimum of words to achieve maximum comprehension by the listener or reader. It made quite clear his intention to rehabilitate ex-service people efficiently and expediently.

The Bill for the Constitution Alteration (Post-War Reconstruction and Democratic Rights 1944 Act' to give it its full title) was designed to give the Government full authority over-

- the reinstatement and advancement of those who have been members of the fighting services of the Commonwealth during any war and the advancement of the dependants of those members who have died or been disabled as a consequence of any war.249

as well as thirteen other items.

The Act was presented by the Attorney General Dr H V Evatt early in 1944. It was passed by an absolute majority of both houses but when put to referendum in August that year was defeated. Gallagher believes that the fear of Communism, held in much of the Western world in the second half of the twentieth century, was responsible for its defeat. The potential loss of personal freedom after so many years of wartime controls could have given rise to this attitude. Certain of the fourteen clauses, such as organised marketing of commodities, production and distribution of goods, control of overseas exchange and overseas investment may well have appeared as ‘Big Brotherhood’, but the rationalisation of other items such as uniformity of railway gauges, national works and national health were obviously necessary.

When Chifley became Prime Minister his position as Minister of Post-War Reconstruction was filled by J J Dedman who remained in charge for almost five years. Planning continued and in 1945, just twelve days after Japan's surrender, the Re-establishment and Employment Bill was proclaimed to commence and became known as the Dedman Act. The CRTS was set up under Part 3 of the Act.

Dr H C Coombs was chosen Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction in 1943. He had a background in economics, obtained a Master of Arts Degree, and won a Hackett Studentship to study overseas. In 1933 he was awarded a Ph.D from the London School of Economics for a thesis on banking. After returning to Australia in 1939, he became an economist in the Treasury in Canberra. In 1942 he was appointed to the Commonwealth Bank board and soon after became Director of Rationing. He approached his newest role with a 'nonconformist, intellectual approach'\(^{250}\) and agreed in principle with the Labor party’s dream of social reconstruction and a 'better and fairer society'. One of his main interests was the rehabilitation of disabled service men and women. Two other brilliant thinkers appointed to the CRTS were Ernest Eltham and Robert Madgwick.

Ernest Percy Eltham, born 1892, was educated at the Bendigo School of Mines and Melbourne University. He was an instructor from 1912 at the Melbourne Technical College. Between 1928 and 1934 he was Chairman of the Apprenticeship Commission of Victoria and from 1930 was chief inspector of Technical Schools in Victoria. In November 1939 he became Director of Industrial Training in the Federal Department of Labour and National Service, and was a moving force in the introduction of the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme. After the war he became Director of Technical Training in Victoria for the Department of Labour and National Service, and the foremost educational administrator of the time.

An outstanding contributor to the development of the CRTS was Lt Col (Dr) Robert Bowden Madgwick, a highly educated and well-recognised man. He was the Army representative on the Reconstruction Committee on Repatriation, Training and Placement, and Director of Education and Vocational Training in the Department of the Army. This Department established spare time study courses including Art courses for serving personnel, similar to those in the RAAF. His experience in the Army Education Service undoubtedly prevented potential teething problems and his contribution to the Inter-Departmental Advisory Committee on Reconstruction had a great influence on its structure. His viewpoint differed slightly from Menzies and Chifley. He said

> the eligibility for training …will need to be extremely wide… All men in the Army…must be given a degree of skill and training at least equal to that given during the war to the civilians; otherwise no preference or anything else will be of the slightest value, because these men will be unskilled and untrained and will not be able

\(^{250}\) H Gallagher, op. cit., p.7.
to take their places in the post-war economy. They will be competing with men and women who are skilled.\textsuperscript{251}

He was in fact saying that service people were returning to an unfamiliar world where civilians had the advantages of being trained in new technologies devised for the war effort and who already had jobs and accommodation. Ex servicemen and women would have to cope with a degree of resentment when applying for new jobs, as well as difficulties of re-adjustment, of settling into families and trying to resume friendships with those with little idea of the traumas of war.

Madgwick suggested that the committee discover the numbers in services who were skilled in various trades and professions and discover the general education and occupational histories of all personnel in the hope that this information would assist in re-establishment.\textsuperscript{252}

This was certainly a vast and optimistic undertaking, to us hardly comprehensible in the pre-computer era.

Four committees were formed to supervise the implementation of the Act.
a) The Central Reconstruction Training Committee – to co-ordinate and plan at national level.
b) Regional Reconstruction Training Committees – with executive authority within the states.
c) Industrial Committees – to advise on training and supervise trainees in industry and trade.
d) Professional Committees – to advise on professional training.

There were three main divisions of training. Professions of University standing were to be supervised by the Universities Commission, Vocations and Trades were administered by the Directorate of Industrial Training, and Rural occupations were the responsibility of the State Departments of Agriculture. Art training came under Professions of University standing and hence under the Universities Commission. Sir Robert Wallace, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney chaired an education sub-committee that was to consider the part to be played by education in Rehabilitation, the problems of post-war educational development, and

\textsuperscript{251} National Archives of Australia: Dept. of Employment and Workplace Relations, CA8921, Paper files & documents, (Series 5954/69 Items 543/3).

\textsuperscript{252} National Archives of Australia: Dept. of Employment and Workplace Relations, CA8921, Paper files & documents, (Series 5954/69 Items 543/3).
also, and most significantly, to plan for 'greater educational opportunity and the raising of the level of education generally'.

Organisation and administration problems limited early access to courses. The Scheme was planned to operate by training service people in periodic intakes but this plan was not successfully communicated and did not succeed. How would such delays have affected the unstable emotional state of the majority of returnees who would want to waste no time 'getting on' with their future? Wait time is cool-off time. The problem of delay was greater at the Technical Colleges where the greatest percentage of applicants was to be trained. The Technical Colleges were the single largest providers of training and to streamline the intake procedure, a separate CRTS Administration Unit was established at the Sydney Technical College. At the end of December 1947, the number training at this College alone was more than 38,000 of which over 10% were women. It trained 26,011 ex-service people including almost 2000 by correspondence. By May 1951 80% of all trainees who had completed or were still in training in full-time or part-time courses were enrolled at Technical Colleges. The last eight trainees finished in 1958.

There were also difficulties with unions who approached the scheme with a degree of caution. The thought of up to 990,000 service people and auxiliaries descending upon civilian life in Australia would obviously concern union members, none of whom wanted to lose job tenure after wartime years of long hard hours, basic wages and overtime payments. No doubt many recalled the depression years and would possibly imagine that the return of service people would constitute a glut on the job market. There would likely be some who resented the training of soldiers to positions equal to their own. There was certainly post-war feeling against servicemen, in part because of regulations that gave preference to ex-servicemen in employment. Civilians believed they had endured a 'hard time' and many resented what they perceived to be preferential treatment. Whatever the reason (and competition for employment was undoubtedly pre-eminent), unions wanted to restrict the numbers in training. ‘Restrictive training quotas’ meant in some cases that some training facilities were underused.

Watters suggests that this stemmed from the confusion that arose concerning the proposed training periods and staged intakes of trainees. Understandably it was not physically possible to provide facilities for the simultaneous training of all demobilised people and the

253 H Gallagher, op. cit., p.5.
254 J Watters, op. cit., p.281, Table T.
255 ibid., p.143.
numbers to be trained could only be determined by the absorptive capacity of industry once the trainees completed their basic training period. After Dr Coombs issued a statement showing why training facilities should be used to their full capacity, the situation with the unions eased slightly. He pointed out that if this did not happen, the number of skilled men required by industry in 1946, which had actually been estimated by the Industrial and Regional Committees, would not be available.

WW2 categories for eligibility of trainees differed from those after WW1. Vol. 2, Appendix 2 shows the categories of requirements for assistance post-WW2. These have been taken from Re-Establishment pamphlet; No. 1. Professional Courses at the Technical College were arranged by the Director of Industrial Training, Department of Labour and National Service and the Diploma of Art at ESTC fell into this category.

In the very few published works relating to the CRTS nothing is said about training for the arts. Painting and Sculpture are not mentioned as permissible areas of training in any documents. In the Watters thesis the word cultural is mentioned for the first and only time on page 90. Tables T and Y give breakdowns of types of training as at May 1951 (from Commonwealth year books) and neither refer to art (painting or sculpture) only Arts (as in University Arts Degrees). Emphasis was placed on training for industry.

The eligibility for part-time training was more liberal than for full-time training and included provision for those 'with a view to improving occupational status' or those who could 'satisfy the prescribed authority that a part-time course was a desirable addition'.

A problem appeared in late 1943, when it seemed that there would be insufficient trained psychologists to administer and interpret Vocational Guidance Tests, (aptitude tests). Dr. Coombs advised that the forces would delegate officers at the point of discharge to make assessments using aptitude test results as well as materials already gathered throughout service, which may or may not have been relevant for peacetime purposes. When peace arrived in 1945 it was recognised that even with two interviews the results could be less than perfect, but the situation was becoming critical as 10,000 people were expected to be tested each month, with approximately 70% of personnel still to be interviewed. In 1947 there were eighteen Vocational Guidance Officers from the Technical College, appointed to act as Selection Officers for entry to courses at the College. In spite of statements that Counsellors visited trainees and were available for consultation and would check progress, none of the CRTS Art students whom I interviewed remembered ever being approached by a Counsellor.

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256 Bulletin (CRTS (Australia)) No. 1 [1946], pps.10-11.
The vocational testing system in schools commenced in 1925 when the Vocational Guidance Association was formed in NSW. The vocational counselling system was unique to NSW. Up until that time no other state in Australia had initiated such a plan.

The Sydney Technical College had its own Vocational Guidance division. The first Vocational Guidance & Welfare Officer, Mr W J Weeden was appointed in 1936. In time his department developed into a state-wide counselling service. When Mr Weedon succeeded Dr Wyndham in the Research Office of the Education Department, Mr William O'Neil (O.A, Hon. D.Litt) (1912-1991) became Vocational and Research Officer at Sydney Technical College. He went on to a long and distinguished career at Sydney University, being appointed to the Chair of Psychology in 1940 and later as Deputy Vice Chancellor. He was considered to be one of the greatest psychologists in Australia but referred to his time in the field (as a Vocational Officer) as 'nine years exile in applied psychology'. One assumes this was a tongue-in-cheek comment.

Gallagher quotes from Change Over which said 'the lessons of the post 1914-18 war have been closely studied: men will not be placed hurriedly with little skill or experience and little prospect of success'.

Mr L M Haynes, the Acting Senior Guidance Officer at the Technical College, instituted the CRTS Counselling Scheme in 1945, adapting the testing techniques used in secondary schools to those appropriate for adults. It was found that the process would be more complex than expected because of the psychological problems found in many returned personnel and 'follow-up' procedures were instituted. The Technical College counsellors compiled case files 'containing information concerning [the applicant's] background, military and civil, interests, attitudes, capacities and emotional problems.' Unfortunately, the procedures suggested were not always adhered to as revealed to me in several interviews with ex-cRTS students, see page 173/4, possibly because of the volume of follow-ups that emerged. Bulletin No. 1 comments

In the brief four months during which the CRTS Counselling Scheme has been functioning, many and various educational, social and psychological problems have been found confronting trainees, which, if left undiagnosed, would undoubtedly have resulted in many more cases of maladjustment.

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259 Bulletin (CRTS (Australia)) No. 1 [1946] p.15.
Counsellors, responsible to the Guidance Office at Sydney Technical College, were allotted also to suburban colleges. In the Bulletin the format for assistance is given.

To ensure that the handling of the trainee during the early critical days of his training will be as scientific as possible, a case file containing information concerning his background, military and civil, interests, attitudes, capacities and emotional problems is prepared by the counsellor. Relevant information is passed on to teachers, problem cases are discussed and, if necessary, referred to the proper authorities, while each new trainee is interviewed, details of his course discussed with him and information concerning his rights and privileges under the scheme is supplied to him in circular form.260

In the pamphlet, two problems are specifically mentioned. First, the lack of adequate housing and the difficulty this causes with integration into society, and second, that of readjusting attitudes of both civilian and ex-service people. The pamphlet states, 'the attitude of the average civilian towards the ex-serviceman is not always what it should be'.

This, along with other anecdotal evidence, suggests that there was more underlying resentment than is acknowledged nowadays. The problems of the housing shortage were immense. During 1948 I knew one couple with three children under five years of age, living in a closed-in verandah at the side of a house with use of kitchen, laundry (tubs and boil up copper, no washing machine), the bathroom at specified times, and a shared outdoor WC. This was not an isolated case. In time people like this became eligible for government housing assistance, or managed to save enough for a deposit on a block of land or house, but the strain of such living must have placed extraordinary pressures on young couples, particularly if the man had been an active serviceman and had any post-war trauma. Many of them sought after hours jobs to add to their savings towards a home, adding to their domestic problems.

The sudden cessation of hostilities in August 1945 meant that there was an urgent need for accommodation for incoming students to courses in 1946. Buildings used around Sydney, requisitioned as emergency class rooms, ranged from the old Fosters Building at Ultimo, the Kogarah Courthouse and the Strand Dance Hall at Hurstville, to the Exhibition Building in Chalmers St, (later the Glaciarium and now demolished), the AWAS Barracks at Strathfield and others. All suburban branches of Colleges were packed beyond capacity. One understands the fear expressed by Departmental Assistant Secretary Percy Riddell to Minister Heffron

I cannot make the necessary provisions for the classes required for the training of demobilised service personnel…any increase in demobilisation…the position would become completely chaotic…261

261 J Cobb, op. cit., p.343.
It all happened as he said it would. Shortages of materials and labour held up the extension program and the war had caused worldwide shortages of certain tools essential to training. Some shortages can be traced back to before the depression of the 1930s. The Committee set up by the War Cabinet reviewing the requests for additional technical college accommodation identified drill halls that could be used as a solution to the general accommodation problem. Thus, Commonwealth owned relocatable buildings, formerly used as drill halls, annexes and huts in army and air force camps reappeared at Universities and Technical Colleges around Australia. After the CRTS training period ceased both these temporary buildings and the more permanent additions and extensions that had been acquired on the understanding that they would be paid for by the recipient were given by Menzies, on behalf of the Commonwealth, to the various teaching institutions. The equity in both permanent and temporary buildings and equipment on loan was waived which was a great advantage when student numbers continued to swell through the 1960s and ever more.

During the war years most young men were conscripted, leaving few able to attend art classes. If not conscripted, those left behind were drafted into war time occupations. This explains the low numbers of males enrolled at art school. But at the end of the war, the trend suddenly reversed and men equalled women in attendance. I believe there were three reasons for this. The CRTS provided the living allowance making it possible for daytime attendance rather than male art students working daytime and attending night classes; the correspondence and hobby classes provided by the Army, Navy and Air Force removed some of the stigma of effeminacy from art, making it less controversial for heterosexual young men to become artists; employment opportunities for artists in the burgeoning commercial and graphic arts sectors were increasing.

Another contributing factor may have been the journal Salt, the authorised Education Journal of the Australian Army and Air Force, first circulated September 1941. Smith comments, ‘There was widespread interest in all the arts among servicemen. Salt the fortnightly magazine of the Army Education Service did something to satisfy this interest and maintain contact between the arts and the services.’

Issued free, it was intended to help those whose education had been interrupted and to maintain their interest and progress. Lt. Col. Madgwick wrote the introductory article entitled ‘Why nobody should be scared of the word “education”.’ Requests were made for stories, poetry and articles, cartoons, sketches and photos and these were received for publication.

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many arenas of the war, groups formed to discuss the content of this little (A8 sized) journal with its blue cardboard cover, which, by modern standards looks like a home produced magazine. It seems that it was a life line to ‘back home’ and the section devoted to craft such as woodwork, leatherwork, machinery, gardening and carpentry would have given mental stimulus for future projects.

After WW2, male artists had proved their masculinity by being service men and did not need to contend against old prejudices. The increased numbers of male students at the Art School reflected a hardening of attitudes by men who had served in the war and were tough enough to state their career preferences without fear of ridicule.

10.3 CRTS and the Art School at ESTC and Strathfield

No study of the CRTS art students at ESTC and Strathfield has been made until now. As a group they had a high rate of success in their subsequent careers. To try to understand why this group was so successful I constructed a questionnaire and from the answers hoped to made some general assumptions and construct a typical profile.

I needed to identify the numbers of males and females, whether they were married or single, to find out about any early art influences they might have had, whether entry to the School was by portfolio or aptitude test, and at which level they entered the course.

Regarding money, I wanted to discover whether the living, travelling and book allowances were sufficient, how many had difficulty coping on the allowance and was this a reason for students leaving the course before completion? I also wondered how long the courses were, whether the students worked to supplement their allowances, if they had to repay any money at the end of their courses, and how difficult it was to do this. I was aware that service-people received demobilisation pay at discharge, and I wanted to know how long it took to come through, and what uses was it put to. I also wished to discover if the drop-out rate was very high.

Other questions that interested me were where they lived, whether they were capable adults or did they need direction? Regarding their student environment, I was interested to find out if the classes were very large, if there was group support and how important this was to students? Also, did they maintain contact with their friends after completing studies? How many continued with art as a career after leaving the School, which teachers were remembered and had any of them been especially influential, were also questions I needed to ask.
The Strath Art Group had been mentioned and I wanted to know how many students remembered it, if any of them had been members.

A list of students confirmed as having studied at ESTC under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme is presented as Vol. 2, Appendix 4. This list was compiled after searching through art encyclopaedias, internet, some graduation records from newspapers and College handbooks, and by word of mouth. Other sources included some material from the School Archives. I confirmed the names I found in the Australian War Memorial Records, to verify full names, date and place of birth, and when demobilised. This list is by no means conclusive. The comment ‘need other names’ means that without them that I am unable to confirm their identities in the Australian War Memorial records.

In 1947 Harvey said that the Departments of Plumbing and Dressmaking were growing but nowhere near the pace of Art. By accounts given by him and others, the Art School was straining at the seams and after the first intake an annexe was acquired at Strathfield to accommodate the second intake of students.

The first post-war year – we knew this year would be different from previous years. We had no idea it was the start of a new era. A fine new school was starting to flex its muscles. ²⁶³

The annexe at Strathfield was a two-storey Victorian mansion with large gardens, in Albert Road, once considered to be one of Sydney’s most prestigious streets. It had been used as a Training Centre for WAAFs and tin huts had been added when the Army used the building as a Cartography Section prior to being handed over to ESTC. The first CRTS class was for Commercial Art students at ESTC, taught by Harry Burton. Harvey notes that all students were returned RAAF men and had their own classroom. Paul Beadle was in charge of CRTS at the Annexe in Strathfield, Sydney, and although a large number of students there initially trained in commercial art, quite a few of them moved towards painting, with teachers such as Frank Hinder, G K Townsend and Wallace Thornton influencing them. Badham taught the first CRTS Art Class and later became head teacher in charge at the Annexe.

Beadle was generally considered to be a tolerant, compassionate and excellent teacher. Later teachers were Harold Abbott, Roy Dalgarno, John Godson, Frank Hinder, Noel Kilgour, Ron Millard and Wallace Thornton.

An art exhibition showing work by CRTS trainees was held at the David Jones Gallery, Sydney from 13-23 April 1948. Fifty eight students showed their works in oil, watercolour, pastel, drawings and sculpture. There was a total of eighty eight paintings and drawings and

²⁶³ EA Harvey, op. cit., p.180.
thirty eight sculptures. Prices ranged from three guineas to one hundred guineas. A painting by Tony Tuckson (*The Mirror*) could have been bought for twenty guineas or one by Guy Warren (*Bateman's Bay*) for eighteen guineas. The paintings were selected from 500 student works throughout the Commonwealth by Hal Missingham and Lyndon Dadswell. The catalogue of this exhibition has a foreword entitled 'Cultural Reconstruction' by Dr. Lloyd Ross, MA. LLB (Director of Public Relations, Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction), who became a foundation member of the Universities Commission in 1943. His prose is fulsome, but his sentiments sincere.

> Post-war reconstruction will be incomplete if the war time renaissance is not expanded continuously throughout our Australian and democratic way of living.  

His message was that after war comes a revival of interest in culture and the CRTS, by providing training in the arts, would have tremendous consequences for the future of Australia. He concluded with the optimistic prophecy that an appreciation of beauty and knowledge and participation in social and cultural activity would supply the solution to contemporary ills. He congratulated the students for their achievements and the promise of bettering the future. These words echo those of Norman Lindsay, mentioned in Vol. 2, Appendix 9, Fig. 9, when Lindsay talks about the contribution that the Sculpture students would make to the world after World War 1 and his prediction that they could shape civilisation in a positive way. This exhibition went to the Canberra University College from 14 June 1948 and toured throughout Australia to cities including Cairns, Launceston and Hobart.

### 10.4 The Strath Art Group

The student group at Strathfield was cohesive and in 1948 formed 'The Strath Art Group'. On the 20 October 1948 they opened an exhibition in Hyde Park, that may have been inspired by the David Jones Exhibition. Alan Waite believes they were the first artists to exhibit outdoors. The occasion was made memorable because of the excessive heat of the day,

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265 Introduction by Dr Ross in Catalogue of Exhibition of fine arts by CRTS trainees in art, David Jones Gallery, Sydney 13-23 April 1948.
followed by a sensational hail storm. The *Mirror* newspaper which appeared the following day, reported that students protected their paintings during the storm.

According to the *Sunday Herald* 30 October 1949, there were seventy-four members in the group, six of them women and five disabled ex-servicemen. Some of the known members were Alan Waite (Paintings Nos. 369, 370, 371, 373, 374, 399), John Rigby (Nos. 149, 359, 360, 361), Jon Molvig, John Coburn (Nos. 3, 357, 358), Bluey Oliver, Alan Mashford, Ivan Englund, Ivan Powell-Lewis, Cynthia Muller and Jean Weir (No. 256). Most of them exhibited as Strath Art members from 1949 to 1953.

Churcher says that Charles Doutney was initially responsible for the formation of the Strath Group, but he unfortunately died young at the age of forty-nine from chronic myeloid leukaemia. Guy Warren said that this was a great loss to the group and the loss of a fine painter.

Three paintings by Alan Waite relating to Strathfield are held in the student collection. One is titled *Strathfield Tech 1947* (No. 369) another is *Wattle and the Peppercorn Strathfield 47* (No. 370) and a third is of a teacher, Mr Godson, *Portrait of John Barclay Godson at the Annex 1947*, (No. 371). Some of the CRTS had been evening students before the war. Emmett Lynch was CRTS student who studied Commercial Art, and later became head teacher of that course.

The Strath Art Group, which lasted five years, was significant at the time and no doubt added to the confidence of those seeking to become professional artists in that it gave experience in hanging works of art, talking to clients and exposing themselves to criticism outside the hallowed halls of teaching.

**10.5 Responses to the CRTS Questionnaire and Interviews**

From the list of CRTS students I compiled, I was able to account for 35 female, 209 male and 11 either men or women students, a total of 255. These students were born between 1912 and 1923, and I found the birth places for 27 of the women and 160 of the men (total 187). I was fortunately able to interview thirteen of the original CRTS students, two further students were cited from book or internet sources, and two relatives or friends of students who have now passed away were also interviewed. This group represent roughly 6% of the total number that I identified as CRTS students. Three other people interviewed for general background information were contemporaries of the CRTS students. Not all the questions in my interviews were answered. The main reasons for this were memory loss and deafness, but the answers I received were adequate to show patterns and similarities between respondents.
Analysis of the origins of 187 of the CRTS students identified follows. This information was obtained from the WW2 Nominal Roll.

**Table 1 - Place of birth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Interstate</th>
<th>Overseas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 - Art background, entry qualifications, part-time work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you study art at school?</td>
<td>1 (art history)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you do an aptitude test for entry?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you produce a portfolio for entry?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you go in with advanced standing?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you have part-time work?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did some or most students have part-time work?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After taking the aptitude test one student was refused entry but did night classes, and was later accepted for the day course. Interestingly, this student became a reclusive, but lifelong artist with posthumous recognition of his talent. Another student was refused entrance because he was not Australian but was later accepted because of the quality of his portfolio. Bob Mitchell submitted a portfolio of drawings made in very difficult conditions, recording his life in a concentration camp. This work survived the war and was shown at the exhibition...
As mentioned previously, Harvey described the aptitude tests as ‘rough and ready’ and it is obvious that the CRTS students were given as much latitude as possible when they applied for entry. One respondent mentioned that he knew of a person without much talent who was accepted without a test, but, as mentioned elsewhere, Edna McKenzie, (Paintings Nos. 72, 280), was discouraged from undertaking the course in spite of previous studies. Students were generally committed to art as a career prior to entering the School and one transferred to art from engineering.

Of sixteen students who responded to my question, ‘did you do the 3 or 5 year course?’ I found that two had completed two years of study, five had completed the three year certificate course, one student studied for three and a half years, three students for four years and five students completed the five year diploma course.

One of the conditions of the CRTS grant was that students who studied for longer than three years had to pay fees for the extra time. Responding to the questions, ‘Did you have to repay money at the end of the course, five said yes, and four said no. To the question ‘Was it difficult to repay the money’? three said yes, but two obtained work so had less trouble doing so. One student had to repay half a year’s fees.

There were twelve responses to the question ‘How long before the demobilisation pay came through after the war?’ Eight said it came through quickly, one complained that it took a long time, and three did not remember receiving their payment. Once received, two students used it to assist in home building, and four to supplement their allowances. One student replied ‘other purposes’ but did not elaborate on this comment. The first class of RAAF Commercial Art Students studied at Darlinghurst, but succeeding intakes were divided between Darlinghurst and Strathfield because of the crowding experienced. After the mid-year exams, half of the group was accelerated to second year. It was reported that there was some resentment from those who stayed in first year. Presumably, those who went straight to second year showed evidence that they did not need the preliminary classes.

Edmund Harvey talked about the ‘over large classes’ in his document, referring to the pressures on the School because of the large intake of CRTS students. The responses to the question ‘Did the classes seem over large?’ varied, mainly because students were in a wide range of courses, either part-time or full-time. Tom Thompson (later a Teacher at the College, Paintings Nos. 17, 18, 99, 347, 348), who gave very concise answers to all questions, said that the Introductory class in 1947 in Sydney had four groups of twenty-five to thirty students,
which were large by normal standards and even more so after the CRTS students returned from Strathfield in 1950. The Strathfield complex had two sections, A and B, and each had about thirty students. One male student who was at Strathfield said there were about twenty at the beginning, including five ex-servicewomen. The classes were mixed but ‘the girls were a distraction’. Some said there were about fifteen to twenty students per class, therefore not crowded, but ‘the easels were too close together’. One replied ‘about thirty but not too big’. One said ‘twenty to thirty but plenty of room’ and three said the classes were overly large. One student who commenced in the early years of the scheme said he was in a class of about fifty. Another student said the classes were large in the beginning but ‘exams sorted this out’.

There were fifteen responses to my question - Was the living allowance sufficient?

**Table 3 - Living Allowance**

| Yes (7) | Six students lived at home or with relatives. One used her deferred pay to help out. |
| No (8)  | One who was married with children said it was totally insufficient. One used part of his allowance to assist with transport costs but was unable to cope on the allowance so discontinued studies. |

**Table 4 - Comparative figures of Basic Wage and CRTS Allowance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>CRTS Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No dependants</td>
<td>65/- (66% of basic wage 99/-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No dependants</td>
<td>55/- (56% of basic wage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married 2 or more dependants</td>
<td>105/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No dependants</td>
<td>90/- (44% of basic wage, 207/-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Dependants</td>
<td>Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No dependants</td>
<td>90/- (44% of basic wage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married 2 or more dependants</td>
<td>130/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These allowances were subject to taxation. After 1951 allowances were exempt from taxation.

Table 5 - CRTS rates in 1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Dependants</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No dependants</td>
<td>132/- (50% of basic wage 263/-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No dependants</td>
<td>132/- (50% of basic wage 263/-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married 2 or more dependants</td>
<td>176/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allowances varied according to whether the student was male, female, single, married, living at home or living independently. (See Table 4) Those who lived at home coped best, but some of the single men had difficulty even though they were living at home. One student replied strongly that it was totally insufficient for a married man with children, but Tom Bass in his book *Totem Maker*, said he was extremely happy with the allowance, even though he had a wife and children. Another student spoke of turning vegetarian to save money and shopping in Oxford Street for the previous days bread, buns and ‘specks’ (bruised fruit or vegetables). Obviously where one lived affected the allowance; one student lived at Dee Why and travelled to Strathfield each day, a distance of about 40 kms with changes from bus to train. Part of his living allowance was used to supplement his travelling costs.

From the responses I received there appeared to be a lack of information about the allowances to which students were entitled. It was difficult to establish how the materials allowance was administered. The general comment was that materials were purchased from Swains, Fox Bros, Penfolds or the College Art Store, and sometimes from two or more of
these retailers but no-one remembered if accounts were set up, or how the items were charged to their allowance. Out of twelve respondents, all knew about the book allowance.

The answers to the question, did you know about the travelling allowance, were generally vague. It did not appear to be widely known that this allowance was available. One student remembered receiving the allowance, two students knew about but did not get the allowance, three did not know about the allowance, one did not need the allowance. One student received the allowance but said it was insufficient. Obviously where one lived affected its usefulness. Nine students lived close to, or within a reasonable distance from where they were studying. Three lived quite a long way from Strathfield or East Sydney and three in the suburbs, with convenient public or private transport. One rode his bike each day.

Income

As far as income was concerned, six replied to the question, ‘What would you have done for an income without the allowance?’ One said he didn’t know, four would have worked part-time, and another worked in the holidays as well as part-time even with the allowance. Students had varied jobs, including dishwashing, display art, poster painting, cleaning, factory work, fruit picking, freelance illustrating and making art boxes.

Financial, emotional or readjustment problems

There were thirteen respondents to the question ‘Do you know if many students had financial, emotional or readjustment problems? Two said they did not know of any problems but the other eleven made insightful comments which are listed below.
Table 6 - Financial, emotional, re-adjustment problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ‘A few students had either or both of these problems’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘There were some emotionally disturbed students and some suffered from shell shock, but the teachers were tolerant and flexible with the CRTS students’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Most ex-service people had ‘wartime baggage’ even though they did not discuss it. [This response was from a student who had suffered a nervous breakdown during 1st year]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Probably everyone had emotional and readjustment problems’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Some students had problems re-establishing themselves in society’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Not many, but a few’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Other students always had financial problems and many had emotional and disability problems’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if they recalled any follow-ups by CRTS counsellors to check how well they were working, all the eleven respondents said no. The one who had experienced the nervous breakdown said quite bitterly, ‘not even after the major illness’ that precluded attendance for some time. This student further emphasised that, unlike now, there were no ‘grief counsellors’ provided. One student recalled that Dundas ‘once mentioned that people had been asking how the CRTS students were getting on’ but was not sure if this was an official enquiry. People were discharged from the armed services and left to survive as best they could. This directly contradicts the procedures set up in 1945 as mentioned on p.160 and p.161. It was intended that Counsellors were to be allotted to suburban colleges, so one would expect that a college as large as ESTC would warrant its own officer, but no student made any reference to such a person. The procedures also stated that case files would be passed on to teachers. It was mentioned (p.160) that ‘the process would be more complex than expected’ and as illustrated by the case above, post-war trauma situations could and did arise. One wonders just how many ex-service people were not re-interviewed or not provided with the help they needed.
I received eight responses to the question ‘Why do you think some students dropped out? Only three of the eight thought there were no drop-outs. The responses are listed below.

Table 7 - Why some students dropped out of courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Those who did so were unable to survive on the CRTS allowance and needed to earn a living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Couldn’t cope on the allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of income, some got jobs and continued part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After 1st term exams a lot dropped out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Few dropped out because they were highly committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some left to get married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regrettably, some good students left their courses. Students’ knowledge of the dropout rate varied, I believe, according to whether they were part-time or full-time students. Some responded that the rate was high because of lack of income, and that some students got jobs and continued to study part-time. A five-year female student thought that very few dropped-out, only a few men and one girl who left to marry. Again, this reflects which courses the students were studying. The general response indicated that the students who dropped out were unable to survive on the allowance.

**Married Students**

Fifteen people responded to the question ‘Were you married, and/or did you have any children at the time of studying?’ Nine students were single with no children, three married with no children, and four married with children. Two of those with children did not complete their course.

**How did married men cope on the allowance?**

Four of seven respondents did not have any knowledge of how the married men coped on the allowance, three were aware that they had problems and did not cope well. Among the comments made were that the men usually had to work and quite a few dropped out over time, and also that sometimes the wife worked to support the men. It is possible that some
who dropped out may have re-enrolled as part-time students (studying at night) but without enrolment records it is not possible to verify this. A full-time male student said that those who were married needed to get jobs and some of them didn’t return to classes, similarly a full-time female student believed that money was the main reason married men dropped-out. A three-year male student didn’t know why some dropped-out, but conjectured that the reason would have been money.

In his book, *The Drift of Things*, Roland Robinson, who was a model at that time, wrote that Lyndon Dadswell believed ex-servicemen needed direction, and were unable to think and act for themselves.\(^{266}\) Fifteen responses that I received to this comment emphatically refuted this, and one person thought that Robinson may have quoted the remark out of context. They believed that if the ex-servicemen were able to pilot Spitfires or Hurricanes, and organise the men in their divisions as many of them did, they would have been more than able to manage their own affairs. There were some variations, however, in the replies. One said that the men had been boys on enlistment, and they came out from the war as men, but needed social skills. Similarly, some service-people came straight out of school and needed a little time to adjust. Another thought that perhaps not having to make decisions was a welcome and restful change after the war years. Only one said that if the men had been in fighting units, he would agree with Robinson. On the whole, it was believed that students were mature and self disciplined, a comment confirmed by several teachers. One student suggested that perhaps an emotional slump could have occurred after the responsibility they had carried, but this did not show up in the quality of their student work. Robinson considered that they were on the whole, happy-go-lucky and he thought Fred Jessup (Painting No. 244) was the leader of them with a humorous nature that was evident in his paintings. Diana Medworth also agreed that Fred was ebullient, a natural leader and stood out from the crowd. Fred Jessup was discussed frequently in Donald Friend’s *Diaries*, and extensively by Olley in *Far From a Still Life*.

One respondent, Tom Thompson, said:

They [the CRTS students] came from all states, like Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, to study at the Tech because it had the reputation of being the best art school in Australia. Students behaved very well in class and had to sign in and out of classes.

It was noted that the standard set by some of the better students was helpful to the group and was one of the reasons why so many were high achievers. Guy Warren, a painting

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\(^{266}\) R Robinson, *The Drift of Things*: an autobiography, 1914-52, Macmillan of Australia, Melb., 1973, p.216,
lecturer for many years, made the point that high-achieving groups appear every so often in any school, some years the students are average, other years much better. Edmund Harvey concurred with this comment also. People such as Tony Tuckson (Paintings Nos 45, 150, 389) and Klaus Friedeberger knew a good deal more than the other students about British and European art, as they had been to the great galleries overseas and could talk convincingly about various movements and artists. This was stimulating to class members. Students moved around during breaks and looked at and commented on each other’s work. Two people responded to the question, ‘how did non-service students compare with ex-service’. They thought they were mostly very young, well behaved, and not as committed, with occasional exceptions.

When I asked why people such as Flugelman, Klippel and Rushforth dropped out of their courses, I received the following responses.

Table 8 - Why did Flugelman, Klippel and Rushforth drop out of their courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not know</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of money or perhaps to travel</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They expected a different sort of teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibly had greater expectations of what could be taught</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were being taught realistic art and they were more modern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flugelman, Klippel and Rushforth went on to become leading practitioners in their fields and I believe that they wanted more than the curriculum could provide. Being more mature they decided to seek their own solutions rather than follow courses that were perhaps outdated or less than inspirational.

Strath Art Group
Five people interviewed remembered the Strath Art Group and four had been members of the group. Two students who were enrolled before the group formed did not know about it. Three students sold paintings through the Strath group exhibitions, and one of them was elated because he sold a painting to a teacher.

Teachers of significance

Nine of the students mentioned teachers who were of special significance to them. Among the names mentioned were Ralph Balson, Paul Beadle ‘very helpful’, Roberta Bell, James Cook ‘a special teacher’, Grace Crowley, Lyndon Dadswell ‘influential’, Douglas Dundas, Bob Gunter, Mavis Hayes, Dorothy Thornhill, Frank Hinder (showed one student the world ‘through new eyes’), Jack Kilgour, Frank Medworth ‘difficult but very supportive’, Godfrey Miller (also a ‘special teacher’), Eric Roberts, Phyllis Shilito, Wallace Thornton ‘enthusiastic and helpful’, and Geoff Townshend. Medworth was mentioned twice by students as being very supportive of service people. This list of names covers almost the all staff of the time. It is obvious that the students appreciated their efforts to help them, and the fact that so many are remembered after sixty years gives an indication of the quality of the teaching provided. A further comment from a student was that ‘the Administration was very humane, tried hard to give every opportunity to any of the CRTS people who may have had difficulties’.

Table 8 - Group support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>In class</th>
<th>Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was there group support among the CRTS people?</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you mix socially?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you still in contact with other CRTS people?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the degree of fraternisation as great as other art groups?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fifteen replied to the questions about group support among the CRTS students. Eleven were enthusiastic about the support that students gave to each other. These students influenced and were concerned for each other and their common factors were the shared experiences of wartime and a slightly older average student age for that time, with concomitant maturity. They had all lost part of their youth, and so formed a cohesive group from the beginning. Some had shared painting classes in New Guinea. One student did not agree that there was group support and another who was not aware of such support at the time stated later in the interview that she had kept in contact with many students throughout her life and named six of them, as well as another group outside her subject area. Enduring friendships formed slowly in the case of this student. One thing that was constantly stressed was the life-long social interaction with friends from that time. Twelve of fifteen mentioned a good number of those that they still knew and whose addresses they could provide.

Social opportunities abounded outside the teaching environment. On Friday nights the ‘pub over the road’ in Taylor Square was the natural venue for the unmarried students. Local social sketching trips as well as those further away and parties were mentioned but asked if the degree of fraternisation was a great as say the Hill End Group, or the Annandale Imitation Realists, most said that it was not as intense. Guy Warren suggested that those groups shared a philosophy/direction as much as social activities but the CRTS student scene was different. This was explained by reasons such as a lack of money and that they were too busy with homework and classes. The married students particularly were unable to fraternise, but just occasionally ‘went to the pub’. There were some who travelled together overseas to advance their careers, further cementing the bonds of friendship.

10.6 Discussion of responses

I was able to account for 255 student but as the last student through the scheme finished his diploma in 1965, many more full-time students would have been enrolled and also numerous part-time students. My total is certainly inaccurate as an article in the Magazine Section of the Daily Telegraph 22 April 1950, stated that the CRTS had accepted 420 NSW ex-servicemen and women for full-time art training in the five years since the war. The last CRTS student to complete his course was Ronald Harry Hogan who later became Head of the Art School at Hornsby Technical College.
With such a small sample group (seventeen students), it is difficult and unwise to project that the results to my questions would apply to the total group of CRTS art students. For example, if statistics were known about the part-timers one might find that a greater percentage of them completed their courses, and that many more worked in the field of commercial art rather than fine arts. Indeed, this is probably the case. However, I can make the following assumptions about the students studied.

There were more male CRTS students than women. More students were born in country towns, interstate, or overseas than in cities and had their primary education in country schools. (Only one of the sixteen I interviewed had any art training at high school and this was in art history). Just over half the group did aptitude tests to enter to the Art School, indicating that the others had some experience in art prior to enrolment. Several students took part in classes organised by the Armed Forces before they were discharged.

From those I spoke to, I found that the classes were large and crowded but this didn’t seem to affect their enjoyment of the student lifestyle. Numbers dwindled as the courses progressed and the drop-out rate appeared higher for married students who had more financial difficulties with the student allowance than the single ones. All students did part-time work and/or full-time holiday work to supplement the allowance. Most of them knew about the materials allowance but only two knew about and used the travelling allowance. This suggests some lack of communication between the students and administrators of the scheme, or the Technical College staff.

Some students were able to survive on their allowances, but others could not. The determining factors were whether he/she was single or married, living at home or away from home, with dependants or not, and had the capacity to do extra paid work and/or have family support. Many used their deferred pay to top up their allowance. Living allowances were always below the basic wage, particularly for women, and between 1944 and 1951 allowances were subject to taxation depending on other earnings. Clearly this would be a state of penury. Students were allowed to earn £3.0.0 increasing to £4.0.0 per week through the year and there was no limit to earnings in vacation. A travelling allowance of 5/- per week (1946) increasing to 7/6d (1951) was granted but was often over run by travel costs when students sought cheaper accommodation outside the city centres where there was a critical shortage of reasonably priced accommodation. There was no increase in the living allowance in line with cost of living increases. In 1951 some extra allowances were given and the taxation was
abolished but the CRTS allowance never matched the basic wage. The financial hardships encountered undoubtedly contributed to the withdrawal rate.

A materials allowance of 20/- (£1.0.0) per annum was given, and at the end of training 40/- for essential equipment for professional training and also books, tools or equipment to the value of 20/-. Students who took longer than the three years for which allowances were granted were able to continue studying and receive an allowance. The only proviso was that this extra allowance be repaid with 2% interest when the student had gainful employment, with up to seven years after graduation to do so. However the allowances made for a trainee's dependants or living away from home allowances need not be repaid, these were a gift. Physically challenged students were treated with compassion and any extension of their training period was funded as a gift if their disabilities had been caused by war service. It was realised that they would have recurring illnesses, psychological problems and mobility problems, outside the usual range that returnees experienced.

There was a general feeling among the respondents that a number of CRTS students had emotional problems as a result of the war and these problems were not addressed by the CRTS counsellors. Guy Warren, at a lecture following the exhibition Lines of Fire, said that ‘generally students refrained from talking about their wartime experiences’. Perhaps, as many men do, they buried their problems and ‘got on with living’. These people were not teenagers with adolescent angst but were mature and self-disciplined; making art in a liberal atmosphere may have been the most appropriate therapy for many of them. Students often became life-long friends. The groups that formed were based on similar experiences, propinquity, and mutual support, rather than a shared philosophy or creed of painting or sculpture. Teachers were generally remembered with affection long after student years.

Of the seventeen students researched, only one renounced art although his training was useful in his new career. Two continued painting as a hobby but the other fourteen remained dedicated artists or worked in the art world.

Finally, though, my judgement as to why the group was so successful arose more from conversations during the interviews, than from the answers to the questionnaires. I found that all were extremely motivated and entered their courses older and more mature than was usual. Deprivations and/or low incomes experienced either before or during the war, plus their wartime experiences, enabled them to construct survival techniques that helped them through difficult times. I believe these were the true reasons that they were able to achieve their high ambitions. They were determined and resilient.
10.7 Chapter Summary

Lyndon Dadswell observed:

‘A total of four hundred and twenty students studied at the College in 1944 and this influx (representing the largest in any Australian institution) had a significant effect on the tone and development of the school... The CRTS group generally had much clearer ideas about what they required from the College...than the average sixteen year old College entrant... ‘This necessitated re-adjustment on the part of a number of teachers, and created some tensions.’ ²⁶⁷

It is likely that these statements summarise the CRTS experience across Australia when mature students re-immersed themselves in a learning environment. In this chapter, I have described the reasons the scheme was proposed, the personnel who made it so successful, its sheer massive size and the difficulties of its administration. The results of my questionnaire have been defined, and problems and achievements highlighted. The difficulties that some returning men and women had during peacetime readjustment are discussed in the following chapter.

²⁶⁷ D Edwards & A Dadswell, Lyndon Dadswell, 1908-1986, Woollahra, p.126 NSW.
CHAPTER 11

Peacetime

In this chapter I use further information gathered from the former CRTS students and published sources to illustrate both successes and problems encountered by people in other disciplines, in different locations in Australia. The artists I interviewed were reluctant to discuss those who did not complete their courses, perhaps for compassionate reasons. The art entry test was taken by a number of applicants, but others entered classes with advanced standing. There was a surge of interest in art at both secondary and tertiary levels of education and commercial art was particularly emphasised. Figures given in two newspapers during 1946-50 may be the only true record of enrolment figures available, each claiming around 2000 art students. This figure compares with that given the previous year quoted as 1,980, so may be assumed to be accurate. One source stated that the Art Department was the largest art school in the world. A similar rise of interest in art as a subject was shown in the figures given for entrants to art exams in secondary school exams.

11.1    Returning to Training - Successes and Failures

After both wars, a large number of men and women returned to the work and background they had come from, grateful to have survived and hoping to resume a normal life at the point where they had left off. An obvious deterrent to full-time training was that many people married soon after returning home, and wives, unless self employed or in family businesses, were not permitted to stay in their jobs. The reason (not stated explicitly) was that they would soon become pregnant and would leave work to take care of their home and family. Others who had the hardships and miseries of the depression of the 1930s still clear in their minds were reluctant to leave secure jobs – albeit mundane and with limited prospects for advancement – for academic training beyond the standards they had reached in their primary or post-primary schooling several years earlier.

For those who chose to use the CRTS, there were both successes and failures. There were failures of interpretation and application of the results of tests. Outstanding success stories included an RAAF burns victim who spent months in plastic surgery and on recovery wished to train as a Medical Illustrator; a course was specially designed for him and he went on to a career in this area. Another woman applied to enter a course in Medical Illustration at
the John Hopkins University in Baltimore USA, under the ‘conspicuous mental ability’
condition, which had to satisfy such criteria as (a) unavailability in Australia and (b) in the
national interest. Her application was granted.

An ex-RAAF member had commenced a Diploma in Applied Chemistry before the
war, and was therefore entitled to continue this course. However his Aptitude test said he was
suitable to do a trade course. He declined the CRTS offer and advice and enrolled in the
Diploma of Applied Chemistry course paying his own fees. After completing part of the
course, he submitted his details to the CRTS and was repaid his living allowance and
reimbursed the fees. An error had been made but was appropriately reversed.\textsuperscript{268}

What appeared to be inconsistencies also occurred. C L Barnard was a farmhand from
the age of thirteen, but was given training as a welder, which led him to engineering,
accountancy, and self- employment. However, another man who wished to transfer from
training as a pastry cook to theology was told this could not be permitted. The reports given
by Barrett are subjective so misinterpretation of the information available may have occurred,
but one man reported that he was told all courses were closed by July 1946 so he went rabbit-
trapping. In fact, the closing date for lodging applications for training was 30 June 1950, but
only those who enlisted on or before 30 June 1947 and were discharged on or before 30 June
1949 could apply.\textsuperscript{269}

Stories like this may have influenced Guy Warren when he was ordered to report to a
careers adviser for testing, to see what area of study would be appropriate for him. He says
that for the first time in his army career, he disobeyed an order, knowing that an art career was
what he wanted and what he intended to have. Another factor worth considering was that
although entitlement to training was almost guaranteed to an ex-service person, there was an
exclusion clause stating that training would be available in ‘a course leading to an occupation
in which prospects of employment are reasonable’.\textsuperscript{270} To a man who knew just where he was
going this clause might cause concern. Artists have never been guaranteed reasonable
employment but Warren presented his portfolio to the Art School and was accepted into the
course. Because of overcrowded classes, he was initially streamed into a Commercial Art
Class but agitated until he was transferred to the Painting Class. Edna McKenzie met with an
unusual reaction when she applied to Herbert Badham for entry to the School. She had studied

\textsuperscript{268} H Gallagher, op. cit., p.33.

\textsuperscript{269} J Watters, op.cit. p.278.

\textsuperscript{270} Bulletin (CRTS (Australia)) No. 1 p.12 [1946].
part-time at the Brisbane Technical College during her service time in that city and had an extensive portfolio to present, but Badham advised her not to do the course as she was older than the other students. Edna was born in 1912 but there were many other students born in the decade 1910-19 and at least one other woman, Elsa Russell, born in 1909, was accepted. Was Badham being solicitous for Edna, perhaps doubtful that she could make a career when she graduated at the age of forty, or did he think she lacked the talent to complete the course? In 2010 Edna Mackenzie was posthumously awarded an OAM for her services to art in the Lismore region.

Pre-Diploma and Diploma entry to Art Courses had never required matriculation qualifications. The quality of the presentation portfolio was considered an adequate indication of artistic ability by the selection panel and many of the CRTS applicants had obvious talent. For non-service students the usual procedure was an entrance test and those chosen were the best from this test. Harvey described the aptitude test as ‘rough and ready’.

The test occupied two hours before lunch and two hours after. The applicant would be required to do two jobs. One, a drawing of a still life group before him, and the other a composition. The Head Teacher of Introductory aided by a committee would sort the work out on long tables, ceaselessly moving the drawings and comps about, until the best were at one end and the worst at the other…The line would be drawn, and those above notified of their pass, and those below informed of their failure.  

One future student, Jean Weir said, ‘We drew a still life study, a nude plaster cast and a composition with figures. All a bit daunting, as we had no idea what the requirements would be’.  

In the *Sydney Morning Herald Magazine*, 21 May 1946, it was stated that 60% of the entrants to the diploma course finished the full five years. Other figures given for that year demonstrate the explosion of interest in art and related courses supplied by ESTC.

- Between fifty-four teachers, sixty classes were taught per day, attended by a total of 1,980 students. This is three hundred more students than the 1944 record enrolment.
- In 1946, approximately 945 students sat for exams in art related courses at ESTC.
- In 1946, 2000 children attended Saturday morning art classes given by the Department of Technical Education.
- In 1945, 5,520 students were studying art for the Intermediate School Certificate, which was 642 more than the previous year.

271 EA Harvey, op. cit., p.168.

272 Personal communication July 2007.
• In 1945, 5,851 students were studying art for the Leaving Certificate, 159 more than in
the previous year.²⁷³

11.2 Post-war expansion of the Art School

In 1950 the CRTS Art School building at Strathfield was resumed by the
Commonwealth Government and students returned to East Sydney. In the absence of
enrolment records, an idea of the numbers can only be gained by the Diploma graduate list in
the yearly handbooks. For the years 1943 to 1947, the average number of graduates per year
was 10.6. Of the total fifty-three students only one was male, i.e. 1.9% of students. For the
years 1948 to 1952 (years with large numbers of CRTS students) the average number of
graduates per year was 21.6, which is more than twice the preceding five years. In the latter
five years, forty eight students were male, i.e. approximately 44.4% of students. Indeed, in
1951, for the first time in the history of the art school, male students outnumbered female
students a total of four times, in the years 1951, 1967, 1969 and 1974. In total, between 1930
and 1975, of 1008 graduates, 331 were male and 653 female and twenty-four with names not
identifiable as male or female.

From 1949, the CRTS graduates tended to dominate the art world and people such as
Tom Bass, John Coburn, Lindsay Churchland, Alan Ingham, Jon Molvig, John Rigby, Oliffe
Richmond, Stan de Teliga, (Paintings Nos. 57, 96), Tony Tuckson and Guy Warren have
attained honours in many arenas and are represented in major collections throughout
Australian.

In her book about Jon Molvig, Betty Churcher mentions George Johnston who
discussed the CRTS group with Charles Doutney, and is reputed to have said that six or seven
artists may ‘become front rank Australian artists in time’.²⁷⁴ Sixty years onwards it can be
fairly said that his prediction underestimated the number who would make their mark.
Sculptors who are honoured in their different fields are Bert Flugelman, Alan Ingham, and
Robert Klippel. Fay Bottrell became a significant fabric artist, Guy (Martin) Boyd, Ivan
Englund and Peter Rushworth achieved honor as ceramicists. Other artists such as Tom
Thompson, Les Burcher, Ronald Hogan and Emmett Lynch chose to become educators of
artists. Norman Hetherington achieved distinction as the creator of Mr Squiggle, a popular

²⁷³ Sydney Morning Herald Magazine, 21 May 1946.
²⁷⁴ B Churcher, op. cit., p.17.
television character and Robin Lovejoy became the first Head of NIDA. Not to be discounted are the many who made their lives and achieved excellence in Commercial Art, one of the most popular post-war courses. Men such as Theo Batten, Frank Freeburn and Charles Thomson produced the highest standard of work in this field. This is a remarkable tally of distinguished graduates over a period of around ten years.

An article by Tom Farrel, *Making new artists for Australia*, appeared on p.13, in the *Daily Telegraph*, 22 April 1950. It is now impossible to verify from where he obtained his facts but they are so detailed he probably got them from a representative of the School and/or from official records. He wrote -

- The Art Department of the school is the largest art school in the world. It has 2000 art students of which 534 are full-time day students and the rest attend from two to four nights a week. Art is studied by CRTS students in other states, but ESTC has the largest enrolment of them in Australia. In the five years since the end of the war, 420 men and women have been accepted for full-time art training. Seventy three have finished their courses, 138 are still studying, 159 got jobs before finishing their courses and fifty did not begin training.
- The staff comprises twenty two full-time teachers and fifty two part-time assistants. Many of the teachers and most of the assistants are former East Sydney students.
- The design and craft course, structured and headed by Phyllis Shillito, attracts most of the 1200 evening students and 250 of the full-time day students.
- Advertising art and illustration courses do not attract as many students as painting or design and crafts. 30 students are studying book and magazine illustration and twenty are studying advertising art. Mr Alfred Cook says the demand for good commercial artists and illustrators far exceeds the supply. Mr Dundas says about half the graduating students do commercial art to support themselves.
- Teachers say that the CRTS students have set the pace in almost every course at ESTC since they began studying in 1946.²⁷⁵

In the absence of official records the numbers given above are probably the most accurate we will ever get of CRTS art students.

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11.3 Attitude of Trainees

The attitude of CRTS trainees to their studies appears to have been positive. The CRTS students had an effect on classes and other students’ attitude to study. Ian Walke had to reappraise his attitude to University study. He found that each student had an allocated seat in the lecture theatre and a roll was marked…under the CRTS a record of attendance was kept. If at the end of the year an ex-serviceman failed, his record of attendance was available for scrutiny and was one of the factors considered when the powers were deciding if they were prepared to finance him for another year.²⁷⁶

A similar system existed at the Technical College. Tom Thompson recalls that a roll was marked for each class and students had to 'bundy in' at the Bundy Clock at the start of each day.

From: *We were there*: One soldier, discussing the part of ex-servicemen in local affairs, said that they had –

a much broader, more tolerant and less class-conscious outlook, and were far better equipped to take their place in society and carry out their responsibilities.²⁷⁷

One man talked about his six years of wartime, and what he had observed about the men he served with.

Men came from all walks of life and, as we had to rely a great deal on conversation, views and experiences were exchanged and all our horizons were broadened. I have listened with great interest to young men from affluent backgrounds talking with those who had been poverty stricken – and marvelled at the latter’s ability to define the truth. I feel that I emerged from a great experience a much enlightened and improved human being.²⁷⁸

Bob Sims, University of Melbourne said that there was some complaint –

that we were all working too hard at our studies and not making proper use of the other mind-broadening opportunities for interaction with other students available at the university. They were right. We all had some catching up to do. Personally I thought the entry of more mature students did the university a lot of good.²⁷⁹

The first Guidance Officer at the University of Adelaide, John Gough, was a man who accepted his disadvantages and made the most of his ability. He was shot in both knees, lost

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²⁷⁶ H Gallagher, op. cit., p.114.
²⁷⁷ J Barrett, op. cit., p.143.
²⁷⁸ ibid., p.143.
²⁷⁹ H Gallagher, op. cit., p.112.
one leg, and the other was fixed in one position. He was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford University and by 1962 had become Commissioner of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Speaking of his time as Guidance Officer, he commented that the ex-servicemen and women-

were so determined to make the most of their opportunities under the Scheme that I felt it necessary to counsel some of them to relax a little and enjoy what other activities the Universities had to offer.\textsuperscript{280}

One wonders just how these students coped on what was obviously an inadequate allowance even when supplemented with income from after hours work. In his biography \textit{Totem Maker}, Tom Bass writes that he and his wife Lenore ‘were overjoyed knowing that for the next three years we would have a regular income of five pounds a week’.\textsuperscript{281}

The fact is that all of them had lived through the depression years, and few had come from affluent backgrounds. They had been born either during WW1 or just later, and most had never known the comfort that most people in Australia currently take for granted. They had sometimes lived close to starvation, as in Tom Bass’s case, and many found that war service gave them regular meals and a reasonable income for the first time in their lives.

Although many were unable to cope with the pressures of income, families and/or ill health, I believe that Bass (who was married with three small children) summarised the position of the majority.

It was just a wonderful period. Anyone who went through it knows that virtually every educational institution in Australia was swamped with these men who’d been bottled up between Depression and war for most of their lives and had suddenly been presented with this great opportunity. I think the CRTS training scheme was one of the best things that ever happened in Australia. So many people got their careers started at that time.\textsuperscript{282}

This attitude compares with comments made by artists Guy Warren and Tom Thompson. In the book \textit{Searching for Gaia} Guy said 'All of us had lost up to five years of our lives, all were immensely grateful to have survived at all, and everyone was serious and anxious to make up for lost time'.\textsuperscript{283}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{280} H Gallagher, op. cit., p.88.
\item \textsuperscript{282} ibid., p.48.
\end{itemize}
Tom Thompson made a similar comment, 'We just wanted to get on with it, that's what we were there for.'

The University of Western Australia reported that many students after getting off to a good start suffered from diminishing zeal in their middle course years. The original stimulus weakened. Reasons given for this were – effects of recurrent health problems - both physical and emotional, personal family problems, inability to cope with increased pressure, uncertainty about choice of career. All of these are possible and indeed happen to a degree to all students undertaking challenging courses. Watters believes it was part of the problem of readjustment to civilian life and I agree with this. Once the post-war euphoria wore off, the effort required may have been difficult for older students with commitments that younger students did not experience, and those with growing families might well have preferred to take a safe job that gave them more time at home.

There were triumphs within the scheme. In 1948, Rhodes Scholarships were won by trainee students in four of six states, CRTS students taking seventeen out of a possible thirty places. The University of Adelaide kept a record of CRTS successes. In 1948 it was recorded that approximately 30% of the students of a total enrolment of 4888 were CRTS. In exams they gained 38% of the total Credits, seventy-seven top credits, fifteen prizes and scholarships, that is, 36% of those awarded. There were ninety-eight degrees, including thirteen Honours Degrees, of which nine achieved First Class Honours, and seventy three Diplomas. A Melbourne doctor, Dr F. Hurley, disputed the claim that CRTS students set a higher standard. He said that they were offered a second attempt if they failed exams, whereas non-CRTS students were automatically removed from the course if they failed. He agreed that in other subjects maturity might have been an important factor, in relation to the determination to succeed as soon as possible.

To summarise the value of the scheme, I quote Watters, Gallagher and Gough.

The CRTS was instrumental in bringing to light and helping to develop a most valuable resource of unrealised ability – talent which otherwise might have remained latent and as a consequence would have been a lamentable loss, not only to the men and women themselves but to the community in general.

284 J Watters, op. cit., p.167.
285 ibid., p.119.
286 J Watters, op. cit., p.322.
The claim made of the CRTS …is fully justified: indeed it was one of the most significant and successful bipartisan government enterprises in C20th Australian educational and social history.\textsuperscript{287}

The results to date have been most gratifying and the enthusiasm and continuing zeal of students have not been eclipsed by any other class of students.\textsuperscript{288}

One of Barrett's respondents made the comment that the consequences of the training must have been enormous in Australia, with the advantage that it made education –'not so much the privilege of the wealthy'.\textsuperscript{289} I believe this is precisely what Curtin and Chifley were hoping to achieve.

\textbf{11.4 Chapter Summary}

As with any scheme of such magnitude, there were bound to be failures as well as successes. Without access to official records it is impossible to determine whether these failures were the result of personal problems or weaknesses in the structure of the scheme. It seems clear that there were insufficient counsellors to help those who needed psychological assistance, a profession that was still in its infancy. However the weight of evidence in favour of the scheme suggests that it was the attitude of the students that made it such an unqualified success. And the final question remains, why did such a large percentage of the ESTC group become artists of renown? My belief is that, having seen the worst and ugliest in the war years, these highly motivated people felt the need to go to the other end of the spectrum and search out the best and beautiful, in the way they were most able, through art.

\textsuperscript{287} H Gallagher, op. cit., p.120.

\textsuperscript{288} Australian Dept. of Post-war Reconstruction \textit{From war to craftsmanship/ Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction}, The Ministry, Melb., p.15, 1946.

\textsuperscript{289} J Barrett, \textit{We were there: Australian soldiers of World War II}, Penguin, Ringwood, Victoria, 1988, p.377.
CHAPTER 12

Post-war Changes to the Structure of Educational Institutions

Population growth after the war necessitated substantial expansion in tertiary education and infrastructure that may not have been anticipated or achieved as successfully as was the retraining scheme. The introduction of the Commonwealth University Scholarship scheme attracted many more university entrants than in the past. The rising costs of education were noted and the need for alternative forms of tertiary education predicted. Various committees were formed and models proposed, stop-gap measures implemented with limited success, rationalisation was sought, and finally a solution found, in the case of art schools, in their amalgamation into other tertiary institutions. In this chapter, I consider the changes experienced at the National Art School. It lost many of its staff to the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education, and was finally subsumed, as a School of Sydney Technical College, into the AMCAE.

12.1 Impact of CRTS on Tertiary Education

The prosperity of the 1960s made it possible for the children of the time to remain at school longer and consider tertiary education as a possibility. The social climate had changed and tertiary education was no longer just for the affluent. There were also greater numbers of young adults applying for entry than in the decade before the war, a result of the post-war 'baby boom' that reached its peak in 1961. Many migrants welcomed the opportunity to ensure secure futures for their children that might have been inconceivable in their country of origin. The physical facilities for larger than pre-war numbers of students were now in place, for instance buildings that had been required for CRTS trainees, and there was a greater number of teachers in the workforce albeit insufficient to reduce large class numbers. The provision of the Commonwealth University Scholarship Scheme gave the means for limited income students to achieve a higher education and Ben Curtin's dream of a people educated to their maximum potential seemed feasible. Those trainees who completed courses helped meet post-war demands in the more prosperous society that followed the depression and wartime years of confusion and despair. Even those who withdrew had received some education and Watters\textsuperscript{290} makes the point that the partially trained would also have made an impact on the

\textsuperscript{290} J Watters, op. cit., p.321.
workplace so the 'drop-outs' were not entirely lost to the training system. For instance, in trades such as house painting, carpentry and bricklaying it was possible for people to start up their own businesses without gaining final trade certification. Optimism abounded at the time. Others might have worked for companies that didn't require fully trained employees but would give them training to suit their own needs. A number of art students did not complete their Diplomas but went on to outstanding careers, for instance, Bert Flugelman and Robert Klippel. Because of my inability to access enrolment records, the drop-out rate cannot be determined, nor can the figures of CRTS students who did not complete courses be compared with normal students. However of a survey of university graduates carried out for the first time in 1951, thirty-five out of one hundred students graduated in the minimum period, and only fifty-eight of the hundred were expected to finally graduate. This information was delivered in the 1957 Murray Report.

The need for funds to finance this growth prompted the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee to publish a paper in 1952, titled ‘A Crisis in the Finances and Development of the Australian Universities’. This committee was looking only at the university sector. Through the 1950s and 1960s however, most expansion occurred in the non-university sector and was funded by state monies.

In 1956 Sir Keith Murray, Chairman of the British Universities Grants Commission, was appointed as head of a committee of enquiry into the University Sector in Australia and found that ‘Australian Universities were in poor condition’. The Commission recommended that all who had the capacity and desire for a University education should be given the opportunity to study. Murray also recommended that the Government should assume greater responsibilities for the country's Universities, that funding be allocated on a triennium basis and that this money come from Federal funds. The Government accepted these recommendations. In 1959 Sir Leslie Martin, a former Professor of Physics at the University of Melbourne, was appointed as foundation Chairman of the newly formed Australian Universities Commission. As a result of his investigations, there were substantial increases in State and Commonwealth grants. However, by 1960 both Federal and State Governments were considering more cost-effective solutions in the shape of Tertiary Education Institutions, deemed to be less expensive to administer than Universities. Prime Minister Menzies noted the rising costs of education, and directed that Universities should manage their funds more expediently as there would be no further increases in funding levels.

Martin, now revising his earlier views on expansion, proposed the need for a committee of enquiry into future tertiary education. He nominated himself as Chairman of this
Committee of Enquiry that was to advise the Government on the most efficient and effective methods of providing the necessary amount of tertiary education within financial limits. This committee became known as the Martin Committee.

Martin visited the USA and after investigating their 'trinary' system proposed a three-tiered system of Tertiary education composed of Universities, Institutes of Colleges and Teachers Colleges. Other committee members were not as convinced as he that the American way was appropriate to Australian needs. Indeed, the Deputy Chairman of the committee, C.R. McRae, previously a Professor of Education at the University of Sydney, felt strongly enough about this issue to resign from the committee in June 1962. Some committee members and the Principal of the Sydney Teachers College, Mr I S Turner, were outspoken against Martins’ proposed model, and Martin again left for the USA in August 1962 to reassess his views. He returned having decided against the American system, believing now that the existing Technical and Teachers Colleges could be profitably redeveloped.

The Committee's Report was finally delivered to the Government in September 1964 and publicly released in March 1965. The phasing out of sub-degree courses and replacement of them with higher degrees, and the higher cost per head of students were factors in the key recommendations for a large expansion of places for tertiary education outside the universities. The Committee recommended that Australia should have fourteen universities, Institutes of Colleges (the forerunners to the Colleges of Advanced Education) in each State, and Boards of Teacher Education to develop the States Teachers Colleges.

The Government however preferred a two tier system of Universities and multi-disciplinary institutions, which would provide teacher and applied education, thus releasing them from the costs of funding separate Teacher's Colleges. The binary system lasted for approximately twenty years, and ultimately the Colleges of Advanced Education sector attracted so many students that it was able to demand and compete for funds equally with the university sector. By May 1965 Senator Gorton was referring to the multi-disciplinary groups as Colleges of Advanced Education. In 1968 the Department of Technical Education instituted a research study into the needs of Tertiary Courses in Art and Design.
12.2 The Gleeson Report 1973

In 1969 the Minister for Education and Science approved the appointment of a committee to enquire into the need for a College of Advanced Education to provide tertiary courses in Art and Design in NSW. It was chaired by the Assistant Director of the Department of Technical Education, Mr Gerry Gleeson, and comprised six representatives of the art, design and education communities. The first report (1970) was not made public.

The Whitlam Labor Government was elected in 1972 and the Gleeson Committee reconvened. The terms of reference stated:

That the Committee investigate and make recommendations concerning the future provision for tertiary art and design education in NSW. In particular, the Committee was asked to consider whether a Corporate College of Advanced Education for art and design should be established.\(^{291}\)

In September 1973 the Committee of the Gleeson Committee noted that the National Art School of the Department of Technical Education was a large, established institution with a wide range of courses and an administrative body responsible for providing art courses at Technical Colleges throughout the State of NSW. The College (in its various forms and aliases) had in fact been providing art and design education to the citizens of NSW for over ninety years. At that point the ‘Tech’ (as it was widely known), catered for 961 full-time art students in advanced Education courses and more than 6,000 part-time art students throughout the state. The two diploma courses offered in Fine Art and three in Design were of four years full-time professional and intensive study. Parallel to this training, the Sydney Teachers College had, since 1944, offered a four-year course in Art Education.

The Committee commented that the stimulating environment needed to develop creative talents is enhanced if provided within a 'compact' institution, one able to be flexible, personal and quick to make decisions rather than larger organisations which presumably and conversely, may be cumbersome and slow to react. The NAS was only one of twenty-six schools competing for funding within the Department of Technical Education and as the connection already existed between the NAS, AMCAE and Newcastle CAE it appeared desirous from the Department of Technical Education's viewpoint to shed the responsibility for art and design education. Further recommendations from the Gleeson Report were that:

\(^{291}\) Gleeson Report, (1973 Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the need for a College of Advanced Education to provide Tertiary Courses in Art and Design in New South Wales ) item 1.2 p.2.
a) a corporate College of Advanced Education be established in Sydney for purposes of providing tertiary education for persons preparing for professional careers in art, design and related occupations.292

b) a professional School of Art be established as a school of an existing College of Advanced Education in Sydney for the purpose of tertiary education initially for artists and art teachers and later, subject to community need, for designers and artist-craftsmen.293

It also recommended that –

a) all Sydney District advanced education courses and students within the Fine Art Division of the National Art School become courses and students of Alexander Mackie College on 1st July, 1974294 …and

b) all staff appointments to the new professional school of Alexander Mackie College should be from open advertisement.295

In 1974, tuition fees were abolished, so the tertiary education institutions were now largely dependent on the Government for their funding. The Government was therefore in a position to control and enforce rationalisation of the education sector, including non-government teacher's colleges, which obviously included courses, locations and staff numbers in the quest for financial efficiency. By 1975 the Government had agreed with six State Premiers on the Commonwealth's assumption of financial responsibility for Universities and CAE's. They could now clearly see the advantages of amalgamating various courses into the CAE's thereby relieving themselves of the funding burdens of courses such as those taught in Teachers Colleges.

The Minister for Education announced that the Alexander Mackie College would become a multi-disciplinary College of Advanced Education, and the amalgamation took place as recommended in the Gleeson report. The National Art School of East Sydney was subsumed into the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education as the School of Art and the Sydney College of the Arts was formed as a new CAE. According to Byrnes and Connors, this-

'precipitated development of award courses in the visual arts and higher award courses in art education.'296

292 Gleeson Report, op. cit., (item 6a) p.52.

293 ibid., (item 6b) p.52.

294 ibid., (item 13) p.59.


296 LM Koder, op. cit., p.213.
12.3 A multi-campus College

The first school on Albion Avenue was the Albion Street Public School built in 1884. In 1924 the Sydney Technical High School for boys transferred from Pyrmont to Albion Street after classes in 'technical education' were given the status of high schools. It remained there until 1955. The site was renamed the Albion Avenue Campus by the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education.

The Alexander Mackie College for teacher training, founded in September 1958 and named in honour of a renowned educator, Professor Alexander Mackie was housed in this complex. Byrnes and Connor said –

'collectively the buildings and lack of space offered probably the worst facilities of any institution in the Advanced Education sector in NSW'.

Regrettably, this trend continued through succeeding decades of art education in inner Sydney. In 1971, three-year courses led to the Diploma of Teaching and four-year courses (or five-year honours courses) in conjunction with the National Art School led to the Diploma in Art (Education). In that year, under the terms of the Higher Education Act of 1969, the College became a CAE offering Diplomas in Teaching, Music Education, Art Education (in conjunction with the NAS) and a part-time Diploma in Special Education.

The decision to remove the NAS from TAFE in 1974 was not a popular one and as Barnes says –

educating artists... required funding structures, understandings and environments somewhat different from those which served teacher training institutions for so long...

...neither the State co-ordinating authority, the NSW HEB, nor the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, understood or even recognised the different needs of this specialist artist education.

The merger was forced upon Alexander Mackie and the National Art School but insufficient funds were granted to permit optimum implementation of the Gleeson Committee's ideals.

C.G. Jordan In Koder, states that -

297 LM Koder, op. cit., p.213.
298 ibid., p.37.
'optimism and growth in advanced education opportunities were characteristic of the time and it was in this spirit that the new art school accepted its first intake of students'.  

However the proposed new college had no premises, and Mackie could not provide them. Jordan commented that-

'had the new staff realised in 1975 that it would take 16 years to find for the school a permanent home on a single site, perhaps some of the enthusiasm which marked the opening of the new school might have been dampened'.

Five properties were in use in 1975.

Albion Avenue Campus, Paddington. Headquarters for the School of Teacher Education with approximately 600 students.

Burton Street Campus. (ESTC Campus at the old Darlinghurst Gaol). Used for components of the School of Art.

Cumberland Street Campus. (leased from the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, temporary headquarters for the School of Art.

Liverpool Street Campus. (formerly the Darlinghurst Marist Brothers School). Used for components of the School of Art.

Commonwealth Street Campus. (The administration centre).

Both Barnes and Jordan pay tribute to the leadership of Mr Ken Reinhard and Dr Rawlinson through these difficult years. For the students as well as the staff, fortitude was a characteristic needed from day one. Constant changes to different venues distant from each other and reduced contact time with major subject lecturers, (as little as five minutes in a two hour class) were only two of the problems of the first years of operation that I personally endured. Jordan comments,

'many lecturers, whose previous experience of teaching in art schools had been under the auspices of TAFE were confronted with a situation in which the time devoted to face to face lecturing was significantly reduced.'

Incoming students from NAS pre-diploma courses were bemused. After two full-time years with a small teacher to student ratio, the CAE was confusing and disappointing. Jordan said that students in a CAE were expected to be more individually motivated and self directing. This philosophy was not adequately communicated and left many of us wondering what why we were actually attending college. My experience was that many

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300 LM Koder, op. cit., p.257.
301 ibid., p.257.
302 ibid., p.258.
303 ibid., p.258.
students took advantage of this laissez faire attitude to wander out of class and campus. Those of us who waited for time with lecturers, frequently waited without result. On the other hand, the minor subject lecturers marked rolls, set assignments and expected a reasonable attendance. Perhaps, especially for young students, a structured approach in the early years would have been more appropriate. I had one only tutor in three years who appreciated that I was a pupil looking for guidance and gave constructive assistance to me.

I recall other outstanding features of that time. There were difficulties in handling large canvases in the cross city walk, if for instance going from Cumberland Street to Liverpool Street (buses did not want such baggage) and there were problems with canvases in trains in peak hours. If students were brave enough to drive to the Forbes Street campus (NAS) to bring in large works, there was a rush every two hours to swap car parking spaces. The unisex toilets at the Cumberland Street Campus were a very small 'comfort facility' for a large group of users and the holes in the floor of the Liverpool Street building, (condemned at the time) were circled with paint to warn staff and students not to walk too close. There were no food or drink outlets anywhere except on the NAS campus, which fortunately still operated a canteen. Each campus had its own set of challenges.

Certainly conditions were far from ideal. J.H. Connors compared the amenities given to universities such as medical facilities, sporting facilities, libraries, student accommodation, catering and food outlets etc, with the conditions (substandard in some cases) of CAE's. With hindsight, I question whether the courses presented in the post-ESTC Art School era were better in quality and content than those taught in the previous decades. My belief is that I learned more about art in my two pre-diploma years at Hornsby Technical College, (a college which offered the pre-diploma art course for entry to ESTC), than I did in the three subsequent years at AMCAE. Those of us from this changeover period generally held the same view. It is gratifying to know that present day National Art School teaching is similar in content to the old NAS, and concentrates on the building blocks of art education such as life classes and drawing in black and white.

12.4 The Butland Committee Review on Rationalisation

The economic problems of 1975 caused reduction in funding to NSW institutions, and in that year the Advanced Education Board, the Universities Board and the Higher Education Authority were replaced by the Higher Education Board. After examining all proposals of

LM Koder, op. cit., p.283.
development of higher education up to the year 2000 by the Boards it replaced, the Butland Committee chaired by Emeritus Prof. G. Butland announced that there was to be a review of the future development of CAE’s in inner-city Sydney by the HEB.

By 1977 AMCAE had been granted funds to enable it to lease premises in Flinders Street Darlinghurst, and was able to vacate the Liverpool Street and the ESTC Campuses. This improved the situation slightly for students, although atmospheric pollution, noise and extremes of weather continued to be a problem in Flinders Street.

In 1979, after much negotiation through the NSW Higher Education Board with the Commonwealth funding authorities, the College was given $100,000.00 to assist in refurbishing the Paddington Campus, (the Albion Avenue Campus). Similar grants continued until 1984, permitting annual fragmented improvements. Chronic shortage of funds to maintain inadequate properties led however, to general dissatisfaction and the suggestion that several colleges amalgamate and share resources gained approval, especially with the possibility that the School of Art could increase its visibility.

The Butland committee identified four inner city teaching colleges as suitable for rationalisation. There was expectation of a surplus of teachers by the end of the 1970s and a population movement out of the city. CAE's had already been established in Nepean, Milperra and Kuring-gai. Inner city colleges occupied twenty three locations in mostly rented premises.

The recommendations relevant to AMCAE were that the Art School amalgamate with the Sydney College of the Arts and all classes be combined at the Albion Avenue Campus, and that the Art Education program be transferred to the Sydney Teachers College, which would move to the Oatley Campus of AMCAE when it became operational.

The Committee did not believe that the proposed campus at North Ryde for the SCA would eventuate. Its solution to the disparate and unsatisfactory buildings occupied by both SCA and the Art School of AMCAE was to amalgamate the two colleges.

Reactions from the concerned institutions varied. The Sydney Teachers College finally agreed to the recommendation that Art Education be removed from AMCAE and endorsed the change of name to Sydney College of Advanced Education. However AMCAE rejected the transfer of the Art Education program to the Sydney Teachers College and the amalgamation with SCA, and argued for the retention of the current structure so that the School of Art could remain a 'fully integrated component of the College'.

SCA was strongly opposed to an amalgamation with AMCAE. As a result, the Committee considered that an amalgamation between AMCAE and SCA should not proceed.

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305 D Barnes, op. cit., p.10.
However the HEB continued to press for rationalisation. In late 1979 the HEB submitted a proposal to amalgamate AMCAE (which included ESTC), the Nursery School Teachers College, the Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College and the Sydney Teachers College into one college, the Sydney College of Advanced Education. (SCAE).

In December 1979 it was announced that the scheme would go ahead. In April 1981, shortly before this was finalised, the Ministerial Review of Commonwealth Functions made the decision that thirty Advanced Education Institutions in Australia would be required to amalgamate. The new SCAE was established in July 1981 and the previous Colleges dissolved. The inadequacies of this scheme appeared almost immediately. Dissatisfaction, tensions related to EFTS, and funds allocated to separate Institutes and the Supervisory role of the Board were all points of contention. Academic autonomy appeared feasible but administrative autonomy was debatable. The City Art Institute as it was now known, felt disadvantaged and believed that funds were being diverted towards teacher education. By 1984 the College, trying to operate eleven campuses and seven libraries was in dire financial straits. The CAI, because of the special needs of art teaching in terms of space and equipment, (the school was now teaching not just painting, drawing and sculpture, but jewellery, fibre, ceramics, film, video, photography and printmaking) felt it was especially deprived.

Arguments continued between the HEB and the College. The SCAE made a proposal for the establishment of a single campus at the Mail Exchange in Redfern, in order to solve some of the problems of split campuses. This suggestion shattered the CAI, which had fought continuously for an independent identity, considered to be crucial to its 'effective operation'. The HEB, under pressure, established the Mansfield Committee to investigate these claims, and 'recommend necessary actions concerning art and design education'.

In March 1987 the HEB received a letter from Minister Cavalier announcing that -

‘Cabinet has now approved the drafting of legislation to establish an institute of art education. Its initial components will be the City Art Institute and the East Sydney Art School of the Department of Technical and Further Education’.

The HEB was ‘disappointed’ and sought an explanation, but this was pre-empted by an announcement of the plans by the Sydney Morning Herald on 20 March 1987. The Assistant Principal (Ted Binder) at ESTC said he and the staff were confused and concerned, as well they might be. A double disappointment for ESTC which had already suffered from the loss

306 D Barnes, op. cit., p.62.

307 ibid., p.72.
of many staff members in 1974 to Alexander Mackie CAE. There was an expectation that SCA would wish to become part of this Institute, the name of which was proposed as the New South Wales Institute of the Arts. In spite of deep concern by all parties to this merger, including the HEB and most of all by those involved with the issues of funding and its transfer, superannuation entitlements and long service leave, the Institute of the Arts Bill 1987 went to its second reading.

There were never ending problems related to staffing, administration, superannuation separation and specifically from whence the funding would come, employment, (for example, the staff of NSWIA and CAI were to be employed by the Public Service Board, but staff of ESTC would remain attached to the Department of TAFE under the Public Service Act 1979 or the Education Commission Act 1980). In June of that year the SCA Council advised that it declined the invitation to be part of NSWIA but would review the matter later on. The School of Design in SCA had long sought severance, aligning itself with Faculties of Architecture and Engineering rather than Art, and the offer appeared to them to be definitely retrograde. Finally, in December, the Commonwealth Government released a Green Paper, titled Higher Education: a Policy and Discussion Paper. As a result of this the Minister announced that ‘SCA would cease to be a corporate institution, the School of Art would be transferred to the NSW Institute of the Arts and the School of Design would transfer to the NSW Institute of Technology’.

SCA, CAI, and ESTC from TAFE, now found themselves to be the NSWIA. The School of Design breathed a sigh of relief and departs from this thesis.

The following quote from Barnes thesis is a very lucid summary of the situation.

‘The administrative aspect of the new Institute was difficult from the beginning. Coupled with the inherent problems related to differing philosophies and expectations amongst the components from different sectors, were the oft discussed differences of ethos between SCA and CAI. Initially, the HEB played a significant role in guiding and pacifying the disparate elements of the Institute. However, this important contribution came to an abrupt end in April 1988 when the new Greiner Coalition Government…abolished the HEB and replaced it with 'a non-statutory Office of Higher Education within the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs'. Officers of the new body, and the Ministry, took up the cudgels for the infant Institute [NSWIA] and worked diligently to assist its healthy growth. However, its life was destined always to be short’. 308

In July 1988 a white paper titled 'Higher Education: A Policy Statement' was issued by the Hon. Dawkins. In effect it dissolved the NSWIA, as it proscribed an institutional size required to conform to the Unified National System of Education. The NSWIA simply did not

308 D Barnes, op. cit., p.75.
have the numbers. Minister Dawkins offered capital funds to CAI and SCA on the understanding that they affiliate with another Institution. By the end of 1989 SCA had joined Sydney University as a College of Fine Arts, CAI was well on the way to becoming a College of Fine Arts (COFA) within the UNSW, and the East Sydney Art School (the National Art School) had returned to TAFE.

12.5 Chapter Summary

The Art schools retired to lick their wounds, battered and resigned. And yet, twenty two years later, COFA still remains a college of UNSW and SCA, a college of the University of Sydney. The NAS has struggled to retain its character and independence in the face of several attacks on its autonomy, and, at the present time, retains the Gaol as its headquarters and operates as a private company. This is discussed in my conclusion. Students, past students and teachers united have formed protest groups, made lengthy submissions to the government, marched on the streets, and generally tried to advertise the School’s unique nature and history.
CHAPTER 13

A Distinguished Associate

Distinguished members of the alumni and staff have long contributed to the prestige of the school, and I chose to document one who achieved significant results in his field of expertise, to the betterment of the NAS. My choice of John Kaplan is based on the respect I have for his professionalism in setting up what is now an art research library of excellence.

13.1 John Kaplan

John Kaplan, (born Hans G. Kaplan 1911, died 1993), was a well-respected, indeed, to those who remember him still, almost legendary librarian at ESTC. He was born in Breslau Germany, now Poland. He studied law in Berlin and Paris but ‘read Mein Kampf and was perceptive enough to realise the implications of Hitler’s book so moved to Palestine where he studied English and worked on a kibbutz.’

After his parents died in the late 1940s he moved to Australia with his second wife. He worked first as a cleaner in the railways but found work in a municipal library and commenced his library diploma. In 1949 Medworth offered him a position in the library, that was to service all the schools at ESTC. Kaplan’s prime interest however, was art, and this showed in his selection of books. He imported periodicals with the most up to date reproductions of masterpieces and articles of current opinion. Many of these periodicals and the books he chose have now been classified as rare books and their value lies not only in this status, but also in the reference material they contain. In 2002 the library moved from the old chapel to Building A (23) as temporary quarters until Building 14 (the old female quarters) was ready for occupation after its restoration. In December 2005, books were unpacked and shelved, many for the first time in years. While it is one of the premier art research libraries in Australia, regrettably, a number of valuable works have been stolen over the years. A story current in the 1960s was that students would throw books from the upper storey windows to accomplices standing outside the building. Security was not as sophisticated in those days as it is now. Hearsay credits Kaplan with an enthusiasm and love of books beyond the average and a determination to impart his expert knowledge to students. History of Art was not taught

as a subject at that time so Kaplan organised extra-curricular classes that were well attended. Harry Nicolson, a lecturer in History and General Studies at Sydney Technical College, shared classes with Kaplan at ESTC in a series called ‘Times and Forms’.\textsuperscript{310} After leaving ESTC in 1962 Kaplan worked in the rare books division of the State Library, but continued educating art students by delivering occasional lectures on the psychology of visual perception and later, philosophy.

He revealed himself as a true scholar in a thesis submitted to the Library Association of Australia in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Diploma in Librarianship, June 1954. It was called ‘Problems in the Administration of Art Libraries’.

He suggested that it is necessary for an art librarian to be ‘something of an expert in art.’ Art is ‘a field which attracts all manner of persons, and often persons whose only distinguishing characteristic seems to be that they remain outside the economic community’.\textsuperscript{311} He said of the type of personality required – ‘artistic temperament is important, as evidenced in a preoccupation with aesthetics’.

He argued for the acquisition of such tools of the time as books, slides, films and prints, not just in technical or recreational fields. He wanted to further the ‘habit of contemplation and appreciation, among actual and potential readers’\textsuperscript{312}. He defined the levels of potential users as-

- The ‘idle curious’.
- Interested laymen seeking ‘immediate appreciation by pure perception’.
- Practicing artists whose usage would be similar to the above, but involving schools of art, techniques, comparison of different artists etc. and the need for pictures of objects that users would require.
- The scholar, historian, critic.

However he made the point that user groups change unpredictably, an idle curious can become an interested layman, then an historian or critic.

He discussed the selection of books, prints, lithographs etc, the paucity of trade bibliographies, now a thing of the past as bibliographies of new and vintage books flood the desks of selection librarians. The need for slides, microfilms, the quality of reproductions and

\textsuperscript{310} D Beck, op. cit., p.98.
\textsuperscript{311} J Kaplan, Submission to Library Association of Australia, 1954.
\textsuperscript{312} ibid., p.2.
the principles of collections were considered. He said that films were useful but costly and should be acquired subject to budget considerations.

He believed that a list of reproduction of paintings currently available would be valuable to art appreciation. Bibliographies of paintings were considered important, proposing that a picture file of high fidelity and true colour was necessary. The cost of processing would be a determining factor and the choice should be determined by need, fidelity and the quality of paper. He suggested 9” x 12” as a good starting point.

Kaplan considered that co-operation between libraries was important if there were more than one of a kind in the region and that an efficient Inter-Library Loan System would be an essential part of the scheme. He wrote a large section on restructuring library services throughout NSW based on central administration as a co-operative scheme, and recommended centralisation of subject fields, for example, music for the Conservatorium, fine arts for the Public Library of NSW etc. and the pros and cons of such schemes. He considered the economies of central processing. Many centralised processing schemes have been developed since this time, examples are UNILINC (previously CLANN) for university and college libraries, and OPAC, used in public libraries.

He expounded the problems, variety and scope of the classification and cataloguing of art libraries. He thought Library of Congress was the best classification system, but agreed that Dewey was more expedient, being already used by the Technical College. It is a useful system for classifying art in different forms and length of notation but had some deficiencies that he overcame by using a modified Dewey system for a short time when he was Librarian. Some amended numbers still appear in red on the spines of older books in the collection. He gave a complex professional discussion on assigning numbers and mentioned several examples of the problems of classification, one of which I will quote, ‘a collection of religious paintings by say Giotto, consists entirely of reproductions of murals. Where will it go, i.e. History of Painting in Italy, Religious Art, Religious Painting, History of Mural Painting.’

He proposed elementary levels for Municipal Libraries, advanced standards and a not too specialised scholarly approach for practising artists, the Public Library of NSW, the Sydney Public Library, Teachers College and ESTC, and scholarly research level for the National Gallery of NSW and the University of Sydney library.

Indexing was to be done as ‘exhaustively as possible’ Museums, galleries, art societies and others who publish guides, catalogues and books should all be indexed. He suggested that
every art library maintain its own index [an excellent idea] with divisions into book, print, transparencies, films and periodicals.

He believed it was not the libraries province to acquire material such as original works of art but one should not refuse gifts if the works were appropriate to the library.

A list of films shown at the library is attached to his thesis, and most were successful with the student audience. He showed films on art teaching, surrealist films, films on French artists, German films on art, early classic films, experimental films, some modern classic films like The Cabinet of Dr Caligari and Chaplin films. These were shown every second Tuesday, at 7.15 pm. Slide shows were held as a means of teaching past and present art movements. He involved students in the display of posters, handbills etc, designed by commercial art students. (Many of these still exist in the student collection, sadly mostly without credits).

The rest of the thesis is technical with an interesting and comprehensive Bibliography. Functional requirements such as shelving, cases, hanging bars for prints and slide storage were also suggested by him. Although modern technology has made such tools as transparencies, slides, card catalogues and reel films outdated, Kaplan’s philosophy of the day to day running of a specialist art library still has much value, and many of his proposals are now standard practice.

Kaplan is only one of many who have added to the history of the School. The names I have mentioned throughout this thesis represent just a fraction of the total of interesting, colourful, and brilliant individuals who studied and taught at Ultimo and East Sydney.
CHAPTER 14

Conclusion

My initial intention was to document a collection of approximately 400 art works, currently held in the Archives of the National Art School, which I believed had not been previously catalogued. The items required careful handling, some being in a fragile condition, but my objective was slowly achieved. At the time of digitally photographing these works, I recorded their dimensions, artist (if known), condition, and medium. I gave provisional numbers and titles to the works. Since that time the NAS has received funding to re-catalogue the works, and has entered them on a MOSAIC database with a new set of numbers. The School has retained my earlier numbering system for reference. While my catalogue has now been superseded, it will be of value as a document for future researchers, who may not have access to the collection held in Sydney. To put the collection into context, I undertook a literature search, which yielded no serious study of the School. I decided to attempt this work, which would necessarily be a general overview since the history of the School dates back to 1833.

I discovered that the School’s origins lie in the Mechanics Institutes, modelled on their British counterparts. In the second chapter, I traced the evolution of these Institutes, emphasising how, in addition to offering educational training, they were integral to community building and played a role in the nation’s changing identity. After a series of developments, the Sydney Technical College was formed in 1884 with Lucien Henry appointed as Instructor in its Department of Art. From 1891, the Technical College’s art classes took place in the Harris Street campus in Ultimo, which was frequented by hundreds of students. I discussed the structure of the Technical College’s Art Department and its classes, which were often contracted due to wartime demands, times of recession, or the need for training in new technologies in an increasingly industrialised country.

Nevertheless, the College continued to receive many students, and particularly after WW1, numbers had increased to the point where a new campus was required. In 1921, the Sydney Technical College initiated its East Sydney Technical College’s campus at the former Darlinghurst Gaol. As a former attendee of this campus, I was strongly motivated to investigate the rich history that lies behind this atmospheric site, and what appears in Chapter 4 offers a succinct overview of its history and its adaptation to its new function. From here, the thesis traces the ongoing social, political, and economic changes that affected the content matter, and daily life of the students at the ESTC. I have used minute books from 1926–1944 to
give a unique insight into the type of camaraderie, rivalry, and issues of the day. The contents of these had not been published before, and so this section offers a valuable summary of student life, which may be extended upon in the future.

A strong theme that emerged from my research was the lack of acknowledgment that the women artists received, and I have included a number of sections that draw attention to this oversight. In particular, women who joined groups in order to assert their status of artists in a male dominated art world are investigated, and women who, in the newly emancipated era, travelled overseas to study new movements. Some of these returned to Australia as teachers. Students such as Freda Robertshaw, Elsa Russell and Christine Pecket are presently being rediscovered but there are more who deserve to be recognised.

In constructing a social history of the NAS, it was necessary to seriously consider the social events that may have impacted on the student’s training. Such examples are World Wars 1 and 2, the Great Depression, and the post-war boom in population and education from the 1960s. Included in this phase was the momentous Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS). No work has ever been carried out on the training of CRTS artists through this scheme and I believe it to be a most important part of NAS history. I was able to record interviews with a number of these artists and draw some conclusions from their responses. Regrettably, because of their age, there will probably be no further opportunity to have personal interviews with CRTS trainees, so this study will be the only one to record original rather than second-hand data. The list of names of ex-service students that I compiled during investigation of this phase of the school’s history was included in the catalogue of the exhibition *Lines of Fire* at the National Art School in 2008. During my research, I noted that when strong interpersonal groups formed, there was a more intense sense of friendly rivalry resulting in a higher standard of artistic output. This may be a contributing factor to the success achieved by the graduates of the CRTS era.

It was disappointing that the complete record of CRTS students enrolled at the Art School, listed as being held at the National Archives at Chester Hill, was not able to be located. This made the task of establishing accurate student numbers and names impossible, as class records are also missing or destroyed. The list that I compiled was gathered from the memories of the group interviewed, followed by investigation into records at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The results of my questionnaire administered to this group concurred with comments made in the only three works found that dealt with CRTS trainees. H Gallagher, J Barrett, and J Watters all agreed with my conclusion: that those who completed
their courses considered the scheme to be ‘wholly beneficial’ and ‘most gratifying’ to Australia.

An interesting observation made during my research was that the quality of the graduates in different eras had much to do with the quality of their lecturers and/or heads of school. Teachers such as Lucien Henry, Rayner Hoff, Lyndon Dadswell, Paul Beadle, William Dobell and John Passmore, all assisted in producing outstanding artists. Again this is an area that might be productively investigated as it suggests that the standard achieved by the student is measurable against the input of the teacher. In 1926 S V Rowe said that ‘if the Art Department was to function properly, and fulfil its mission as the National Art School, it must obtain young teachers of outstanding ability’ and I believe this to be as true today as it was then.

Two other valuable compilations are the List of Teachers Names, with their dates of service, and the list of Students Names, also with personal data, studies, graduation dates etc. The Student Names number approximately 4,000. Both lists are incomplete, so offer a project for future researchers. They are the first ever collected and will go to the Alumni Register presently being compiled by the NAS.

The years from the mid-1950s were turbulent in the education sector. Financial contractions were responsible for the suggestion that Tertiary education would be better served by the introduction of Colleges of Advanced Education, considered to be less expensive to fund than Universities. The end result, after years of argument and controversy, was that small institutions whose numbers did not conform to the Unified National System of Education, were affiliated with larger organisations. The NAS that had already been subsumed into AMCAE was returned to TAFE in 1973. My history concludes at this point, but it was by no means the end of the NAS story.

In writing this history, a major problem that I encountered was encapsulating the long time scale of the Technical Education system, and selecting the facts, anecdotes, and hearsay that abounded on the subject. Every person I spoke to regarding their time at Art School at the ‘Tech’ had stories to tell, amusing, scandalous, defamatory, and inspiring. The overview I have provided offers a tantalising insight into what is an exceedingly rich history.

The School has weathered many crises which threatened its existence. Each time it has re-emerged, if not always stronger, at least unbowed. Surely the Chanticleer, the School’s symbol, should be read as a phoenix, arising from ashes and gaining strength with each new manifestation. In keeping with modern thought it is now a public company with State funding for five years and is managed by a Board of Directors using modern corporate methodology. As Lucien Henry would have said - *Autres temps, autres mœurs*. (Other days, other ways)
The present Director, Professor Anita Taylor, had this to say in *FONAS*, Spring 2009.

‘Steadily and surely we are achieving the separation from the Department of Education and Training to meet our objective of full independence. The new constitution has been developed, the registration and accreditation applications submitted, and we have begun to consolidate our plans for the future. This is an exciting and critical phase for the School.’

All of us who were ‘up at the Tech’ wish them every success.