

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### The Problem

The purpose of this thesis is to address three simple yet intriguing questions:

1. How is the office of vice-chancellor defined in Australian universities?
2. Who are the occupants of this office?
3. What do vice-chancellors do?

Anyone who has been associated with an Australian university in whatever constituency – as a student or graduate, as a member of academic or administrative staff, or as an external representative on a committee or governance body – could offer some response to these questions. Vice-chancellors themselves, officers of government co-ordinating agencies, and ministers of education also could be expected to give plausible answers. The critical issue and one which is fundamental to this thesis is to ask upon what evidence would any response be based. The fact is that there has been no systematic study of Australian vice-chancellors. Hardly anything has been written about the office of vice-chancellor as it affects either the operation of Australian universities or matters beyond their immediate precincts.

### The Study of University Leaders

Leadership and the role of a leader are significant variables in the postulation of any organisational theory and are influential in the empirical analysis of almost every aspect of organisational operations. To understand the leadership phenomenon in an organisational setting is to learn much about the purpose and activities, at various levels, of the organisation. While expressions of leadership and their interpretation may change, an understanding of leadership remains central to any study of organisation.

This abiding concern for leadership can be traced from the writing of Weber through to contemporary authors of both scholarly and popular studies of organisational life including such recent publications as Schein's (1985) influential *Organisational Culture and Leadership*, and the works of Bennis and Nanus (1985), Peters and Waterman (1982) and Ouchi (1981). Within the domain of educational administration a good deal of research has been published

about leadership and executive functions at school level, both from an institutional and a system perspective.

Surprisingly little has been written about the leadership role of the chief executive officer of English speaking universities other than those in the USA. There is an extensive literature about the presidency in United States universities, notable works being Demerath *et al* (1967), Cohen and March (1974) and Kauffman (1974) each of which has a comprehensive bibliography of related research. More recent studies include Kerr and Gade's (1986) *The Many Lives of Academic Presidents*, and *Presidents Make a Difference*, a study sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and directed by Clark Kerr (1984), *The Power of the Presidency* by Fisher (1983), and Kauffman's (1980) *At the Pleasure of the Board*. That the study of this topic is extensive in the USA can also be seen by its inclusion in doctoral research, for example, Steiner (1973) and Salimbene (1982). The *National Study of Higher Education Administrators* (Moore, 1983), which analysed the careers of university presidents, provosts and deans and the leadership study at Columbia University involving and reported by Birnbaum (1989) and Bensimon (1989) were of sufficient importance to attract funding from large foundations.

In Canada the university president has been the subject of much less research than in the United States. Harris (1974) presented an historical profile on the office and Muzzin and Tracz (1981) established a data base in their article, "Characteristics and Careers of Canadian University Presidents". A study of Indian vice-chancellors as members of an educational elite (Desai, 1983) is the only comparable research forthcoming from the sub-continent's prolific higher education systems. In Australia, and one would expect elsewhere, the vice-chancellor is touched upon in institutional histories, for example: Blainey 1957, Drummond 1959, Alexander 1973, Fischer 1975, Matheson 1980, Bolton 1982, Willis 1983 and Thomis 1985; or examined in relation to other dissimilar offices such as university administrators (Sloper, 1979). In searching for a conceptual identity for university administrators (Sloper, 1983), it has been necessary to distinguish these personnel from others, including vice-chancellors, who are involved in leadership and management in universities. This previous research has provided contrastive perspectives on the office and role of vice-chancellor. Several short articles about the office were published in 1968 by incumbent vice-chancellors (Baxter, Madgwick, Mitchell) in one issue of the defunct journal *The Australian University*. This deficit of research into the role of the university chief executive is also found in the UK where, apart from a paper by Collinson and Millen (1969), vice-chancellors receive brief mention only in other studies.

Evidence of increased concern for the office of vice-chancellor – in terms both of leadership and management functions – is clearly stated in the 1985 UK *Jarratt Report* and is

implied in the 1986 *Report of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education in Australia* (Hudson, 1986). Vast changes have occurred in British and Australian society in recent decades, changes to which universities have contributed significantly, for example, in areas of technology, social policy and administration, and values; and yet each of these major reviews of higher education supports the viewpoint expressed by the *Robbins Report* (1963, S.676) more than thirty years ago:

No other enterprise would impose on its Chairman the variety and burden of work that a modern university requires of its vice-chancellor.

Apparent changes occurring between the time when this statement was made in the early 1960s and when the present research was undertaken in the mid 1980s would include a marked increase in the complexity of work required of a vice-chancellor and a likely increase in misunderstanding – from both inside and outside the university – about the role of vice-chancellor and those who hold office. Despite the changes and the concern for their effect upon the office of vice-chancellor, the absence of systematic research about the office is notable.

### **Focus of Study**

This study was not research about an elite although numerically and in other ways, Australian vice-chancellors form a distinct group. It was not merely a leadership study, much less does its focus rest upon *the leader* in the organizational crucible of the university. Leadership is recognized as a phenomenon that may be, and usually is, actively present at various levels in an organizational hierarchy. This is particular true of university organizations which are inclined towards participative democracy. Leadership was a necessary part but not the sufficient whole of the present research. A vice-chancellor can be expected to demonstrate leadership both jurisdictionally in the role of chief executive officer and also actually, in that decision-making in universities depends intensely on personal interaction. In this second domain, leadership in universities involves not merely followers, but reciprocal relations with diverse constituents, internally and externally to the apparent boundaries of university activities.

In addressing the three questions posed at the beginning of the chapter, the focus of investigation was on the office and the role of vice-chancellor in the organizational context of Australian universities. Undue attention was not placed upon individual vice-chancellors although data relating to groups of vice-chancellors was sometimes obtained through an examination of attributes possessed by individual incumbents. Ways of maintaining anonymity and, where necessary, confidentiality are detailed at appropriate sections in the thesis.

To delimit further the research it can be stated that this thesis is not an historical review of vice-chancellors; neither is it an examination of policy changes affecting the office nor is it a study of growth and development either in universities or in the higher education sector that might impinge upon executive leadership. Consideration was taken of these and other matters and reference is made to them in the thesis, but only in so far as such matters were related to the central issues researched, *viz*: how was the office of vice-chancellor defined and occupied and how was the role discharged in the period under investigation? The research was conducted in the 1980s and the time span covered is from the early 1960s until 1986, justification for these dates being given elsewhere. For Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 data were collected in respect of vice-chancellors incumbent in the years 1963, 1973 and 1983. The information in Chapter 3 derived from data gathered from universities early in 1986 and from the advertisement of positions during 1984 and 1985. The data analysed in Chapter 6 were collected from incumbent vice-chancellors in 1986. While spanning several decades, the research had its principal focus in time on the period 1983 to 1986. All Australian universities in existence at different years and phases of the study are included. Thus the population of vice-chancellors surveyed is total. As all vice-chancellors in this study and in Australia until January 1987 have been male, masculine gender pronouns are used to refer to the survey population.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To determine the primary focus of research is easier than to identify a single methodology with which to undertake such a study. In one sense the search for an appropriate methodology by which to study the vice-chancellorship provokes the prior question: with what organization or suite of organizations was the Australian university in the 1980s best compared. If the university resembles most closely, for instance, a high technology industrial enterprise, a social welfare agency, or a knowledge-based government department, then it would have been profitable to review research about chief executive officers in these types of organizations. The belief, outlined in Chapter 2, that a university possesses certain *sui generis* organizational characteristics encouraged the search for an appropriate methodology to proceed elsewhere. Another possible source, popular literature about leadership and the executive function, is often illuminating, but intentionally less than explicit in analytical rigour.

What then are the compass points that guided this research, ones which might be set down objectively from the writer's cosmology of intellectual, social and professional influences? Firstly, the study lies within the field of ethnographic analysis being an empirical investigation of the situation of vice-chancellors within the culture of Australian universities and an analysis of what they do in relation to the multiple expectations seemingly placed upon them and their institutions. One important implication of this approach is the absence of an initial statement of testable hypotheses.

Additional to its centrality in ethnographic studies, culture, as a concept, has acquired general currency in social science research in recent years. The concept deserves some examination here. The first influential, scientific definition of culture was proposed more than a century ago when Tylor (1871) in *Primitive Culture* wrote that:

Culture .... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

This historic statement indicates that a culture, no matter how diverse the skills, attitudes or beliefs it might embrace, still possesses a coherent unity. The existence of such a "complex whole" also implies, through its elements detailed by Tylor, some pattern of regularity in behaviour of members of any culture. Kluckhohn (1962) provides a cognate definition of more contemporary appeal:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning influences upon further action.

And Schein (1985, 6) attempts to clarify the popular use of organisational culture by defining culture as:

the deeper level of basic *assumptions* and *beliefs* that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and that define .... an organisation's view of itself and its environment. These assumptions and beliefs are *learned* responses to a group's problems of *survival* in its external environment and its problems of *internal integration*.

The import of these statements for the present study is to place emphasis on the norms, the values and the symbols of a university's organisational culture as well as on those artifacts which are more tangible expressions of its activities. Organisational culture may be considered as an expression of a defined and relatively stable social unit, membership of which is acquired through a process of secondary socialisation. While such a culture is not impenetrable, and neither internally free from conflict nor unilinear in relationships with other units and cultures, it embodies the shared view of members based on common experience. As Schein (1985,7) points out, culture in this sense is "a learned product of group experience". This brief review of culture is important because of a popular use of the term and often incomplete understanding of its conceptual properties. A more detailed discussion of culture and ideology, in the context of professionalism, is available in other research completed by the writer (Sloper, 1979, 91-

124). The significance of organisational culture in this ethnographic analysis of Australian vice-chancellors will be apparent in successive chapters.

Even though attention is given in Chapter 2 to analysing the organisational setting in which the office of vice-chancellor is located and from which the role of vice-chancellor is enacted, this did not represent, on the writer's part, a bias towards a structuralist or functionalist approach. This initial approach through organisational theory yielded an holistic view of universities as organisations, one which is consonant with the orientation of ethnographic research. It led to a pluralistic perspective of the university as an organisation being outlined in Chapter 2, a perspective which excludes a doctrinaire or singular model. Such pluralism in organisational dimensions which is definitional, in concept and actuality, of a mature university affects the office and role of vice-chancellor and, the writer contends, the modes of research that were considered appropriate for use in this thesis.

A brief note about the office of vice-chancellor should allow some comparisons with university president or rectors. The vice-chancellor is the chief academic and executive officer of a university and all those studied in this thesis were full time salaried officials. A vice-chancellor is organisationally located at the intersection point for many of the resource and policy transactions, both internal and external, with which a university may be involved. Efforts have been made to compare the role of vice-chancellor with that of a prime minister (Moodie and Eustace, 1974, 131) or orchestra conductor (Straw, 1968, 24). Neither image presents a complete picture. As discussed in Chapter 2, the organisational environment of a university is intensely political despite any self-perception by its members of an ideal based on collegiality. And within this context the vice-chancellor is well described as "a marginal man but at the very centre of the total process" (Kerr, 1963, 30). Major reports on higher education including Robbins (1963, S.676) and Murray (1957, S.343) skirt peripherally around the position by commenting on the variety and burden of work required of a vice-chancellor. University legislation reviewed in Chapter 3 is similarly deficient in providing any explicit statement about the duties of office. In a large measure, such apparent deficiencies may be explained by the fact that vice-chancellors are usually appointed from the professoriate, the members of which have, as disciple and teacher, been acculturized into the sub-world of the university. To many people inside and outside the university, the office of vice-chancellor is surrounded with ambiguity and is poorly defined. Still less is known about the social characteristics of occupants and the work that they do.

The second cardinal point in the methodological compass of this thesis can be succinctly presented against the personal statement of influences given previously: this research has both an experiential and a professional bias. However, direct experience of the professional life of vice-chancellors has not led the writer to assume either an uncritical or a normative position.

Rather, this acknowledged bias, sustained by maturing intellectual enquiry, enriched the study in two dimensions: in one, it made more fascinating the exploration of response to the three questions at the centre of the research problem; in the other, it pragmatically facilitated contact with and access to vice-chancellors and other senior university personnel. At this point the writer is aligned with a professor of anthropology and contributor to the study of academic politics who has compared (Bailey, 1977, 2-3) the relative ease of researching a known setting with the difficulties experienced in penetrating the culture of another occupational group:

Not only do people have a proper reticence about letting a stranger, no matter how well-disposed, behind the scenes, but also the back stage of politics is played out in a language of great subtlety which is often beyond the reach of those who are not native speakers. Admittedly, one loses something of the fresh perceptive eye when looking at the familiar, but in this I thought the price worth paying and the "natives" in this ethnography are my colleagues.

The writer's deep professional involvement in the culture of five tertiary institutions in Australia and overseas and his intensive though shorter involvement in many other universities as a consultant and adviser have helped develop a catholic conception of the university. Research strategies to compensate for any over-familiarity will be outlined in respective chapters.

### **Modes of Enquiry**

Consideration of actual modes of enquiry and data collection that were used represents the third compass point of the research map. Geographic and demographic factors, as these affected the dispersed locations of the 19 universities in Australia during the mid 1980s, placed constraints upon pursuing one familiar approach consistent with ethnographic research: that is, for the investigator to live in the sub-world of a number of universities, to study their culture as a participant observer, and so to analyse the office and role of vice-chancellor. Given the constraints of distance, time and funding (*e.g.*, in 1986, 21,300 km were travelled within 8 months in connection with this research whilst the researcher was in full-time employment) an appropriate triangulation of data collection methods was designed. These kept the office and role of vice-chancellor centrally in focus and, although each university was visited at least once, compensated for the practical impossibility of spending lengthy periods in all institutions. An outline of the three principal modes of data collection follows.

Data obtained from documentary evidence formed one point of the triangle. These documents included parliamentary legislation, resolutions of university governance bodies, and other published materials of and about each university. Most of these materials were obtained personally or by writing to universities and other organizations. This was the practice followed

in collecting two sets of data in Chapter 3. By comparison, in Chapter 4 in which the social characteristics of vice-chancellors were analysed, the principal source of data was *Who's Who in Australia* and *Who's Who*. Where necessary, clarification was obtained from officers of the institution concerned, often by telephone. The second mode for data collection was by means of an instrument completed by vice-chancellors or their personal administrative assistants. This mode refers principally to the completion of the Diary Analysis Survey by which data were collected for analysis in Chapter 6. Prior to this exercise written and also telephone contact was made with all persons involved in completing the survey instrument. Any clarification regarding data that were ambiguous or incomplete was undertaken during subsequent personal visits to vice-chancellors. The third point of data collection, and arguably the one of greatest potential, was the series of interviews using fundamentally the same semi-structured schedule. These interviews were conducted in each university with at least the vice-chancellor, the registrar, and the president of the academic staff association. It was also possible to interview other significant university personnel including more than half the total number of chancellors. These interviews provided further depth to data collected by other means and, where necessary, clarification. As well, they furnished a volume of data, the full analysis of which is beyond the scope of the present research.

This triangulation of data collection methods provided abundant and intentionally interlocking data. Complementary and more detailed presentation of the modes of enquiry and data collection methods used, their design, testing and application are given in Chapters 3 to 6. This devolution of detailed research modes to separate chapters is justified because of the distinctive patterns of enquiry required in response to each of the three research questions.

The fourth cardinal point, which completes in outline the compass of research methodology used in this thesis, concerns the analysis of data and the presentation of outcomes. Data analysis was undertaken progressively and is reported in each chapter in conjunction with the review of selected issues or of data associated with what were, in some instances, different sets of vice-chancellors rather than being presented in a single chapter. The fact that such analysis was undertaken formatively with some summative positions arrived at in the concluding chapter is appropriate to the separate though cumulatively interrelated phases of the research as dealt with in each chapter. Treatment of the data is discussed in relation to the issue being examined and the research mode or modes that were used in each chapter. Outcomes are presented either as propositions that derive from a specific research issue and are stated at the end of a chapter, as in Chapters 3, 5 and 6, or following the analysis of data tables, where these are numerous, with a general summary as in Chapter 4.

The overall research design while not novel is a distinctive feature of this thesis. This design with its several enquiry modes recognised: the smallness of the population size of vice-



chancellors at any point in time; the changing composition of the population; and the need to collect data, in respect of certain issues posed by the three research questions, about incumbents or institutions over several years or decades. What was arrived at through the analysis in each chapter of separate but related issues was a composite response to the research problem. The principal among these outcomes are included in Chapter 7.

### **Related Research**

Much of the literature that might inform inquiry into the office and role of Australian vice-chancellors has been dealt with in the preceding section in which the domain of the present research was mapped in relation to studies of leadership in universities. Other specialist studies such as those that examine the role of the dean (Tucker, 1988), the head of department (Moses, 1990) or the registrar (White, 1990) could be added. However, to engage in a discursive literature review in order to conclude that little analytical writing has been done about the office and role of vice-chancellor seemed of minimal benefit to the present research.

Furthermore, congruent with the devolved research design and methodology appropriate to issues analysed in individual chapters, literature and relevant research findings are cited and used in each chapter. Brief mention is made of these principal sources. The typological analysis of the university as an organisation pursued in Chapter 2 made extensive use of scholarly literature in the fields both of organisation theory and of higher education with some fifty different reference works being cited in that chapter. An immediate contrast is evident in Chapter 3 where two issues are examined – the legal and formal basis to the office, and appointment procedures and selection criteria; and in Chapter 5 which analyses incumbency patterns. Research into these issues is unprecedented in respect of vice-chancellors and reference to comparable findings was not possible. Reference is made to reports of government committees of enquiry such as the *Murray Report* of 1957, the *Martin Report* of 1964 and to comparable overseas material including the *Robbins Report* of 1963 as well as to more numerous and recent enquiries conducted during the early to mid 1980s. The size and pluralism of the higher education sector in the USA generate a body of experience and literature concerning the selection of university and college presidents which has no equal elsewhere. It is the object of specific study in Kauffman's (1974) publication *The Selection of College and University Presidents* and in Nason's (1984) report, *Presidential Search*. The former includes insights from case studies while part of the value of the latter lies in the checklists that conclude each chapter and deal with such themes as organizing the committee, developing a pool of candidates and interviewing candidates. No comparable literature about the selection of Australian vice-chancellors is available.

Another significant source of data was the *Transcript of Proceedings of the Academic Salaries Tribunal* which sat in 1985 to hear the salaries case for vice-chancellors and whose sittings the writer attended. Reports of this order contain a great volume of data which were analysed selectively to yield information of pertinence to specific aspects of the research not only in Chapters 3 and 5 but also in other chapters.

With respect to Chapter 4, there was one report of a comparable study (Muzzin and Tracz, 1981) which reviewed the social characteristics of Canadian university presidents. Throughout the research the contrastive prism of US literature on the presidency in higher education was used. This material included the liberal and humanistic writings of Kerr (1984) and Kerr and Gade (1986), the perceptive and pragmatic assessments of Kauffman (1974, 1980), and Cohen and March's 1974 study which remains profoundly influential as a conceptual viewpoint on higher education and not simply the presidency. It is in Chapter 6, with its assessment of the work patterns of vice-chancellors, that comparisons with the research findings of Cohen and March are made most frequently.

### **Overview of Thesis**

In the next chapter consideration is given to the setting within which Australian vice-chancellors included in the study were active. This setting is viewed from two perspectives: firstly, the concept of the university as an organization, elements of which underpin the writer's approach to the study; and, in less detail, an account of environmental and heredity factors which have influenced the development of Australian higher education, particularly the university sector, in the 25 years to 1986. A simple classification of universities is proposed which is used in later chapters.

Chapter 3 narrows the focus to the office and role of vice-chancellor. Through an examination of legislation and university bylaws the legal and formal basis to the office is analysed in each university. Also included in this chapter is a review, in respect of vacant positions advertised in 1984-85, of appointment procedures and selection criteria for the vice-chancellorship in eight Australian universities.

Chapter 4 is the first of several that analyse data about the office and role of vice-chancellor by reference to specific incumbents within the survey period 1963 to 1986. It should be noted that the population surveyed in each of Chapters 4 to 6, although total, is not identical. Change in membership of the population of Australian vice-chancellors over time is inevitable. The contention is that such changes, properly identified for research purposes, should actually enrich the present enquiry. In Chapter 4 the analysis, in sixteen dimensions, is of social characteristics of vice-chancellors in the years 1963, 1973 and 1983. This analysis

provides base-line information about the educational, professional and personal accomplishments of vice-chancellors.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of data about the incumbency or length of time spent in office by the 49 vice-chancellors who held appointments in Australian universities in the years 1963 to 1986 inclusive. This analysis uses as a framework the classification of institutions developed in Chapter 2.

The data forming the basis of Chapter 6 derive from the Diary Survey completed over a 14 day period by all vice-chancellors in 1986. The analysis of these data provides unique information about the disposition of time, the location of principal activities on and off campus, and with whom a vice-chancellor interacts and spends most of his professional life.

Chapter 7 brings together principal outcomes from the study. Most of these relate directly to the office and role of vice-chancellor, while some reflect on the emergence of a system of higher education in Australia. One firm conclusion is that the field for further research about vice-chancellors and not only in Australian universities is extensive.

This thesis, through systematic enquiry, has gathered evidence and subjected it to analysis to arrive at a position which people in higher education may have sensed to be true. Perhaps, after Thucydides, this seems like dull work but it is inseparable from the demands of rigorous research. Any contribution that this thesis makes to enhancing the understanding of Australian universities and their vice-chancellors is accompanied by the satisfaction the writer has in perceiving a pattern where none was known before.

## Chapter 2

### AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES IN CONTEXT

#### Introduction

Universities endure. Next to the family, the monarchy and the Christian Church, the university remains one of Western society's most enduring institutions; although, not all of its antecedent elements are exclusively Western. To claim continuity for the university is not to suggest that it has been unresponsive to change over any given period; and minimum periods in which change is notable can be related either to the average time in office for chair professors in a specific discipline or to the maximum time allowed for student enrolment in an identified degree program. These are significant time frames within which changes in curriculum, in research, in orientation of the discipline, or in subject and degree requirements become discernible. Change in universities has historically both contributed to and been generated by value shifts in society, by the expansion of knowledge, and by altered needs for trained manpower. The university is as much a residual component of historic Western societies as it is the hallmark of modernization for recently independent nations.

This perspective on universities is vividly painted on a broad canvas by a former Chair of the Social Science Research Council of the UK, Michael Posner (1986, 8) in part of an address entitled "The Primacy of Academia":

A word to start with about Ministers, Research Council Chairmen, and Universities. Universities unlike states and governments and research councils really do last for millennia. Whatever Wagner meant when he evoked Holy German Art outliving the Holy German State, he conveyed absolutely the right message. The English poet put it even better: "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; look on my works ye mighty and despair." Universities last a thousand years, ministers and most research council chairmen last not much more than a thousand days .... We politicians and bureaucrats must bow to the transcendental values, purposes, and durability of Universities ...

As an ideal this statement would be likely to find support in Australia equal to that in Britain. The reality of what obtained in the 1980s – to be reviewed in a later section of this chapter – may qualify the expression of this ideal.

The environment encompassing the contemporary Australian university is dynamic and heterogeneous. Internally, the structure of a university may appear to be relatively passive, often excessively so to those outside its boundaries. There is an apparent plethora of offices

and titles: chancellor – deputy and vice; pro and deputy vice-chancellor and professors, lecturers, tutors and registrars in their several ranks and grades. Together they convey the impression of a stable hierarchy. By contrast, the process of a university is essentially active. In its evident teaching and research endeavours and as a locus for the practice of diverse professions, the university represents one of the most labour intensive enterprises in modern society. No less activity is found in the processes of administration which incorporate the dual functions of decision-making and decision-implementation. The activity of the former, decision-making, follows a pattern which can be bewildering to anyone who has either not been acculturised with university values or otherwise drawn into a position of endorsed support for them. Few academic and professional staff in Australian universities would be untouched by the dynamic and heterogeneous *milieu* within which they work. Many of these personnel, almost as a cultural norm, would wish to distance themselves from too close an identification with university organisational structures. Nevertheless most selectively pursue activities related to the overall purpose of the university.

A vice-chancellor, as will be seen in Chapter 3, formally stands at the apex of the pyramids of both structure and process in an Australian university. While the present research is not an organisational study, it is essential, in order to locate the office of vice-chancellor in context, that a brief review of the university as an organisation be undertaken. Much of the research and literature emanates from overseas; however, themes and general issues sound resonances in Australian university experience and their pertinence will be pointed out.

### **The University as an Organisation**

What follows is an analysis of context that further identifies basic presuppositions within the methodology outlined in Chapter 1, upon which the research has been undertaken. A simple truth to be learned from anthropology and sociology is that all organisations are in some respects the same, in some respects different, and in certain defined or limited respects unique. The first premise, translated to the domain of organisation and administrative theory, has found widespread support as indicated, for example, by Litchfield (1956, 28) in his historic article in the first issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly*:

administration and the administrative process occur in substantially the same generalised form in industrial, commercial, civil, educational, military and hospital organisations.

The generally held contention among university people that, as organisations, universities are different, if not unique, has been tersely expressed by Millett (1962, 4) among others:

ideas drawn from business and public administration have only a very limited applicability to colleges and universities.

Such a claim would seem to refer more to consultative decision-making processes in universities than to management practices which sustain and follow from governance bodies at several levels. A university, in whatever setting, is a highly complex organisation. If this were an excursus into organisational theory, the analysis could proceed by reviewing the more important among those characteristics which define a university, for example:

1. Aspects of the relationships between a university and the social environment in which it is embedded.
2. The output of a university which could be reviewed in terms of its multiple, conflicting and partially intangible goals.
3. The governance process within a university, which as a component of the total process of administration tends towards being unique.

While this study cannot include detailed analysis of such characteristics, the writer should, at the least, state his appreciation of the purposes for which a university exists and is sustained by its external community; for it is in the statement of an organisation's goals and in the interactive processes amongst members (sometimes formally structured other times not) towards the accomplishment of goals that understanding of that organisation's *raison d'etre* is gained. The writer believes the modern Australian university should embrace as central to its purpose:

1. The transmission and extension of knowledge, both theoretical and applied.
2. A willingness to act as a responsible critic of society.
3. The cultivation among its constituents and others of a sense of civilisation.

Whether one subscribes to such a generalised statement, or accepts the more traditional triumvirate of functional outputs – teaching, research and public service – difficulties exist in defining goals and purposes for an organisation as complex as a university. A principal difficulty obtains from the failure of a university's formal structure to describe, in relation to any statement of goals, the distribution of either responsibilities or actual power. These matters will be among those specifically considered in the review of university organisational models that follows.

In the past three decades much has been written about the university as an organisation. That universities are highly complex organisations pursuing multiple goals is generally agreed by organisational theorists. Less agreement exists about the organisation typology which best

fits the university. Four organisational models or types have been identified as applicable to a university and each will be reviewed briefly.

**Bureaucratic Model.** The first model is that of the bureaucracy which derives from Weber's ideal-type complex organisation based on rational legal authority (Gerth & Mills, 1948). This profoundly influential model, which has become the benchmark against which most other organisational models have been compared, is characterised by: continuous organisation of official functions bound by rules; specified spheres of competence, encompassing the systematic division of labour, provision of authority to an incumbent to implement the functions of his office, and the specification of means and conditions of compulsion; hierarchical organisation; regulation of the conduct of an office by technical rules or norms; separation of officers from ownership of means of production; absence of appropriation of official position by an incumbent; and documentation of actions.

The bureaucratic model has general application to the civil service, military and custodial forces, some churches and some traditionally run manufacturing industries. Stroup (1966) is among those who contend that "the prevailing basic organisational pattern of institutions of higher learning is bureaucratic" (Anderson 1963, 17). Such a comparison has validity in a number of areas particularly those relating to the appointment of university officers and academic staff and to the operation of a university's administrative departments. What the bureaucratic model stresses is formal structure, official goals and patterned activity based on legitimate authority. The deficiencies of this model when applied to the university lie in its failure to account satisfactorily for, *inter alia*: how policy and purposes are formulated; how authority and power are distributed; how governance operates; and how such an ordered model deals with change and the dynamic activity often found – and always present somewhere – within a university.

As suggested in the introduction to this chapter, the pattern of stability conveyed by the ranked officers found in a university is deceptive. To illustrate by another example: equally inappropriate in terms of the bureaucratic model's applicability to the university is Weber's proposition that power derives from "jurisdictional authority – [which] is fixed by rationally established norms, by enactments, decrees and regulations ...." (Gerth & Mills, 1948, 299). An organisation chart in a bureaucratic organisation (and inaccurately in many other types) would represent power based on authority as flowing downwards through a structured relationship of superordinate and subordinate officers. Whereas authority is a structural concept, power is more often a relational or interpersonal concept. Raven and French (1958) have usefully analysed the complexity of power relationships by proposing five bases of power: Reward, Coercive, Legitimate, Referent and Expert Power. Their definition of

Legitimate Power, being P's perception of O's right to prescribe behaviour, approximates Weber's concept of jurisdictional authority.

From experience we know that the occasions and circumstances in a university when power derived from authority can be exercised by one academic over another are few indeed; and these are rather precisely understood within the culture of a university. The exercise of such jurisdictional authority relates more to process and functional activity than to structure and hierarchical rank. It usually operates in the domain of formal requirements relating to course co-ordination, teaching and examining responsibilities, and accounting for the expenditure of funds.

And even here the bias in interpersonal relations is towards ostensible collegiality, probably Referent or Expert Power in Raven and French's classification. Handy (1977, 185), a former management consultant become University of London professor, captures the inappropriateness of the bureaucratic model of authority in a university in the following vignette. It portrays the difficulty a new appointee to academia experienced with a junior colleague concerning the latter's failure to carry out his instructions.

"You cannot *tell* me to do something", this colleague explained gently, "you can only *ask* me. On the other hand," he went on, "I don't ask *you* if I'm going to do something. I *tell* you".

This vignette serves to introduce the collegial model of organisation, which with subsequent models will be reviewed also with some reference to the preceding analysis of power and authority.

**Collegial Model.** The absence of a hierarchy of bureaucratic authority encourages many university academics to assume that they work within a collegial organisation, the second model to be reviewed. Despite the inadequacy of this model in dealing with most of the dynamic processes within a university, this concept remains one to which large numbers of people associated with universities defer when asked to characterize a university as an organisation. Central to its popularity would be the essential university value that the exchange of ideas should be free, that every teacher and researcher must be allowed the right to test their scholarship against that of their intellectual and professional colleagues. As a theoretical concept the collegial model lacks the clarity and precision of the bureaucratic ideal type. This ambiguity contributes to the identification in the literature of at least three themes which the concept of collegiality or a community of scholars is used to justify: (1) a description of a pattern of governance; (2) an account of a professional style of authority relationship amongst academics; and, (3) often at the same time, a nostalgic remembrance of past traditions and a utopian prescription of how a modern university should operate. The literature about the



university as a collegial organisation is permeated with a dichotomy between the descriptive and the normative when applied to structures and processes. Normative and prescriptive values seem dominant. Authority, according to this model, ought to be subject to ratification by like-minded colleagues who each have equal rights in governance matters.

Supporters of the collegial model are doubtless influenced by a basic assumption in the culture of universities, namely, the ideal of democratic self-government – within, by, and for an academic guild. In the British Commonwealth tradition this ideal derives from the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge universities, where each college is legally a body corporate whose powers of self-determination, won from both church and state, are vested in a group of elected academic fellows. This model, however deferred to as archetypal, is organisationally atypical. The architecture, and sometimes the ceremonial, of Oxford and Cambridge (and of European universities) may have been copied in former colonies and in the New and Third World; but the pattern of collegial organisation found in these ancient universities has not been replicated. And even in the case of the collegial model of Oxford and Cambridge, the reality differs from the normative ideal as Halsey and Trow (1971, 121) reported from a study of those institutions:

Academic self government, however, is not academic democracy .... Self government means professional oligarchy and the democratic ideal has only made modest and recent advances .... Moreover, the democracy to which we refer is a democracy of academics, not of all teachers and learners. Student enfranchisement was never considered before the mid-1960s; concessions to it are recent and severely limited.

Dynamic heterogeneity exists in a modern university. That a university, as a complex formal organisation, possesses a single set of common values seems to be a principal false premise of those who align it with the collegial model. In an Australian university, students, academics, administrators and other staff, have a relationship with their institution which is generally of limited duration. Students and academics especially, enter the organisation with certain skills, values and attitudes; they acquire, discard and contribute to others; and then they leave at varying intervals. Resulting from such an interactive process, change and conflict inevitably occur, more particularly if one accepts the tenet of a leading exponent of the collegial model that an "important goal of the academic community is to provide an *environment* of learning, not a *product* of learning" (Millett, 1962, 62). Within a university – from both an organisational and an academic perspective - specialisation and differentiation occur in the pursuit of academic activities. Nucleated clusters of specialist and professional interest groups often emerge. Some may be classified as *local* or *cosmopolitan* in orientation (Gouldner, 1957); others might give primary allegiance to teaching, to research, or to a professional sub-culture. These observations, affecting both students and staff, militate against the collegial model providing the most apposite analysis of the university as an organisation.

The collegial model identifies aspects of organisational life which the bureaucratic ignores, most important of which, is the significance of social forces generated formally and informally by groups within a complex organisation. Its ideological orientation not only values people as social beings, rather than as specialised labour units as in a bureaucracy, but gives rise to a paradox: the spirit of collegiality accommodates diversity of commitment but at the same time such diversity, with its implications for structure and process, precludes the university being classified as a single collegium. In explaining aspects of normative behaviour and group expectations in a university, the collegial model makes a contribution. However, as a conceptual model, it is inadequate in its failure to explain the existence of conflict and how power is exercised. It also fails to analyse how a university deals with conflict and change, particularly among constituent sub-system units, in a way which maintains overall organisational equilibrium.

**Political Model.** Conflict is a part of life, no less significant in an evaluation of human endeavour than co-operation. That conflict exists in all complex organisations including universities is undeniable. In the third organisational model, the political, the university is identified as a conflict-prone organisation. The university welcomes inquiry, debate, and dissent internally as essential to its purposes; and it often receives external criticism from, for example, politicians, the press, and articulate members of the public for failing to achieve goals, some of which others assign to it. In this analysis the university is seen as an organisation which is divided into numerous professional, specialised, cosmopolitan, local, or other interest groups, each of which gives priority to the pursuit of differing goal commitments. Some of these groups are quasi-permanent, others are loosely allied for a specific objective or time. All identify with or generally support sufficiently common values to allow the total aggregation of personnel to be classified as belonging to the university rather than to any other organisation. In this model, power and authority are seldom structurally fixed; more usually these derive from personal recognition based on expertise.

What proponents of the political model claim is that this concept yields a comprehensive account of how groups within a university are linked formally and informally, how power operates, how internal conflicts and external influences are accommodated and how policy is executed. Rather than viewing the university in holistic terms, as do the bureaucratic and collegial models from different perspectives, supporters of the political model, such as Baldrige (1971a; 1971b) and Baldrige *et al* (1978) see the university as a pluralistic system. From the diffuseness of three kinds of goals identified by Bailey (1977, 6) – "the pursuit of learning for its own sake; the benefit to be derived from belonging to a community; and the goal of power" – tension and conflict emanate as real forces in university life. "These goals may occasionally complement one another, but mainly they contradict." In the judgement of Baldrige (1971, 107), conflict is definitional and endemic:

The academic kingdom is torn apart in many ways, and there are few kings in the system who can enforce co-operation and unity. There is little peace in academia; warfare is common and no less deadly because it is polite. *The critical point is this: because the social structure of the university is loose, ambiguous, shifting, and poorly defined, the power structure of the university is also loose, ambiguous, shifting, and poorly defined.*

Reminiscent of Kerr's (1963, 36) view that a modern university more closely resembles the United Nations than a single country, Baldrige's statement indicates the theoretical basis from which the political model is derived: (1) conflict theory, an increasingly important tool in sociological analysis; (2) community power studies, undertaken by both sociologists and political scientists; and (3) the political interpretation of interest group activity in organisations.

Political processes accurately describe governance activities in a university at both macro and sub-unit levels of the organisation. Scholars including Moodie and Eustace (1974), Bailey (1977), Becher and Kogan (1980) have researched aspects of political interaction within the structure and process of university life. None has exceeded the terse propositions which form the basis of Baldrige's earlier studies, not even his subsequent research (Baldrige and Tierney 1979; Baldrige and Deal, 1983). They are stated here because of their contribution to the writer's theoretical construct of the university and their significance to the present study. The summarised assumptions (Baldrige 1971b, 9-10) underlying the political model are:

1. Conflict is natural, not abnormal, in a dynamic organisation.
2. A university is fragmented into many power blocks and interest groups each trying to influence policy.
3. Small groups of political elites govern decisions but no one group controls all decisions.
4. In spite of control by elites there is a democratic tendency in a university. Students and junior staff increasingly demand, and are given, a voice in decision-making committees and councils.
5. Formal authority, as prescribed by a bureaucracy, is severely limited by the political pressure and bargaining that groups exert against authorities. Decisions are not bureaucratic orders but negotiated compromises among competing groups.
6. External interest groups exercise influence over a university, and internal groups do not have the power to make policies in a vacuum.

These assumptions incorporate aspects of the bureaucratic and collegial models and compensate for some elements of these models which were noted as inapplicable to the university. In the political model account is taken of the exercise of authority and power, with

emphasis being placed on Expert Power and Referent Power, in Raven and French's classification. This incorporative bias of the political model recognizes that the principal policy formulation and governance processes of a university "are through informed negotiations and mediations .... accepted by those participants who have had access to that machinery and who exercise power within it" (with due regard, of course, to the claims of other parties) (Trow, 1968, 18). It could be argued that one weakness of this concept of university organisation is that too great a stress is placed on Expert Power and too little recognition is given Reward Power and its influence on real process interactions. Another could be the effects of gross divergence of values and interests among staff arising from a lack of identity with an internal interest group. This leads to consideration of the final organisational model.

**Anarchical Model.** If the political model with its reliance on community power and interest group theory is molecular in concept, then the anarchical is an atomistic model. As Becher (1984, 193) observes, this model could perhaps be best described "as more anti-managerial than managerial, concerned more with disorganisation than with organisation". It does contribute to understanding the university as an organisation for it emphasises circumstances which, however exceptional, are latently present in Australian institutions.

The model depends upon the high degree of personal autonomy available to academics who are not bound to give unequivocal loyalty to their employing university. Academics in the anarchical model are intellectual cosmopolitans who develop allegiances outside the university, in discipline and professional bodies, in learned societies and academies, and in the provision of services to government and private enterprise. Such external interactions not only create values and orientations which are possibly divergent from those of their university, but they also accrue to individual academics status often sufficient to allow them to resist internal constraints that may be imposed on them. This status depends upon Expert and Referent Power associated with a collegiality that is external to the university.

Cohen and March, whose claim that the university is best understood as an organised anarchy has contributed as much to this perspective as to the ensuing debate, believe the following are the properties (Cohen and March, 1974, 3) exhibited by this model:

1. *Problematic goals.* The organisation appears to operate on a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences, discovering preferences through action more often than acting on the basis of preferences.
2. *Unclear technology.* The organisation does not understand its own processes although it manages to survive. It operates on the basis of simple trial-and-error procedures, the residue of learning from the accidents of past experience, imitation, and inventions born of necessity.

3. *Fluid participation.* Participants in the organisation vary among themselves in the amount of time and effort devoted to the organisation; individual participants vary from one time to another. Standard theories of power and choice seem inadequate; and organisation boundaries appear uncertain and changing.

Not surprisingly much scholarly debate has proceeded from this anarchic point of view (Cohen and March, 1974, 81) which contends:

an organisation is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work.

The pithy tripartite analysis of the anarchic model and its associated "garbage-can processes of decision making" are often quoted, but Trow stands with its critics. He doubts that "these descriptive categories have any real influence" over what is actually done in universities and that they may "stand in the way of a clearer description and understanding of the elements and functions in higher education" (Trow, 1984, 28).

Organisationally the anarchical model is structurally diffuse and has strong decentralising tendencies. A logical extension of the concept would make it almost impossible for university executives to provide leadership, to chart and influence the passage of affairs other than by an occasional restraining hand upon the organisational helm. If this is a weakness of the model, its strength resides in the recognition that most academics give primacy of commitment to their discipline. This can result in their possessing a stronger sense of identification, not with the amorphous university, but with the department and consequentially with its external discipline affiliations. Implicit in the anarchical model is the need to understand what is it that activates members of the university organisation wherever located, a vice-chancellor no less than a tutor or graduate student; how is it that rational and highly intelligent people strive for accomplishment without the benefit of precisely defined organisational goals; and how can an organisation so loosely co-ordinated and with such a flattened hierarchy of control be managed.

**A Pluralistic Perspective.** Models like the four reviewed are interpretative guides aimed at enhancing understanding. Theories of organisation and administration cannot circumscribe reality. And they do not always coincide with experience of organisational life. In fact, they rarely do, as March (1980, 27) aptly indicated by the sub-title given one section of an address dealing with the dissonance between administrative theory and administrative action – "Round Theories and Flat Experience". Which is most accurate, which is most apposite among the four

organisational models examined, or should the search for illumination continue elsewhere? The inadequacy of legislative instruments referring to the university (one element of which will be considered in the next chapter) and the deceptive simplicity of standard organisational goals such as teaching, research, and public service encourage, rather than restrict, debate about the most appropriate organisational model for the university.

From the preceding review it can be deduced that no one model is comprehensively adequate in accounting for the highly complex formal and equally diverse informal operations of the modern university; yet each contributes to increased understanding of organisational behaviour in universities. It is possible that significant elements of each of the four organisational models may be manifest in a specific activity, at a given time, or in relation to a particular structure, person or procedure. However, more likely is the circumstance that emphasis over time will vary, and that one or more of these four models may be latently but not overtly in evidence. Thus each model interpenetrates the others; and one may usefully employ the conceptual properties of any to analyse a structure or a process in relation to a standard activity or a specific issue encountered by a university.

The pluralistic perspective lacks sufficient conceptual integrity to be an alternative model. However, this perspective serves to accommodate the strengths and the deficiencies of the four models. It encompasses the limitations of a top-down rational bureaucracy and of a bottom-heavy collegiality by acknowledging the inevitable and legitimate differences between sub-units of the whole system. For example, it recognizes that administrative sections of a university more closely resemble hierarchical structures to be found in a bureaucracy than the collegial type relations of discipline departments and research centres. Of similar and selective pertinence are insights included in the political model with its concern for interest group cohesion, and the concepts of goal ambiguity with diffuse organisational commitments predicated by the anarchic model. The fact is that, in concept and in actuality, no single model suffices.

A university is itself pluralistic, the modern institution standing in the expectations of Kerr's "multiversity". Its generous tolerance of value divergence, which to some observers may indicate contemporary lassitude, is a unique and fundamental element of its enduring character. Universities thrive on intellectual dissent and uncertainty. If everything were known or knowable, there would be no uncertainty – and maybe no universities. In cultural terms, a university is at once local and cosmopolitan, national and international.

This pluralistic perspective on the university places it within the ambit of "organisations of consent" identified by Handy (1977). In the organisation of consent the individual sees himself as a valuable resource, to be cherished by the organisation and possessed of undeniable

individual rights which, extended to others, influence the way people should relate to each other – in sum: "Hierarchy is bad. Argument is good. All men, and women, are essentially equal" (Handy, 1977, 185). The university as an organisation of consent is, in concept and actuality, not a consensus organisation. Consensus implies a considerable degree of certainty. And as Goodlad (1976, 91) notes incisively, "consensus may be more dangerous to universities than conflict". The executives and managers in an organisation of consent are "meant to manage, to take decisions, set up information systems, plan and organize". Each individual has a specialised and valuable contribution to make and no one wants to do another's work for him. "But the important decisions, the right to institute procedures, must be exposed to possible dissent before implementation. The individual may not want to be involved but he does want to be consulted .... The minority report may never be implemented but it has a right to be heard." (Handy, 1977, 186).

Consonant with the pluralistic perspective of university organisation, the exercise of power in an organisation of consent in relation to a critical organisational activity is generally conceded after exposure to dissent from those likely to be affected. Within universities large committees, which incorporate characteristics of each of the four models, are rarely decision-making bodies; rather they are the sounding boards for decision, the forum for dissenters. This accords with Ouchi's analysis of the success of Japanese corporations outlined in *Theory Z* (Ouchi, 1981) and recently in vogue. He suggests that western organisations should spend more energy on discovering essential problems and consequential needs and less in developing executive muscle to implement unacceptable decisions.

In this review of four organisational models, characteristics of the university that are unique have been identified as well as those it shares with other sets of organisations. The pattern of participative decision making – not to be confused with participative management – and the distribution of power and authority in a university are among the characteristics that cause it to fascinate scholars as well as managers in other organisations. Pragmatic and not philosophical issues motivate the interest of the latter. They are likely to ask, for example: how often do academics go on strike, why do university people close ranks so quickly to defend their institution against external criticisms, or how can such a labour intensive industry provide productivity and employee satisfaction for a diminishing rate of personal financial reward? (The day is imminent when academics could be the sole employee group working 50 or 60 hours per week and finding satisfaction with their work.) The answers to such questions, while intrinsic to the fabric of university organisational life, are beyond the scope of the present study.

**Implications for Research.** In that the pluralistic perspective of the university as an organisation assists in defining the conceptual framework within which the present research is conducted, cognizance has been taken of the advice given by Perrow (1970, 1):

No matter what you have to do with an organisation – whether you are going to study it, work in it, consult for it, subvert it, or use it in the interest of another organisation – you must have some view of the nature of the beast with which you are dealing.

A number of implications that influenced the research about vice-chancellors came from this review of four models and principal among these are the following:

1. In an organisational analysis the university is best viewed from a pluralistic perspective. None of the models reviewed adequately represents the university. Different characteristics and different emphases of each model appear in ascendancy at different times in relation to varying issues or activities.
2. Modes of activity seem to be more significant to university constituents than fixed domains. That is, an analysis of process and action orientation is likely to be more fruitful than that of structure and formal jurisdiction.
3. Intensely personal and individual organisational behaviour is accommodated, and recognized, in a university. At the same time, both individuals and sub-cultures exhibit a professional disposition towards goal accomplishment.
4. The university furnishes an intensely inter-personal environment in which enquiry, debate and dissent are encouraged. As one consequence, power, in other than symbolic terms, is earned rather than conferred.

The import of these propositions will be evident in the specific research into the office and role of vice-chancellors that was pursued and is reported in the following chapters.

### **Environmental and Heredity Factors**

As stated earlier, universities endure; but like plants, animals and other organisms which are products of heredity and environment they evolve and adapt. Historical analysis will reveal that this process of adaptation is not merely one of survival, although to some participants the university has, on occasion, seemed to be an endangered species.

The purpose of this section is not to survey comprehensively themes and issues present in today's university; nor is it to trace inherited characteristics and antecedents, though some of these may be mentioned. Works which yield a fuller account of the evolution of Australian higher education include: reports of government committees of inquiry, reports of the



Australian University Commission (AUC), the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) and associated government legislation; the published writings of vice-chancellors to be found, for instance, in *The Australian University, Higher Education, The Journal of Tertiary Educational Administration* and *Minerva*; and scholarly publications, for example, those of Beswick and Harman (1984), Gallagher (1982), Gross and Western (1981), Hore *et. al.* (1978), McCaig (1973), Williams (1978) and more recently Davies (1989) and Marginson (1993). What follows as a vivisection rather than a full anatomy, is a selective outline of the development of Australian universities, particularly during the period 1960 to 1986.

Consider the contemporary implications of the following observations made by Ashby:

The Australian universities have never been in such need of an advocate as they are today. In the Press they are rarely mentioned except to their discredit. On the platform they are too often used to enliven the speeches of irresponsible public men, who refer to the university as out of touch with affairs, a 'citadel of wealth and privilege'. At the city luncheon table the business man boasts that his graduation from the 'University of Hard Knocks' is a better qualification for life than his son's degree.

That the author wrote this almost fifty years ago, while a professor at the University of Sydney (Ashby, 1944, 5), is less remarkable than the currency of some of his observations. Elsewhere (*ibid.* 12-13) he notes that the University of Sydney was founded to give the facility "to the child of every man, of every class, to become great and useful in the destinies of his country"; and that the colonial legislator, Wentworth, when the University of Sydney bill was debated in the NSW Parliament in 1849, declared with fulsome optimism of the Victorian age: "From the pregnant womb of this institution will arise a long list of illustrious names of statesmen, of patriots, of philanthropists, of philosophers, of poets and of heroes."

**Excellence and a Culture Myth.** Illustrious indeed, have been many of the graduates, the research and professional endeavours, and the civilising influence of Sydney among other Australian universities. Great distinction has been earned by Australians in such diverse fields as Antarctic exploration, agriculture and associated engineering inventions, pioneer aviation, medical science, nuclear physics, the arts, and diplomacy and international affairs. Relative to the nation's population and its own stages of development, many of these achievements by university staff or graduates have been of the highest order of excellence. However, less recognition has often been accorded these achievements within Australia than overseas. Why this circumstance obtains, why this failure to recognize and appreciate excellence exists even though not unique to universities, merits consideration in understanding the broader context within which vice-chancellors work. An explanation of this phenomenon may be analysed in two dimensions: firstly, influences apparent in the social environment which surrounds the

university among other institutions; and secondly, those influences characteristic of the Australian university, described as part of its heredity.

A significant influence in Australia's social environment is the culture myth of mateship. This bonding myth of settlers battling together against natural adversities in a harsh continent, of the populace favouring the underdog with a general predisposition towards the rejection of authority, claims its origins in white settlement's short history of convict subjugation and colonial subordination. That mateship remains significant even among the more ethnically diverse immigrants of recent decades confirms its status as an intrinsic culture myth, co-equal with the ANZAC legend. This positive attribute of social egalitarianism has its negative obverse in what Australians call "the tall poppy syndrome", an almost eager willingness to see cut down to size anyone who stands above some notion of a performance standard. Often evident as a subtle rejection of excellence, this syndrome is based on a false premise: equality of achievement rather than equality of opportunity. It is a present element in the historic relationship between Australian universities and the host environment, notably the relationship with successive governments in their role as principal paymaster and patron.

A federal cabinet minister, speaking at a 1978 seminar at the University of Adelaide, identified Australian excellence in sport, in physical feats, in bravery on the battlefield; and he extended this acclaim for physical performances to singing in the Sydney Opera House (Staley, 1979, 24). We are not embarrassed by excellence in those areas, Staley said,

but excellence in education – in things of the mind and in things of the spirit – are other matters altogether. In these areas excellence seems to be somewhat un-Australian, old fashioned, undemocratic – almost impossible and even indecent. Perhaps Australian society can be seen as an inhospitable host of excellence in education.

The speaker's objective analysis may be better understood when it is known that he was formerly a university lecturer in political studies; and he did not despair entirely observing that there is a streak of independence in the Australian people who "like someone who will give it a go" (*loc.cit.*). Perhaps because he was a former academic become politician of the state, he concluded with lofty optimism: "Excellence depends on the universities as much as the universities depend on excellence and democracy itself depends on the universities" (p.26). Most educated people would agree with Staley (and John Dewey) and admit the organic relationship between education and democracy. In Australia fewer politicians, civil servants, and electors in the democracy have given priority to supporting this vital interdependence, and particularly, to increasing excellence in universities. Detailed evidence of this will be given later in the chapter. It can be noted here that compared with other OECD countries in the period to 1986, Australia had a low stock of higher education graduates and low participation rates at this

level of education. Participation rates were lower, for example, than such non-OECD nations as Korea and Thailand.

**Principal Performance Requirements.** If Australian universities are to fulfil the purposes that contemporary circumstances demand of them – both those functions which they identify and those laid upon them – their standards of performance depend principally on two factors: initially on high quality staff of appropriate motivation and inseparably on adequate funding to allow planned development, including innovations, to be sustained. These two factors are concomitants which directly influence in qualitative and quantitative terms other indices of university operations, such as: student enrolment and graduation patterns, staff orientation towards teaching and research, provision of facilities and equipment, relations with the professions and other external interest groups, institutional self-image and the ability to innovate and develop. Each principal factor may experience differing emphasis over time; neither can be allowed to decline significantly without long term consequences. During the 1980s, there was more evident concern for the factor of high quality staff than there was for that of adequate funding.

Identification of these needs for universities is hardly novel. But they bear restating as forces operative upon the organisational environment that forms the context of the present research. Early in the keynote address to the Tenth Commonwealth Universities Congress held in Sydney in 1968, Sir Fred Schonell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, (Schonell, 1968, 1) drew attention to some formative influences shaping the pattern of universities in contemporary society:

.... firstly the nature and demands of society; then the great growth of the student body and the changes in its composition; thirdly, the extensive and far-reaching accretions of knowledge ... and fourthly, the growing extent of government aid to universities, with its implications.

His analysis was almost prophetic. And it was no less applicable to Australian universities even though his audience comprised more than 500 officers and executives of Commonwealth universities, including 140 vice-chancellors and presidents. Schonell concluded the address by declaring that both capital and recurrent funding to universities must be increased. To him the choice was for a country to do so or to put its head in the sand and so to "drift into intellectual bankruptcy, an ailment not unrelated to economic anaemia, and find [itself] unable to play a purposeful part in international affairs during the eventful and decisive years ahead" (*ibid*, 22).

During the several years following Schonell's address university expansion continued, for Australia was on the plateau of what seemed to be a profound commitment to higher

education which most Western nations had endorsed in the post-Sputnik era. The decline of that commitment came soon with the OPEC era of international economic crises and domestic contraction. This period, evident from the early 1970s, inaugurated the principal funding for Australian universities coming from the sole source of the Federal treasury. Associated with this phase has been a decline in financial allocation to universities, the effects of which have yet to be calculated.

**Optimism and Decline.** So much for prophecy; what then of advocacy? Amongst Australian politicians there seem to be more red-blooded optimists than there are staunch advocates of the university, those Ashby saw needed to defend its contribution to excellence. Hudson, formerly a state minister of education and during the 1980s Chairman of CTEC, echoes the optimism of previously quoted politicians of quite different persuasions (1985, 17):

When one examines the changes that have taken place over the past decade, there is every reason to be optimistic about the future of tertiary education in Australia. Our institutions do respond to the needs of students in the community at large .... for example, the enormous changes that have taken place in teacher education, business studies and computer science over the past decade. Furthermore, our institutions, when they address specific problems, are much more flexible than they normally care to admit publicly.

A cynic might say that fine phrases like Hudson's hang shabbily on the lean body of Australian universities; they in fact cloak the reality of the general problem of having to accomplish much more with considerably less resource. Elsewhere (Duncan, 1986, 68) Hudson states that while "real resources per student have increased by 50 percent in primary and secondary schools over the decade, there has been a decline of a real 8 percent in higher education – 4 percent in universities and 11 percent in colleges of advanced education".

Government policies of contraction and rationalisation became euphemisms for institutional amalgamations, fiscally enforced CTEC directives and increasingly central control in an area of education neither ministerially well guarded nor enjoying strong advocacy elsewhere. Further evidence may be found in the 1986 *Report of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* (Hudson, 1986, 4-5), for example:

1. Total public sector funding of higher education as a proportion of GDP, which doubled between 1965 and 1975, declined by more than a third between 1975 and 1985.
2. Total Government outlays on higher education were virtually unchanged in real terms over the decade even though the number of students increased by one-third (and EFTS by one-quarter).

3. Operating grants increased in real terms by 16 percent during the decade (cp. 25 percent EFTS increase) but capital expenditure in 1985 was less than one-fifth of the real level of 1975.
4. Direct research expenditure in universities increased by 40 per cent, not from CTEC grants, but mostly from other government or private bodies providing specific purpose grants or contract research.
5. Funds for equipment did not increase in real terms.

A terse statement on the same page of the *Report* sums up the situation, at least from a Treasury perspective: "There is little scope for additional savings". From an institutional perspective, some of the larger and older universities are shackled with high and accumulating maintenance deficits, relatively static academic staff numbers and increasingly senior staffing profiles and associated salary and superannuation problems. In addition to issues of academic excellence, environmental forces have given Australian universities some rather intractable management problems which could affect the leadership, even the direction of these institutions during the remainder of this century.

Universities are not short cycle production units. Because among other reasons they are highly specialised, labour intensive enterprises, they are generally not able to respond quickly to altered market and environmental conditions. The maelstrom of change and its consequent impact on staff/student ratios, subject departments and sometimes their viability, academic career development and employment continuity, research and other specialised programs – indeed the general framework for planning and administering higher education – is well known. It has been the subject of many conferences and petitions and some perceptive publications.

Much less evident has been institutional planning encompassing a hierarchy of strategies and contingency options endorsed by constituent parties. Universities and colleges which crested the waves of expansion have to accept some responsibility for the consequences of their own lack of forward and integrative planning, both within their institutions and in relation to the external publics they are funded to serve. Planning strategies have too often been hip-pocket defences as institutions battle with governments and coordinating agencies, the target issues becoming institutional autonomy and accountability. Frequently politicians have interpreted the latter in terms of cost effectiveness in a limited time span of one or two budgetary years. The results of short term and inadequate planning became clear in the 1980s in Australia: for example in the contentious area of manpower planning – a current oversupply of teachers, a recent shortage of geologists and a projected shortfall in professional engineers; in research programmes which once curtailed can only be resumed at greater cost; in disruption to library holdings particularly serials; and in the expanding technological deficit ensuing from failure to replace and upgrade obsolete equipment.

**Loss of Political Priority.** Why was it, in words that echoed Ashby four decades earlier, that "Australia's higher education institutions have been subjected to unsupported criticisms and unthinking hostility, ignoring the enormous contribution they have made to the country's economic social and intellectual well being" (Karmel, 1986). What explains the failure by any major political party to give as much emphasis to university education as to other levels. One conclusion stands out: Australian universities had lost their previously high level of political priority in terms of access to national resources.

I do not believe that there are any votes in universities, and whatever may be said now, if there was a change of government, you think of all the other claimants on the public purse whose voices will be louder and more effective than ours.

What Sir Alex Jarratt (1986, 12) states bluntly about the UK situation has equal applicability to Australia. The cutting edge to this loss of political priority for Australian universities perhaps has its finest point in the progressive reduction in academic salaries and conditions. In a nation with an historic and structured system of arbitration and conciliation, academics have recorded markedly lower salary increases when compared with a vertical range of occupations as shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Percentage Increase of Average Salaries 1976 to 1982**

Occupation	Increase as %
Academics	66.6
Building Workers	87.8
Federal MPs (with allowances)	97.0
Federal MPs (without allowances)	81.2
High Court Judges	77.9
Metal Workers	93.5
Transport Workers	86.8

Source: Derived from Duncan (1986).

**Unrivalled Contribution and Centripetal Forces.** Despite their loss of priority in terms of Treasury appropriations, the response of most universities, indeed of the sector generally, is rarely negative; they continue to make an unrivalled contribution to Australian society. This position was strongly endorsed by Professor Peter Karmel, Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU) and formerly Chairman of CTEC, when he stated that "over the past 10 years, universities have awarded more than 250,000 bachelor degrees, 32,000 doctors and masters degrees and 34,000 post graduate diplomas". Furthermore, universities

contributed about 40 percent of Australia's research and development activity and 54 percent of all pure and strategic basic research. Karmel (1986) noted that accumulated building maintenance and rehabilitation amount to nearly \$200 million and concluded his defence:

Our universities are not failing. They have responded energetically to the demands made upon them. They have the capacity to give even greater returns to the investment the Australian community has made in them if they are adequately resourced and their value recognised.

On R.M. Hutchins' simple log of higher learning, diversity and flexibility do not balance easily with accountability to a single paymaster. Among the implications of Schonell's prophecy about "the growing extent of government aid to universities" has been the development of centripetal forces which seem to encourage and even reward standardisation and homogeneity. Evidence of the operation of centripetal forces between universities and CTEC is abundant. Within universities the same centralizing forces are gathering momentum, no doubt related to financial constraints and the external demand for standardised information about institutional activities.

**Positive Results Within Institutions.** Within Australian universities during the mid-1980s the consequences of the changes outlined above and, in particular, of reduced financing are not all negative. In a paper, "Management Development for Academics" (Sloper, 1984), three positive outcomes were identified which will significantly influence Australian universities in the future. They are summarised here because of their importance to the context in which a vice-chancellor functions.

*Firstly*, the concept of administration, with its somewhat passive and bureaucratic connotations, is being displaced or at least expanded to include management and entrepreneurship as legitimate, if not necessary, activities in the overall operation of universities. What is referred to here is neither the often inept marketing or commercialised packaging of academia – of courses, surplus student accommodation, convention venues or whatever else – nor the debate about education as an industry and its marketability (Beare, 1982; Bates, 1982). Rather, higher education management, as an expansion of the concept of university or college administration, provides a positive and acceptable alternative to the myth of the ivory tower institution. It encourages new expressions of accountability at the initiative of the institutions; and in so doing, it invigorates institutional autonomy. Principles of managerial and entrepreneurial practice are implicitly affecting personnel from vice-chancellor to non-tenured tutor, as well as administrators of both hard and soft data. The expansion of applied research institutes, the control of patents, the appropriate dissemination beyond academic journals of research achievements, the reinterpretation of extension and community service activities, and the thoughtful preparation of information for a diverse student clientele

before and after enrolment, are among examples of increased concern for a more holistic management process in higher education institutions. At the centre of these examples have often been changes in the pattern of decision-making and resource allocation within institutions.

*Secondly*, teaching and research staff have become more involved in the process of institutional management. Their involvement has been extended from a more generalised concern for governance, a process which is usually concerned with policy formulation and with determination of decisions that have long range import and which, according to Selznick's (1957) distinction may be related to *critical* rather than *routine* organisational matters. Now academics, often through committees responsible to an expanded academic board, are involved with matters not necessarily concerned with either policy formulation or issues of *critical* import.

Two factors provoke increased boundary-spanning by academics into previously administrative areas: one has to do with heightened competition for diminished resources; the other, and of potentially greater significance (given the limited discretion actually available in budget allocation once salary and fixed recurrent items are committed), concerns the fundamentally different data base available to guide policy formulation in contemporary universities.

The first factor suggests that in the present era of reduced institutional resources, teaching and research staff have become more involved with decision implementation, those activities previously undertaken or influenced most directly by full-time administrators. It is not simply that academics with fewer students now have more time for administrative concerns. Some may; but the weight of evidence is that present staff/student ratios compare unfavourably with recent peak enrolment years. A primary motive for greater involvement in administration by teaching and research staff is to ensure equity for their discipline or faculty in the distribution of resources.

The second factor, while incremental in terms of the use by higher education institutions of new administrative technology, has been accelerated by the micro-chip revolution and the use for management services of on-line data bases. No aspect of institutional administration has been unaffected. Collateral with the use of desk top terminals and a variety of micro-processor applications, has been a movement towards the centralisation of institutional data. The standardisation and increased collation of internal data originate from external demands for accountability, both of a statistical and social nature. Universities are often required to respond, and to respond quickly (the responsibility being on a vice-chancellor or registrar as officers of a university, for example), to external requests for data: of a statistical kind towards coordinating agencies and governments, and of a varied kind towards politicians, the press, and other public



interest groups. The centralisation of institutional data is fact. Is there a single day when a head of department does not have a form to submit to central administration: periodic reports of enrolment variations; staff contact hours and room usage; library serials to be deleted; monthly budget returns; requests for part-time marking assistance; schedules of approved staff absences from campus; completed proofs of last year's publications by departmental staff; photocopying and copyright returns and so on? Against this background there has been legitimate concern among academic staff that the initiative in policy formulation – via faculties or their equivalent, academic boards, and governing council – might gradually pass to administrators who work nearest the locus of "the institutional informatics interchange", to coin a neo-Orwellianism. Clark Kerr's "constellation of anarchies" may be coalescing to form a new configuration of data-based power relationships and drawing academics, perhaps unwillingly, into its management orbit. Whether the configuration is Ptolemaic or Copernican remains to be seen.

*Thirdly*, the pattern of professional development for administrators in higher education has assumed increasingly definitive forms. These include the attainment of formal qualifications – in educational administration, business administration and management, accountancy and computer studies, *inter alia* – and participation in specialist short courses aimed at a mastery of new technologies and social requirements as diverse as microprocessor applications, freedom of information or equal opportunity employment legislation.

Corporate aspects of these new definitive forms have seen the growth of professional societies for higher education administrators (often across nominal bi/trinary sectors), the publication of journals and newsletters, and the convening of annual conferences and a range of professional workshops. One can question the motive force for administrator professionalisation. Is it a positive concomitant of the expansion of the management process in higher education or even in part its precursor? Or are its origins perhaps derived from concern about the incursions academic staff are making into previously administrative precincts?

To review responses to these and allied questions would exceed the scope of this thesis. It is sufficient to note here the general thrust of administrator development and its vitality; and to ask whether academics have acquired the necessary administrative skills and knowledge of university operations to be effective in their expanding domain.

**Dichotomous Orientation.** Part of the difficulty for an Australian university in responding relatively quickly or uniformly to rapid environmental changes derives from the dichotomous "nature of the organisational beast": in one direction, the university is committed to the task of conservation and transmission; in another, it is driven by innovation and discovery. If the university were not heir to an innate logic, an historic character which encompasses these

apparently divergent aspects of heredity, it might cease to be. Inherent tension between these two aspects can result in dysfunction, particularly in a short time frame like a decade or two. Yet another Janus-like dichotomy in Australian universities has been identified by a Canadian, Harris (1969, 190). He suggests Australia and Canada are similar in that in educational terms, their universities tend to look back to Britain and forward to the USA, and he adds, "neither is sure in this context that 'forward' means progress". Writing some twenty years ago, Harris saw that an increasingly important challenge for the Australian university was to develop an educational system which would synthesize the often conflicting benefits of British and American practice – a substantially British heredity needed to be adjusted to what seemed to be an emerging American style environment (*ibid.*, 192).

Some of the issues mentioned by Harris, Schonell, and others, and dealt with in this section because of their contextual significance to the research being undertaken, are not new. At a Conference of the Australian Universities held in Sydney in 1920, the first item on the agenda was the matter of relations between Australian universities and the Universities Bureau of the British Empire. Another familiar chestnut, around which coals had been raked before and many times since, was the concern expressed at the 1920 Conference about "the over-multiplication of university studies" and worries about "over-specialisation" as "some students tried to do too much" (Auchmuty, 1970, 238). Of special interest to this study was the resolution passed by representatives of five of the six universities, with Melbourne opposed, that there be appointed "in each university .... a full-time executive officer entitled the vice-chancellor" (*ibid.*, 240).

Universities are organisationally slow to change, at least in formal and structural terms. This is one aspect of their enduring character, the strength of heredity in dissimilar environments. However, in the period under study from the 1960s to the mid 1980s, Australian universities exhibited signs of dysfunction. They showed evidence of being organisations under stress, in different areas and for variable lengths of time. This organisational stress derived for the most part from rapid and severe changes in the external environment, not the least of which was reduced funding; and for which they were poorly prepared to adjust. Until the mid 1970s change was equated with expansion and growth. Then institutions, their academic staff and programs, all of which had been primed on this growth equation, had to adjust to change without growth, or at least, to a much reduced rate of growth in certain critical areas.

**Themes and Issues.** Key themes and issues from this examination of environmental and heredity factors in the contemporary context of Australian universities are summarised below:

1. There is evidence that endemic cultural mores in Australia do not always give uniform recognition to excellence; indeed, it is suggested that a spirit of "anti-excellence" may be latent.
2. Amongst the principal requirements needed by a university to sustain its long term contribution to society are high quality staff of appropriate motivation and adequate funding.
3. The political salience adopted by universities as a group and by separate institutions has seldom been high. Correspondingly low political priority has been accorded universities. This fact is evident whatever the complex of reasons beyond those briefly examined.
4. The political priority and support accorded universities may be related to a relatively shallow historic commitment to higher education in Australia, linked, in part, to a low national stock of graduates and low participation rates.
5. During the two decades to 1986 a growth in centripetal forces encouraging standardisation is evident. These operate between universities and central agencies and also within institutions. Such centripetal tendencies seem to be antithetical to demands for innovation and entrepreneurship in the university enterprise.
6. Positive organisational benefits to universities arising from reduced resources include: a more dynamic appreciation of administration and management; an expansion of the domain of administrative activity for academics; and increasing professionalisation amongst administrative personnel.
7. Centrally predicated rationalisation initiatives and a reduction in growth rates during the past decade have cancelled the change equals growth formula of the previous fifteen years. Universities unable to encompass rapid environmental change in a short time frame have exhibited organisational dysfunction.

Reference will be made to these themes and to other matters dealt with in this section in later chapters that consider the office and role of vice-chancellor in the context of Australian universities.

## **A Classification of Australian Universities**

In this section a brief outline is given of the development of Australian universities within the overall provision of higher education. A classification of universities is presented. This typology is not intended to be definitive; its usefulness, as an analytical framework for the purpose of this research, will become apparent in subsequent chapters. The datum point for the classification is 1983 as the information to be analysed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 relates to vice-chancellors incumbent in that year.

**An Emerging System.** In 1983, there was a total of nineteen Australian universities, the oldest, the University of Sydney, being founded in 1850 and the most recent the University of Wollongong, gaining autonomy in 1975. Five universities commenced as colleges of established universities. Military training institutions which have adjunct colleges in special relationship with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) are not included in this study.

All universities in Australia in 1983 had been created by legislation enacted by state (or colonial) parliaments with the exception of the Australian National University (ANU). In the period 1850 to 1913, each of the six Australian states founded its own university. Apart from Tasmania each state had more than one university; and there were six in New South Wales. Tertiary education in Australia included two other sectors: Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) which with universities constituted the higher education provision and were funded almost entirely from federal sources; and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges, recurrent funding for which mostly came from the states. Upward drift saw some of the larger, multi-disciplinary CAEs, often known as Institutes of Technology, striving for recognition as universities. Planning was well advanced for the establishment of private higher education institutes aimed principally at capturing the export earning potential of education in Australia. Neither of these trends had developed sufficiently by 1983 for inclusion in the present research.

For the purposes of this thesis, Australian universities have been classified in four groups as shown in Table 2.2. The first group, the 19th Century Institutions, have more in common than mere chronology. In a broader (and as yet unpublished) study of vice-chancellors, it was found that certain characteristics of the universities of Adelaide and Tasmania link these institutions closely to the mid-19th Century foundations of Sydney and Melbourne. These common characteristics include: size of the colonial population; dependence upon and intellectual affinity with British universities; the pattern of governance, in particular the relationship between the office of vice-chancellor and that of chancellor. These themes will be examined in a more historical paper beyond the scope of the present study.

The University of Queensland and the University of Western Australia form the smallest and second group, Early 20th Century Institutions. Each was founded after the federation of states and territories into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901; and their foundation completed the pattern of each state having its own university. The Universities of Queensland and Western Australia are located in Australia's two largest states – the latter being one-third of the continent's land area – and served a small and dispersed population. They are institutions established before the social watershed of the First World War; and 36 years separate this group from the foundation date of institutions in the next classification.

**Table 2.2 A Classification of Australian Universities**

Group	Universities	Foundation Date
19th Century Institutions	Sydney	1850
	Melbourne	1853
	Adelaide	1874
	Tasmania	1890
Early 20th Century Institutions	Queensland	1910
	Western Australia	1913
Post War Institutions	New South Wales	1949
	New England*	1954
	Monash	1958
	ANU*	1960
New Institutions	La Trobe	1964
	Macquarie	1964
	Flinders	1965
	Newcastle*	1965
	James Cook*	1970
	Griffith	1971
	Murdoch	1973
Deakin	1974	
	Wollongong*	1975

\* Inaugurated earlier as an affiliated college of another university.

While it could be argued that each of the universities in the Post War Institutions group was established with a specific mission in contradistinction to existing universities, these four were founded or became autonomous in the moderate growth of higher education associated with economic and social revival in Australia in the years after 1945. For the purposes of this study the year in which the ANU formally incorporated undergraduate education, 1960, is treated as its foundation date and not 1946 when it was established as a post-graduate and research institution. The Post War Institutions are a group of universities which had each achieved an identity prior to the emergence of a system of Australian higher education of which the fourth group, the New Institutions, is a more deliberate part. What follows is a synopsis of events illustrative of the separation between these two groups of universities.

The twenty years between the *Murray Report* of 1957 and 1977, when the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) replaced the separate commissions for universities, CAEs and TAFE institutions, saw the inauguration of a system of higher education in Australia. The Australian Universities Commission (AUC) recommended by Murray was established in 1959 and influenced the shape of university development in subsequent years. The second major review of Australian higher education, the *Martin Report* of 1964, as noted

previously, led to the creation of the advanced education sector. Inclusion of teachers colleges in financing arrangements from 1972 made this sector more comprehensive and helped define not only its own but also the university domain of educational activity. Changes to State and Commonwealth financial support for universities in 1973 and the establishment of a TAFE Commission in 1975 complete this brief outline.

Comparison between the New Institutions and any of the other groups in Table 2.2 could have been based on a mix of the following criteria: enrolment size, delivery mode, educational orientation, extent of professional, research or graduate programs, or location. Despite dissimilarity among institutions in this fourth group in relation to any of these criteria, New Institution universities founded since 1964 are, in general, definitively planned elements in the university sector of Australian higher education. Thus the classification given in Table 2.2 derives from analyses of Australian universities in a total system perspective cognizant of centripetal forces and the influence of a single paymaster which were discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

The year 1983 provides recent, available data about Australia's nineteen universities prior to the inauguration of the Unified National System. Ten years previously, in 1973, all but two of the present institutions had been founded as independent universities. The decade following 1973 was also sufficiently long after the Murray (1957) and Martin (1964) Reports, and the creation of the CAE sector to expect the effect of these to be seen in universities and in the appointments made to new and vacant vice-chancellorships. In 1963, ten universities and none of the New Institutions existed. Murray's impact and that of the AUC was only beginning to be experienced. A system of higher education in its contemporary sense had not then emerged.

## Summary

This chapter, comprising three major sections, sets the scene for subsequent research analysis through a definition of parameters. A conceptual framework for the university as an organisation involved the review of several dominant models. The conclusions arising from this review appear under the heading, **Implications for Research** on p.24. The second major section in this examination of the context of Australian universities is summarised in a number of **Themes and Issues** on p.34. The final section provides a classification of Australian universities in Table 2.2 which will be used in the analysis of data in later chapters.

The next chapter moves from this background of organisational theory and the Australian context in the mid 1980s to a review of the legal and formal basis to the office of vice-

chancellor, its constitutional anatomy, and of how appointments are made to the office, an important component in understanding its physiology.