In all the discussion on the recent Federal Budget, a good deal of attention has been given to education and the Commonwealth's financial provisions in this field.

I have paid considerable attention to the new scholarship schemes and particularly the new Senior Secondary Scholarships which we have extended from 20,000 to 50,000, and, of course, at the tertiary level, the new allocation of funds in the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education has also received considerable publicity.

These are two aspects of the unfolding Commonwealth Education Policy of which I am sure most of you will be aware.

However, I think I should draw some of the threads of our education policy together in this talk and should emphasise some of the decisions we have made which have received little publicity in the last few weeks.

Last month I made two statements to Parliament. The first concerned the Commonwealth Education Programme for the current financial year and was an explanation of the education provisions in the Treasurer's Budget. I will run quickly through some of the points I made.

In the last 4 years, the Commonwealth's direct expenditure on education has more than doubled from $193 million to $426 million.

Next July our new 5-year $215 million programme for capital development of Government and independent schools gets under way - $167 million for Government school building and $48 million for the independent sector.
From the beginning of next year we will proceed with our proposal to grant independent schools a basic level of support for running costs on the basis of 40 per cent of the cost of educating a child at a Government school. The Commonwealth will pay half, and we hope States will match it.

In the key area of education research, we will increase expenditure by 21 per cent so that the Australian Advisory Committee on Research and Development in Education can support urgently needed local research into many important areas of education.

There is more money for child and adult migrant education - from $6 million to more than $9 million. More than half of this will help migrant children overcome the disadvantage they have through a poor understanding of English.

The Commonwealth's two major schemes for Aboriginal children will also be stepped up.

At the same time $1¹⁄₂ million will be available in the next 5 years for the development of projects concerning Asian languages and culture.

The total number of scholarships will increase from 70,000 to 123,000. While the new Senior Secondary Scheme will account for a large part of this increase, there will also be substantial rises in the number of university scholarships, later year awards, and advanced education scholarships, bringing the total at the tertiary level to 21,300 new awards each year, and maximum rates of living allowances will be raised and the means test substantially eased.

In 9 months time, the two Commonwealth Programmes of unmatched grants for the building of teachers colleges - $54 million over 6 years for teachers colleges and $2.5 million
for pre-school teachers colleges will come to an end.

The schemes have had a significant impact on the training of teachers. For instance, the number of Government teacher trainees has risen from 29,000 in 1968 to 42,000 in 1971 and the pupil/teacher ratio in classes throughout Australia continues to fall.

The Commonwealth has now decided to broaden and expand its support for State teacher colleges. This means that those teachers colleges which are being developed as self-governing teacher institutions shall benefit through matching arrangements now applying to universities and colleges of advanced education. This means a sharing of both capital and recurrent costs of the colleges between the Commonwealth and the States.

The Australian Commission on Advanced Education will report to the Government by next March on how this can best be achieved.

I should add here that the Commonwealth continues to favour the provision of teacher education in multi-purpose institutions wherever possible, and that is why I am so keen to see teacher education introduced at the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education.

The Australian Commission on Advanced Education will also look at the training of teachers of the handicapped and special remedial teachers to examine the special requirements of this area.

A few days after I made that speech in Parliament I presented the reports of the Australian Universities Commission, the Australian Commission on Advanced Education, and the Australian Research Grants Committee.
Total expenditure under the three programmes will be $1,487 million in the 1973-75 triennium compared with $1,024 million in the 1970-72 triennium. The Commonwealth share has risen from $487 million to $685 million.

Perhaps the most significant feature is that in presenting these to Parliament, I announced that the Commonwealth had accepted all the financial recommendations of the Universities Commission and all the recommendations of the Advanced Education Commission as they apply to individual colleges.

The greatest growth area is in the colleges of advanced education - the programme has been boosted from $252 million to $450 million.

To give you an indication of this growth the number of students enrolled in CAE's in 1970 was 37,600. This is expected to reach 81,000 in 1975.

I think this massive commitment to education proves beyond doubt that the Commonwealth does not take it idly.

It is our declared belief that investment in education is investment for the future. We must develop to the full the natural resources we have available to us, and the most valuable of those is our people.
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