

# Attitudes and Trends in Australian Art and Design Schools

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## Introduction

Australia's art and design schools are grappling with the implications of sustained and profound change over the 24 years since the move into the higher education system – the Tasmanian School of Art joined the University of Tasmania in 1982, followed over the next decade with most others merging into their local universities through the late 1980s to the early 1990s Dawkins reform period.

I'll use the Tasmanian School of Art as a 'mini' case study – it's a school traditionally at the forefront of change, and the one I know best, being a 1970s graduate and its current Head of School. I will survey developments over the past 30 years, current circumstances and possible future options.

Art schools' enthusiastic embrace of academic research, especially research training, radically changed the nature of art and design education. Thirty years ago, a diploma was the standard terminating award for artists and designers; nowadays, as a result of the opportunities provided by Higher Education, few serious aspirant artists stop at a bachelor's degree, many now completing an honours degree, a research or coursework master's prior to undertaking a PhD – up to nine years of full time study - making such folk amongst the nation's most highly educated.

The desire for higher degree qualifications is also reflected in the requisites for lecturing staff members. Prospective art and design school academics are now generally expected to have a PhD, indeed, it is not uncommon for a Dean or Pro-vice Chancellor with responsibility for art school recruitment to insist that only applicants with a PhD are interviewed for vacancies (sometimes apparently irrespective of other indicators of quality, experience and potential). This requirement and the processes of generational change as senior art and design school academics retire, is dramatically re-profiling our schools.

Digital technologies have been equally transformative for our art and design schools, opening up unimagined creative opportunities, but also imposing significant fiscal pressures as schools strive to maintain competitiveness by upgrading and expanding digital capacity. Frustratingly, Australia's funding of university art and design schools has slipped behind the demands of technological advances and concomitant student and industry expectation.

Two current key and complementary developments in national education policy are shaping the future of our art and design schools. The national Australian University Quality Assurance audit

process is now supported by quality assurance and funding determining measures of teaching and research achievement. The Learning and Teaching Fund has been established to measure and reward teaching success, and the imminent Research Quality Framework (RQF) will do the same for research performance. Each is focussing university attention firstly on patterns of performance within the two core areas of academic activity and likely future trends, and each will increasingly be related to income.

Moreover, funding levels are likely to decline for schools that fail to rate sufficiently well on the various measures of teaching performance, especially the Course Evaluation Questionnaire (CEQ) completed by graduates within three months of completing their studies, and the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), conducted at the same time, but measuring graduates' employment success and salary levels as an indicator of the success of specific disciplines, courses and schools.

Despite the success of higher degree training options and the increased popularity of undergraduate courses within Australian art and design schools, and real terms income decline over the past 30 years, the cost imposts of contemporary technologies combined with increased administrative burdens of long-needed quality assurance mechanisms has left most Australian art and design schools struggling to manage within constrained resources and increased expectations and demands.

Not surprisingly given its reputation for strength in the visual arts, and as the state that first brought art training into a university, Tasmania has two creative arts schools offering programs in the visual arts and design. The School of Visual and Performing Arts (SVPA) is based at the University of Tasmania's Launceston campus, located at the Inveresk development, site of the former railway yards and now home to TAFE Tasmania's local arts program, the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, an exhibition centre and sporting facilities. In the south, the University's School of Art, housed in the refurbished IXL jam factory, is situated on Hobart's waterfront in the midst of the city's cultural, maritime and tourist hub.

In addition to being well located within their respective cities, both schools have excellent studio and technical facilities and engage directly and effectively with their professional and general communities. National and international visitors contributing to public lecture programs, artists in residencies, and substantial regional galleries that offer substantial public exhibition programs, all of which serve the community and establish a strong sense of engagement between students, graduates the community and the wider art and design worlds. The Tasmanian School of Art partnered with the State Government in developing Tasmanian Living Artists Week, an initiative embraced by the artistic and general communities and clearly building links between creative suppliers and consumer demand. Equally significant has been the sponsorship secured by the SVPA to support its gallery program and special projects.

Tasmania's two schools have evolved as interesting examples, typifying the differentiations that are starting to define art and design schools. The Launceston School has a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with TAFE Tasmania that permits emphasis on professional and industry-based learning programs. It also strategically embraced interdisciplinary opportunities since

merging with a former performing arts program in 2000, which encourages students to develop wide-ranging creative skills in theatre, music, art, craft and design. It has a modest RHD program, but good coursework postgraduate programs and international student numbers.

Complementarily, the School of Art in Hobart has retained a focus on traditional fine arts studio specialisations and secured an international reputation as a leader in research training, establishing Australia's first research higher degree programs: a masters in 1982, and studio PhD in 1995.

While the Tasmanian model of differentiation won't work in every Australian situation, it is a timely indicator of trends increasingly common among art and design schools. Preparedness to change with the times is an essential prerequisite to survival. As such, you'd expect that the Tasmanian Schools would be examples of stability and viability. Not so, despite the qualities I've outlined, and good enrolment numbers, neither school is confident of its long-term future viability without significant and fundamental change to the way it manages its teaching programs and delivery.

## **Trends and Attitudes Survey 2005**

Concerned by the insecurity experienced by the Tasmanian schools, in late 2005 I surveyed Australian art school heads, asking them how things in their schools had changed in recent years, and how they were feeling about the future.

The responses were sobering.

28 Australian universities have art and design schools, 12 (42.8%) responded to my survey.

- 90% of these are reviewed every five years.
- 90% are restructured with each review, in addition some reported that they had also been restructured outside a formal school review, having been 'picked up' in a faculty or university-wide restructure process.
- 90% are situated within a faculty structure, 90% of those within an arts and humanities mix, 18% within creative arts.
- The average enrolment is 295, with a total extrapolated 2005 load of approximately 8,260;
- therefore, an estimated 2,339 graduated in 2005.
- Most schools still retain a traditional studio model with majors, however 45% have combined low enrolment disciplines to increase/maintain their viability: including, for example, folding drawing into painting or printmedia/printmaking; ceramics into sculpture/3D, printmaking, photography, papermaking and digital art into 'intermedia', video into e-media.
- Recent losses of studio major offerings from Australian art and design school programs include: ceramics (3), printmaking (3), sculpture (3), drawing (2), multi-media (2), glass, textiles, film, illustration, and leatherwork. Four schools reported that they have not lost studio majors in the past five years.

- Studio majors deemed at risk in Australian art and design schools include: ceramics (4), printmaking (3), textiles (2), multimedia (2), fine art, and furniture design; two schools are concerned that the whole school is at risk.
- No schools that responded to my survey use 'craft' in the titles of programs, courses and major streams, favouring instead 'art and design' or 'visual arts' as generic and inclusive terms, however all refer to 'craft' in their general descriptive and promotional information, and many use the term within the title of subjects.

I also asked Heads of School to comment on their situation more generally, identifying issues of concern.

Issues of serious concern to heads of art and design schools include:

- Lowering enrolments
- Hostile commonwealth education policies
- Static/declining funding/income
- An outdated funding model (ie. what is now known as the Research Fields, Courses and Discipline Code aligned funding formula developed in the late '70s/early '80s)
- Increasingly devolved administrative responsibilities and load – especially as these relate to planning and review cycles, and associated quality assurance reporting requirements
- Risk aversion within universities
- Regional locations have their own range of specific risks and worries
- Graduate employment opportunities/outcomes
- Aging staff, and succession planning
- Loss of profile for art, craft and design within university structures
- Liberal arts degrees, trends towards more interdisciplinary/generic courses
- Declining interest in/capacity to teach skills
- Challenges of meeting research objectives and reporting structures that don't fit our discipline/culture
- Reduced hours available for contact teaching
- Increasing class sizes
- Technology costs/convergent technology
- Competition from TAFE and private providers
- Stratification of art and design schools

## **Predictions for Number of Art and Design Schools**

90% of Heads of Schools believe that it is unlikely or highly unlikely there will be more art and design schools in 10 years time. 70% think it is unlikely or highly unlikely that there will be the same number of schools. 80% think it is likely or highly likely that there will be markedly fewer art and design schools in Australia in 10 years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A draft report on my survey was presented to the March ACUADS executive committee meeting. The meeting acknowledged that the data were both concerning and potentially useful. The committee resolved that we should circulate this brief report as an initial draft, without yet being fully contextualised – this happened during the process of writing it up as a paper for the 2006 conference. I was also asked to include some additional questions to extend the usefulness of the survey. Heads of School who didn't

## Tasmanian School of Art 1976 to 2006 - A Comparison<sup>2</sup>

30 years ago, I started art school with the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education's Tasmanian School of Art (which I now head).

In 1976, art schools were usually situated within Colleges of Advanced Education or Technical and Further Education. Previously, many had been independent institutions.

Today, CAE's no longer exist; their art schools are mostly now located within universities, a move instigated by John Dawkins as federal education minister. Most of the amalgamations were enacted by 1991.

Many TAFEs still have art schools, or art courses, about 10 bachelor degree courses are now offered in visual arts disciplines by TAFE and private provider institutions.

1976 was the first year (or maybe the second) of the bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Arts, Visual Arts), which was then a four year course. I think Tasmania's was Australia's first bachelor's degree course in visual arts. Previously the CAEs offered a three year diploma, and a two year associate diploma.

The standard model with the four year degrees included an introductory foundation program and a broad range of studio majors. Some schools still have an introductory semester or year. No university art school now offers a four year undergraduate degree.

In 1976, there were no postgraduate programs: honours, coursework postgraduate courses, research masters and PhD were not offered by any Australian art school. The Tasmanian School of Art (TSA) introduced its first (and the country's) postgraduate programs in 1980 with a graduate diploma (a masters followed in 1982, and a PhD in studio in 1995).

In 1976, TSA's 14 studios included: Foundation Course, Painting, Sculpture, Drawing, Visual Communication (Graphic Design and Illustration), Film Making, Printmaking, Photography, Ceramics, 3D Design, (Glass, Papermaking, and Textiles were in the process of forming), and finally Art History.

The school taught the practical studio components of the CAE's art teacher education program comprising about 40% of our student load.

The school's satellite program in Launceston included studios in ceramics, painting, jewellery and sculpture.

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respond to the initial survey may still wish to contribute, so I was asked to circulate the original questionnaire again too. Six responses have been received. Two responded in 2005, so there is new data on only four more; however, as I expanded the range and detail of questions, there is additional information on which I will report as I process the data.

<sup>2</sup> The data for this section was sourced from archived Tasmanian School of Art files and discussion with current and former staff members who were with the school in the mid '70s.

TSA now has seven (7) studio majors, half the 1976 number. It dropped the Foundation program with the fourth year of the degree (now a BFA rather than a BA - Visual Arts), which was 'replaced' with the Honours course; 3D Design became Furniture Design, Film Making morphed into Film and Video and thence E-Media, Visual Communication to Graphics, and back to Visual Communication, which is now also a degree (although Illustration has not returned as a major), Art History is now Art and Design Theory, Glass, Papermaking, Textiles and Ceramics have gone. Art Teacher Education is not associated with the school, and our northern branch is now the independent School of Visual and Performing Arts.

Along with the BFA Honours, we now have five coursework postgraduate programs (in Art, Design and Environment, Fine Art and Design and Visual Communication) and the MFA and PhD. All these are offered within the current eight major options (7 studio and Theory).

In 1976, there were 26 full time academic staff members in Hobart, nine (9) technical staff members and five (5) administrative officers.

Currently we have 16.4 full time continuing academics, 5.6 technical officers and 2.5 administrative officers: 36% fewer academics; 37% fewer technicians, and 50% fewer administrators.<sup>3</sup>

The school had 292 students in 1976, up 51 or 20% on 1975. In 2006 we have approximately 615 students, an increase of just over 100%.

Therefore our staff/student ratio was 1:11.23 in 1976 and will be 1:37.5 in 2006.

First year applications for 1975 were 137, resulting in 58 enrolments.

The school received 343 applications for courses in 2006 – representing an over 150% increase in applications since 1975. We offered places to approximately 206 of the 343 applicants for 2006, 153 enrolled.

We are attracting more applications, and enrolling a higher proportion of them.

The school's 1976 budget was \$1,750,000; and \$2,678,000 in 2006 representing a 65% increase over 30 years.

With CPI and our growth in student numbers, and drop in staffing the relative decline in income is substantial (to give a comparison of how staff costs have risen in 30 years: a Senior Lecturer salary was \$14,308 in 1973 – and \$88,086 in 2006 – more than 600% increase). Using that measure, our current annual budget would be over 12 million dollars – wouldn't this be a different presentation if that were the case?

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<sup>3</sup> These figures relate to continuing staff members; sessional staffing numbers were unavailable for the 1970s.

## Tasmanian School of Art – Now and the Future

What has resulted from 30 years of change apart from the pressure to do more with less?

The TSA enjoys complex and to some extent contradictory circumstances. Ironically, despite the school's good national reputation within the sector and the university's positive internal teaching evaluation surveys, the nationally applied measures such as the Course Evaluation Questionnaire (CEQ) results suggest that our commitment to teaching and learning is not reflected in our graduates' view of their courses of study. CEQ results contribute to the judgements made about the school by government, the university and potential students, especially through the *Good Universities Guide*.<sup>4</sup>

Following legislation in 2004, university funding is also increasingly determined by performance measures such as the CEQ. TSA has effectively suffered reduced income from the Commonwealth (and also through internal UTAS programs) as a result its performance in CEQ, Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), attrition levels and student progression results. Clearly the school must improve its performance and ensure that students recognise the skills they're developing. Equally, we must ensure that graduating students understand the significance of the CEQ and GDS and fill them in. Typically, smaller regional art schools perform better with the CEQ and related measures. Curiously, these schools are also the ones that reported greatest studio loss or merging and were more pessimistic about their school's future viability.

The standard expectation is that art school academics should devote approximately 40% of their working time to teaching, 40% to research and 20% to administration and professional/community service. In contrast to these generalised averages, the TSA academic commits much nearer to 80% of their working time to teaching and learning, with research, administration and service occurring as 'extras', often in people's own time.

A comparison with teaching practices in other UTAS schools is instructive in understanding the additional costs taken on by TSA. The School has 150 first year students. They are all required to undertake two core Art and Design Theory units. A one hour lecture is provided each week to the whole group, followed by a one hour tutorial; the average size of tutorial groups is 18-22 – therefore, 8 groups. Each student is expected to attend the weekly art forum lecture as part of their program of study. A total commitment for the 12.5 point unit is therefore 10 hours per week. The same cohort also chooses studio units to study. The 150 are divided across 7 studios, with each providing a one hour weekly lecture or workshop, a one hour group critique and a total of 36 hours of one-to-one consultation in the studio. Therefore the same 150 students undertaking a 12.5 studio subject 'costs' the school 50 hours of teaching per week, five times the theory unit. The School receives the same funding amount for a studio and theory unit.

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<sup>4</sup> There is serious doubt and great debate about the efficacy of CEQ and GDS methodology and results. While the mechanisms do not enjoy the confidence of Australia's universities, they remain the government's preferred measure and increasingly affect income levels and reputation. The measures are currently being reviewed and will probably be improved over the next few years. Meanwhile TSA must work with them as they exist, and accept that, despite their faults, some other art schools (almost exclusively small, regional and barely viable schools) rate well through the CEQ. None of the nation's traditionally well-regarded art and design schools ranks at the top of the CEQ survey.

The real terms decline in income for Australian art schools over the past 30 years together with ever-increasing administrative requirements (accountability and quality assurance reporting and planning), salary increases, declining non-salary budgets, increasing student load – but declining demand in some areas, have made it virtually impossible for schools to continue to offer the full suite of studio disciplines and to do so in the traditional ‘atelier’ mode.<sup>5</sup>

The rapid development and take-up of postgraduate study by Australian artists (and to a somewhat lesser extent by designers), together with recent research study findings, make it quite clear that twin realities must be addressed by art schools:

- 1) The majority of professional practicing artists (earning or reasonably aspiring to earn their living from art – practice, teaching, etc.) have completed postgraduate study within their discipline, and this trend is increasing, and
- 2) Most bachelor degree graduates do not earn their living as artists (more designers do) but acknowledge that their degree provided valuable transferable graduate skills that have assisted them in the employment.

This means that undergraduate fine art (and to a lesser extent design) education is primarily utilised by graduates as a means to establish set of useful transferable skills that provide them with comparative advantages for professional/employment opportunities other than arts practise. The three year bachelor’s degree does not train artists; specialist postgraduate programs do that. Consequently the bachelor’s degree programs must be reconsidered to ensure that they are best directed to the way in which graduates actually use them, to ensure that the course content and form is focused on maximum development of those skills identified as useful and transferable, and on those that are not so prevalent and that could be enhanced within teaching programs (communication skills – especially writing skills, and teamwork are conspicuously lacking qualities in art school graduates).

## **Summary of Major Issues – The Art School Environment**

### **Funding Model**

Demand driven funding is fine, except that the amount per student is insufficient for the type of studio teaching we provide. As a result, many schools are unable to maintain the range of studio majors, and the manner in which they’ve been traditionally taught – resulting in the risk is that the decisions of young people considering tertiary study has a direct affect on the viability of disciplines and schools. Art and design school budgets are so tight that they cannot carry disciplines that are not popular. The recent additions of Research Quality Framework and Learning and Teaching Fund and their reliance on the outmoded Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD) and DEST’s reluctance to include categories that adequately reflect creative arts research processes and outputs will increase pressures and may perhaps push some schools over the line of viability.

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<sup>5</sup> See the summary of responses by heads of school to the 2005 Attitudes and Trends survey, included within this document.



### **Costs of Technologies**

The school funding model established in the mid 1970s does not accommodate computers and related hard and soft ware maintenance and upgrades. This costs the TSA about \$100,000 each year, an amount that places great pressure on our school and ensures that it remains marginally viable in financial terms. I think it is instructive to note that at a time when the country boasts a disposable surplus of 10.6 billion dollars, that neither the government nor opposition has advocated increased investment in higher education - in knowledge development. I do not foresee any significant improvement in funding arrangements in the near future.

### **Postgraduate Options**

I think it is fair to say that all people who have completed a fine arts degree and who are committed to pursuing a practice as an artists or designer will go on to do a postgraduate course. Undergraduate degrees in fine/visual art are being increasingly viewed as good first degrees upon which people build a specialisation through postgraduate study (art teaching, arts administration, art practice, academic career, etc.).

### **Degrees at TAFE**

The increasing number of TAFE degrees is presenting a level of competition for university art schools that is beginning to threaten viability. The first was introduced in 1999/2000; there are now about 10 offered in Australia. TAFE programs cost under \$1,000 per year, whereas university courses have a HECS debt or fee of almost \$4,000.

Interestingly, I have had anecdotal reports that mature-age students choose TAFE programs, being more price sensitive and less concerned about the perceived status of the degree, whereas people coming directly from HSC tend to favour the more expensive, higher status university degree program. Nonetheless, the proliferation of degrees, especially cheaper ones, has substantially increased pressure on the art school sector.

### **The Bologna Agreement – International Context<sup>6</sup>**

The Bologna Declaration (2) was signed by 29 European countries in June, 1999 (expanded to 40 participating countries by 2005), establishing a standardised two tier higher education structure in Europe, a three year bachelors degree and a two year masters, complemented by a third level, a three year doctorate.

This arrangement is at odds with the Australian system, typically a three year bachelors degree, one year honours course, an 18 month to two year coursework masters, and (either or both) a two year research masters or three doctorate/PhD. Although not fully endorsed and implemented in Europe, Bologna reminds us that dovetailing is increasingly important with exchange agreements, student and staff mobility and the related issues of income generation through international student enrolments.

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<sup>6</sup> The Bologna Agreement, drawn from a discussion prepared for University of Tasmania Academic Senate by its chair, Professor John Williamson in early 2006.

The USA system is usually a four year bachelor's degree program followed by a two-year master's. Increasingly, studio practice PhD programs are appearing in US art schools within studio practice (not just art history and theory).

### **Learning and Teaching Fund**

The L&TF will increase the impact of the inappropriate CEQ, Graduate Destination Survey and related measures. Universities and their schools will have to commit resources to improving performance against these poor measures, argue for their improvement and adapt to funding linked to them.

### **Research Quality Framework**

Implemented well, the RQF presents many attractive opportunities for Australia's university art and design schools. However, implicit within the RQF is greater accountability, the requirement that measures be developed that permit (objective) evaluations on the relative merits of performance and outcomes. To ensure both quality research and positive impacts from its publication and exhibition will require that schools dedicate academic time and budgets that permit quality research projects. That time and money is not likely to be available within current school operating structures that see approximately 80% of resources committed to teaching and learning. Moreover, schools that do not have a substantial track record with research performance (publishing, exhibitions, grant and consultancy income generation) will be deemed 'teaching only' and may not be permitted to manage research higher degree programs.

### **Succession Planning**

In light of the scale and nature of changes and developments over the past 10 to 15 years, the qualities needed in a successful art and design school academic has changed significantly. Along with this, many longer-term staff members, those that have built our art schools, are tired and often disenchanted. Schools will need to manage the process of moving staff on and recruiting new academics carefully, respectfully and expeditiously – and the associated costs will increase pressure on already stressed budgets and Heads of School. The profile of a newly appointed academic will be very different to that of staff member appointed before the mid 1990s.

### **Impacts of Change Over Past 30 Years**

The model for art school degree study in Australian universities was established in the mid '70s, when as we know staff numbers and funding were about double and student numbers half. The focus was on development of technical and conceptual skills over a four year course. I have explained a number of the changes since then, and now ask the question: is this the most appropriate model for the future? I am beginning to think the changes and challenges have compromised many courses and that the arguments in favour of the studio-based undergraduate degree are no longer valid.

In summary, I fear that these issues and the contemporary fluidities (crossovers) of creative practice together with efforts to legitimise art schools within universities have created a veil that is disguising a reduction in the range and quality of studio offerings available in Australian art schools, to the point where we are no longer able to claim 'traditional studios'. Driven by

increasing costs and declining income, thereby ultimately restricting artists' capacity to utilise the full range of media, materials, techniques and processes traditionally associated with art, craft and design practice, we are not able to sustain studios as they were originally envisaged.

Have we finally starved the 1970s studio teaching model to a point beyond which an alternative is the only option? And are these alternatives able to provide a more relevant art, craft and design education, more likely to prepare our graduates for career success? And given our achievements with postgraduate programs, do we need to hold onto the remnants of traditional 'studio' teaching? Clearly, decisions already made by a number of schools provide an indication of the trend; many schools no longer offer the full range of media-specific studio majors, favouring broader thematic studio programs. Art schools are moving towards generic 'creative arts' degrees in studio.

### **Predictions for the Future**

I was interested to see the University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor, Glynn Davis's kite flying late last year as he proposed a move towards an 'American model' of generalist undergraduate awards with specialisation occurring within postgraduate programs.

His musings rang a bell, crystallised thoughts for me. Most serious artists nowadays are completing a bachelor's degree, followed by honours and then a masters, and increasingly adding a PhD (nine years all up). If so, and acknowledging that most of our baccalaureates won't be practicing artists and designers but will use their degree in whatever they do and accepting that our (traditional) teaching structure is unsustainable, should we be restructuring our courses to reflect the way our students use them – as general career preparation, refining to specialisation only in subsequent study in Honours and Postgraduate (professional and research) courses? (Blackwell & Harvey, 1999).

### **Reconceptualised Art and Design School Courses**

Three year undergraduate programs will be reframed with major emphasis placed on developing the generic skills common in artists and designers, which are most likely to be useful wherever the graduates' careers take them. These include: adaptability and flexibility, commitment, resourcefulness, problem solving, creativity, etc. The Blackwell and Harvey report suggests that teamwork and communication skills could be improved – something that might be worth including within courses (along with professional internships/placements and exchanges). The structure of such a course would be much more economical to teach, thereby removing the 'sword of Damocles' hanging over most art schools.

Such programs would emphasise genuine inter/cross-disciplinary (art, design, music, digital technologies, theatre, dance, film, television, etc.) opportunities within such an undergraduate degree, and not stream people into traditional studios before third year.

The post-bachelors degree two year block will be a merged and reconceptualised version of the current honours and coursework awards. Honours and research masters as we now know them will decline and probably cease to exist, being replaced by coursework Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas and Master's, and a research option (methods and thesis) will exist to

permit building a terminal degree of 'Masters with Honours'. This will be followed by a PhD and professional doctorate.

Graduates with the two year 'Masters with Honours' would be able to claim a degree with all the value of the current research masters degrees, and be eligible to proceed to a PhD. This model would fit more readily with the changes mooted for Europe and bring them more into line with the USA's structure.

## **Summary of My Four Key Predictions**

Traditional media-specific studio majors will disappear from undergraduate programs, emphasis will be on developing a range of valued transferable generic skills through the creative arts, still within studios but not in the broad range of narrowly define media-based classifications: painting; sculpture; drawing; printmaking; photography; glass; ceramics; textiles; jewellery; furniture; graphic design; illustration; multimedia, etc. Courses will be structured around set studio and theoretical projects with teaching structures similar to those of traditional 'arts' disciplines, with common lectures, tutorials/critiques and studio supervision – thereby freeing up funds and staff time.

There will be a form of bifurcation of schools: schools without strong research achievement (grants, publications and exhibitions) will be distinguished by cross-art form, interdisciplinary professionally oriented programs closely linked with TAFE schools and courses. These will be most common in regionally-located art and design schools. Schools with sufficiently strong research performance will be distinguished by competitive entry to small (increasingly 'elite') undergraduate programs that emphasise development of research skills, and proportionately larger postgraduate programs, coursework and research.

Specialisation within traditional studio disciplines will occur in the two year block immediately following the bachelors degree, replacing the current Honours, research Masters and coursework models we now use and followed by a PhD or professional doctorate

In order to make sense of this within the schools themselves, within their institutions, and within their market, art and design schools will benchmark and standardise awards structure, content, nomenclature and quality. Distinctiveness will be seen in thematic course content, student feedback, graduate success, performance rankings and staff member research achievements.

Structural arrangements will continue to be fluid and subject to change – leading eventually to fewer universities, but in the short term, to fewer faculties. We're already seeing 'fine arts' and 'creative arts' faculties folding into larger arts, humanities and social science groupings. Similarly, schools are being combined to increase size and efficiencies. There will be fewer discrete 'fine arts' schools and more cross-art-form visual and performing arts, architecture, design and art schools.

Taking an optimistic view, the incoming RQF will oblige arts schools to agree on a common set of performance metrics and standardised context statements against which quality will be

appraised. This will result in more comprehensive acknowledgment of the nature and significance of creative arts activity – process and outcomes by government (and universities) for the first time.

These are thoughts that I'm putting forward to encourage discussion. Despite our numerous strengths, we are all vulnerable to economic rationalism – and will have to consider a strategy of increasing our overall numbers to fend off threat. But, equally, I believe that we'll have to restructure our programs and practices to maximise our viability and relieve some of the current crippling stresses we all experience. So while I suspect that our school review later this year will oblige us to reflect on how we can most efficiently (cheaply) deliver our courses, and consider alternative operating structures, I would like us to be honest about how our 'industry', our school, and our competitors have changed over the past 30 years, so that we can make informed and realistic decisions about the future of art, craft and design education within Australia.

Most of all, I want us not just to read the writing on the wall, but to be prepared to engage in debates, take control and actually do the writing. I would like us to lead rather than follow, play to our acknowledged strengths – and do rather than be done to.

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