

DIGITAL DISRUPTION AND CO-CREATING AUSTRALIAN STUDIES

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Abstract

In the early 1990s, designing curricula was a fundamentally different exercise to what it is today: teaching was face-to-face, resources were print-based, overhead projectors were state of the art in lectures, while VHS had only recently taken over from Betamax videos. Computers were little more than text editors, as floppy disks gradually reduced in size from eight inches to three and a half. Compact disks vied for supremacy with vinyl in music stores, not as storage devices, while DVDs had not yet been invented. I had arrived in London in August 1989 to work at the Menzies Centre in the midst of immense transformations in the world. Less than twelve months into the job, I received a call from the Australian Ambassador in Budapest with a request to scope the prospects of mounting Australian Studies programs at Hungarian universities. The present article gives an overview of the development of Australian Studies and compares what it was like to teach an Australian Studies course in Hungary then and what it is like today.

Each Wednesday at 8.00 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time - across thirteen weeks of Semester 1 2019 - Dorka, a shift worker from Geelong (Victoria), joins a small Webinar group studying *Banned Books*, as part of her Australian Studies at James Cook University, along with Veronika, Bernard, Zoltan, Gizella and Agnes from Cairns and Townsville (Queensland), Cecilia who completes a six hour round trip from her work on an outback mine site to login from her home at Broken Hill (New South Wales), Douglas who resides in Canberra (Australian Capital Territory), Werner who lives in Darwin (Northern Territory), Agnes from Kangaroo Island (South Australia), Giovanna from Launceston (Tasmania), and Glenda from Fremantle (Western Australia).¹ These Australian-based students might have just as readily logged on from anywhere in the world - for example, Budapest, Berlin and Barcelona - where Australian Studies are taught in Europe. Our online discussions are animated and typically run longer than the allocated hour. Those unable to meet online at the appointed time join in a discussion board and appear to be similarly motivated.

At our week six meeting, Dorka informs the group that she intends writing her term paper on the banning in Australia of DH Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Veronika is exploring the prohibition of comics, magazines and pulp fiction, Bernard is investigating the trial, guilty verdict and imprisonment of the novelist Robert Close for criminal obscenity, Gizella is interested in the banning of Gore Vidal's *Myra Breckenridge*, Zoltan is testing definitions of sedition against the banning of JM Harcourt's communist

¹ Aliases used.

novel *Upsurge* for indecency, Agnes is examining the banning of Jean Devanny's *The Virtuous Courtesan*, Douglas is assessing the filtering of books for young readers by libraries and schools, Cecilia is inquiring into the banning of Nabokov's *Lolita* which, unlike *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, does not contain a single "offensive Anglo-Saxon four letter word", Werner is bemused by the prohibition of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Agnes is tracing legal definitions of criminal libel in the trial of Frank Hardy's *Power Without Glory*, Giovanna is undertaking a study of non-violent erotica in a comparative analysis of film classifications, while Glenda is delving into the dark web. Although the class is small, these meetings double as a site for testing strategies in digital learning, which has been a feature of higher education for twenty five years.

Banned Books is one of a suite of new subjects I teach at James Cook University in 2019. Each has been designed with digital literacy in mind, including *Modern World History*, *Time Traveller's Guide to Australia*, *Modern Australia*, *Crime and Punishment* and *War and Peace*. The subjects are scaffolded by 130 lectures and a similar number of podcasts, face-to-face and online seminars, online quizzes and discussion boards. Two-hour consultation periods are set aside each week for in-office, Skype and Zoom meetings. My preliminary observations are that standards and engagement are better than in previous years and that participation and retention rates are up, leading to tentative speculation that the online student experience has been enriched.

Phase two of the digital strategy involves a plan of encouraging students to submit assessment items for possible online publication (for example, through <http://blog.naa.gov.au/banned>), creating digital content for peer review in the form of blogs and vlogs, the selective release of podcasts as a means of marketing the subjects beyond the University, and a longer-term ambition to introduce interactive games as part of the subjects' design and delivery. An early adopter of digital technologies through the co-creation and management of the Australian Public Intellectual Network between 1997 and 2011 (archived at <http://www.api-network.com>), I remain ever alert to digital transformations and disruptions.

In 1990, following enquiries from Eötvös Loránd University and the University of Debrecen via the Australian Embassy in Budapest, I set about co-creating Australian Studies programs within the Hungarian Higher Education Sector. The fall of the Berlin Wall the previous November and Velvet Revolutions across former Warsaw Pact countries had animated optimism globally in the wake of earlier disillusionment triggered by the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989. Our initially cautious readiness to believe that the world might be changing for the better was buoyed up in February 1990 by the release of Nelson Mandela from Robben Island Prison after twenty seven years of incarceration in Apartheid South Africa. I had arrived in London in August 1989 to work at the Menzies Centre in the midst of these transformations. Less than twelve months into the job, I received a call from the Australian Ambassador in Budapest, Hon Douglas Townshend, who requested that I scope the prospects of mounting Australian Studies programs at Hungarian universities.

Arriving in Budapest for the first time in December 1990, I witnessed firsthand the seismic political and historical shift that was underway. Retreating Soviet garrisons rumbling along the city's wide boulevards provided assurance that the Cold War was coming to an end. Beginning in March 1990, the last of the long convoys was despatched by mid-1991. Out of sight of these awe-inspiring scenes, an entirely different revolution was about to sweep aside many of the most stable of assumptions of twentieth century modernity. In March 1989 the World Wide Web was announced, though very few, even Microsoft's Bill Gates, comprehended the significance of what was about to transpire. Commercialisation of the internet five years later in 1994 marked the beginnings of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Now-familiar terms of digital education, like blogs, vlogs, Skype and Zoom would have seemed like nonsense-speak as we made our first tentative efforts to establish

Australian Studies in Hungary. In a special issue of *Hungarian Studies in English* given over to the development of Australian Studies and published in 1992, I cited an entirely different order of global communications influences that contributed to the “breaking down of national borders”. Satellite television channels such as “MTV, CNN and Sky predominate[d] through satellite dishes across Europe” and significantly challenged Soviet influence in the region. I might also have mentioned media magnate Robert Maxwell’s efforts to establish a continental English-language newspaper – *The European* –, which was published between May 1990 and December 1998 (Nile, 1992, p.18).

Communications scholar Geoffrey Kirkman famously observed in 1999 that over half the world’s population had never yet made a phone call. He was talking about landlines. A mere two decades later, in 2019, two thirds of the world’s people (4.7 billion or 63%) owned mobile phones (Mobile Phone Users Worldwide); around 60% had internet access (Internet Users Worldwide). While a digital divide continued to be evident (80% take-up in the Global North), mobile coverage extended to more than 90% of all people globally (May, 2011), with 60% accessing the internet via mobile devices (Mobile Users Worldwide).

More than 5.5 million Hungarians owned smart phones by 2019, while 80% of the population enjoyed internet access (Internet Users Hungary). By this time Australia recorded 22 million internet users and 20 million mobile phone subscribers, of which 85% possessed smart devices (Mobile Phone Users Australia). As elsewhere, the impact on Australian Higher Education continues to be profound. “Like every other sector of the economy, Australia’s universities are facing the forces of disruption,” observed Jack Goodman, Founder and Executive Chair of the online company Studiosity, citing a survey of students which indicated that as many as one in five believed that physical campuses were unlikely to exist in twenty years. “To continue to thrive and deliver value to the nation,” Goodman observed, Australian Universities would “need to find new ways to attract, support, and retain students” (Nadalin, 2018). Flipped classrooms and blended learning approaches were consequently adopted along with new curriculum and pedagogical strategies designed to take advantage of digital learning.

Digitalisation of the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) sector led to the development of systems capable of delivering holdings to screens everywhere. Among the forerunners, the National Library of Australia developed Trove as a fully searchable online archive of Australian newspapers and magazines, covering the period from the early 1800s to the mid-twentieth century, which by July 2019 comprised more than 23 million pages. The National Archives of Australia digitised the service files of more than a million military personnel from the First and Second World Wars. Using these and similar capabilities across a broader range of institutions and resources, Griffith University’s “Prosecution Project” linked criminal court records over a century to 1960, cross referenced against newspaper accounts and other archives, while the University of Tasmania’s “Founders and Survivors Project” mapped convict and criminal records against Births, Deaths and Marriages, war service records, and newspapers. In the literary field, the University of Queensland-led Austlit Database, which began as a print-based bibliography at Monash University, was transformed into a fully searchable online resource that networked Australian literary production, authorship, and reception.

Noting the impact on the study of Australia, President of the Australian Academy of Humanities Professor Joy Damousi observed in 2018:

In a time of artificial intelligence, precision medicine, globalisation and social change, discussion of our national future depends on informed ethical, historical and cultural perspectives provided by [the] humanities, arts and social sciences ... New technologies and developments promise to transform our engagement

with our past and our present ... unlock and connect the vast rich record of cultural and social life in Australia. (National Research Infrastructure, 2018)

Yet, for all its potential, digitisation also represents perceived threats to brick-and-mortar institutions. In his "essay" *The Idea of the Australian University* (Davis, 2017), University of Melbourne Vice Chancellor Glynn Davis provocatively suggested that as many as three quarters of Australia's current "path dependent" Universities may not survive the half century to 2070 (p.18). Contrary to Davis' position, Australian Universities have existed in a state of dynamic change since at least the Dawkins reforms in the late 1980s and been agents for social and cultural transformation since at least the establishment of the Australian Universities Commission thirty years earlier in the mid-1950s and the publication of the LH Martin Report in 1964. Like virtually all Universities worldwide, Australian Universities have redoubled their efforts to be primary institutions of the digital knowledge economy.

Flipped classrooms established the potential for deploying virtual and augmented educational content (for example, the 3D Gallipoli App <https://www.abc.net.au/www-anzac/gallipoli>), while borderless education allows for the co-development of rich integrated digital ecosystems that exist independently of location. Obvious recent developments include Massive On-Line Open Courses, TEDx Talks and Conferences, podcasts, and mobile screen technologies capable of receiving myriad interactive content through simple apps for students everywhere, while blockchain technologies suggest new relationship models between institutions, and between teachers and learners, opening up further potential for partnership learning and co-creation.

Triangulating traditional communications through Budapest, London and Canberra, telephone, faxes and post maintained our vital connection in the early 1990s. Each workday morning, I raced across Bloomsbury to my Russell Square Office to marvel at the flow of faxes from other time zones: Canberra ten hours and Budapest one hour ahead of London. Securing library donations was the most pressing and urgent task for ensuring the success of the initiative. The Australian publisher Angus & Robertson came to the party with books, while grants from the Australian Embassy in Budapest and the Menzies Centre provided much needed funding to purchase select titles from the Australian Bookshop in Woburn Walk, London. A further grant allowed for the employment of Glenda Sluga, Oxford postgraduate and subsequently Professor of History at the University of Sydney, to facilitate on-site teaching at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Budapest and Debrecen University. Professor Andrew Reimer from the University of Sydney mobilised his networks to assist in these efforts, while Professor Peter Spearritt, Director of the Monash National Centre for Australian Studies and Professor Chris Wallace-Crabbe, Director of Melbourne University's Australian Centre, provided essential institutional support.

At that time, there were two major Australian centres at Monash and Melbourne, with longer-established centres at the University of Queensland and Curtin University. Griffith University possessed significant teaching and research expertise and, along with Melbourne and Monash, employed a dedicated Professor of Australian Studies. The major European Centre was the Menzies Centre at the University of London, with teaching and research programs the length of Europe - from Aarhus in the north to Lecce in the south. With a substantial presence in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland, and emerging interests in Slovakia, Poland and Serbia, Hungarian Studies on Australia would contribute significantly to expansion across Central and Eastern Europe. The Menzies Centre's visiting scholars program provided the opportunity for senior Australianists to include Hungary on their travel itineraries. Dennis Altman, Bruce Bennett, Chris Wallace-Crabbe, Ann Curthoys, John Docker, Ken Inglis, Marilyn Lake, Andrew Reimer, Henry Reynolds, Portia Robinson, Peter Spearritt and James Walter, among others, made visits to ELTE where they were greeted by

Dorottya Holló, who anchored the teaching program. Former minister, Australian Senator Margaret Reynolds also visited as part of the initiative.

Towards the end of 1992, after convening a successful Australian Studies Conference at ELTE called *Australian Civilisation*, I returned to Australia to head up the Australian Studies Centre at the University of Queensland. Soon after arriving at the St Lucia campus, I hosted meetings which led to the creation of the International Australian Studies Association (InASA). The inaugural InASA president was James Walter, Professor of Australian Studies at Griffith University and former Head and Professor of Australian Studies at the Menzies Centre. Five years later, the University of Newcastle appointed Lyndall Ryan as Australia's fourth Professor of Australian Studies. Professor Ryan had begun her professional life in the mid-1960s as a research assistant on Manning Clark's six-volume opus *The History of Australia*. Half a century on, Professor Ryan and a team of scholars through the Centre for Twenty First Century Humanities co-created a digital resource that revolutionised understandings of colonial violence through the development of an interactive map of more than 250 massacre sites across Australia.

When Professor Ryan began her career as a research assistant in the 1960s, it was within the context of the singular vision of a single individual scholar: the sole named creator of C. M. H. Clark's *The History of Australia* and, since 2015, the centenary of the author's birth, Manning Clark's *The History of Australia*. By contrast, twenty-first century digital projects like the *Massacre Map* became genuine sites of co-creation that provided extraordinarily rich and authentic experiences and opportunities for students of Australian Studies. At the same time, social media became a tool in undergraduate teaching and research supervision (Minocha & Petres, 2012), in addition to specifically tailored educational software. Australia's National Broadband Network began paving the way for greater connectivity, collaboration and competition between institutions (and groups of institutions), learning and teaching, and research, as communication feeds become faster, cleaner and more dynamic.

In 2002, Professor Ryan convened the biennial conference of the International Australian Studies Association at the Ourimbah Campus University of Newcastle, New South Wales. Former Federal Education Minister and Senator Susan Ryan was invited as the conference's special guest of honour. Eighteen years earlier, in 1984, the then Minister had outlined a case for what she referred to as an "ambitious, wide ranging, consultative and creative program to rectify the past neglect" of Australia as a subject of University education and research (Ryan, 1985, p.15). The occasion was the annual conference of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL founded 1977) at Ballarat, where the minister had been invited as special guest speaker. The context - an academic conference on Australian Literature (Senator Ryan had graduated with an MA in Literature before entering parliament) - would establish one of the early and enduring principles of Australian Studies: that it would be defined as being interdisciplinary by building upon the strengths of key disciplines. The 2002 conference generated "The Ourimbah Declaration", following on from and extending the "Debrecen Declaration" of ten years earlier, by calling for the greater internationalisation of Australian Studies. The great changes being effected by the Digital Revolution encouraged efforts to internationalise Australian Studies.

Hungarian Australian Studies had followed closely on the heels of the release of an Australian federal government 'Guide' called *Australian Studies Overseas*, which was the second part of a two-part review of "Australian Studies in Tertiary Education". The main report, *Windows onto Worlds: Studying Australia at Tertiary Level*, had been published in June 1987. Both the report and the guide were presented to the Australian Parliament by the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, who endorsed the central tenet and recommendation concerning what was called the "Australianisation of curriculum" (CRASTE, 1987a, p.iii). Although

this phrase raised a few eyebrows, it was in keeping with the mood of the time, in that it professed a form of 'benign nationalism' (Ryan, 1985) then a common currency of Australian literature, film, music, and a good deal of popular culture (Turner, 1994) - by promoting Australian education and calling to account a university system that had been steeped in British traditions. The review had been commissioned by Dawkins' predecessor, Senator Ryan, in 1984, under the auspices of the Australian Bicentennial Authority established to oversee the 1988 celebrations of two hundred years of colonial settlement (Ryan, 2004, p.26).

The formal announcement of the Committee to Review Australian Studies in Tertiary Education (CRASTE) was made in Canberra on 11 October 1984, along with the allocation of AUD1.3 million which, by the standards of the time, was substantial. CRASTE comprised three members: Kay Daniels (Chair) from the University of Tasmania, Bruce Bennett from the University of Western Australia, and the independent scholar and author, Humphrey McQueen. Its work began in early 1985. Beyond the terms of reference, the members appeared to be in broad agreement about the need for Australian Studies to be a core component of Australian tertiary education. Like the Minister, they saw the bicentenary as an opportune moment to dismantle the influence of London and Oxbridge, especially the privileging of British degrees.

Looking back from the vantage point of 2004, Manning Clark Professor of Australian History at the Australian National University, Ann Curthoys, noted:

Both the Minister and her Committee, and indeed many of those who made submissions or otherwise contributed to the work of the Committee, belonged to the same cohort of educated Australians. They were born between approximately 1940 and 1950 and were part of a generation that had entered the universities from the early 1960s in unprecedented numbers. Yet when this new and large generation of Australians entered universities, it found a university system still oriented to Britain and rather slow to respond to changes in Australian society and culture... For this generation, born in the 1940s, schooled in the 1950s, and flooding in to the universities in the 1960s, the universities had provided an undergraduate education that included very little about Australian culture, society and history. (Curthoys, 2004, pp.60-61)

Daniels (1941-2001) had graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1963. Like many aspiring Australian academics at the time, she travelled to the UK to read for her PhD—at the University of Sussex. Her subject was the British novel of the 1890s (Roe, 2002). Bruce Bennett (1941-2012) was a Rhodes Scholar from the University of Western Australia with an interest in the poetry of TS Eliot which he studied at Pembroke College Oxford (Haskell, 2012). Both Daniels and Bennett took up the cause of Australian Studies when they returned to Australia. They were also interested in interdisciplinary approaches to subject Australia. Daniels taught Australian history and women's studies at the University of Tasmania. Bennett introduced Australian literature at the University of Western Australia. In 1991/92, he collaborated with Tom Stannage from the history department, in an effort to establish an Australian Studies Centre at UWA. In 1993, Bennett left UWA to take up the chair of Australian Literature at the Australian Defence Force Academy. CRASTE's third member, Humphrey McQueen (1942-) had taken an undergraduate degree from the University of Queensland and was, for a time, enrolled in a PhD program at the Australian National University, where he was also a tutor for Manning Clark, before becoming a freelance historian. He was well regarded for his polemic and history *The New Britannia: an Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Nationalism* (1970).

CRASTE's agenda to Australianise the curriculum of Australian Higher Education was seen, in its time, as a natural, if somewhat overdue, corrective to the "cultural

cringe”, and was stimulated by, as much as anything, generational change in the academic workforce noted by Curthoys in 2004. Through the sheer weight of numbers, cohorts of then younger scholars, known as the Baby Boomers, altered the profile and character of Australian Higher Education. These well-educated Boomers came to signify a generational transformation, as Australian universities became decidedly younger, outwardly confident and progressive. “I embarked on a project to introduce full Australian literature courses in my home university”, Bennett reflected, “In that way, I fancied I was establishing my rootedness in my local and Australian community. I felt ‘responsible’ for my local culture” (Bennett, 2008, p.137).

In addition to his regular lecturing duties, Bennett became editor of the journal, *Westerly*, which had been established in 1956 by one of his former lecturers, the writer and academic Peter Cowan. During Bennett’s time as an undergraduate, his home state of Western Australia had boasted one University, founded in 1911, and fewer than four thousand students. In the early 1960s, there were around 50,000 undergraduate students enrolled in BA programs across Australia’s then ten universities (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.33). Today there are four times that number of Universities and twenty times more students. Approaching the third decade of the twenty first century, academics now teach far greater numbers of students from a broader diversity of backgrounds utilising technologies that would have been beyond the wildest dreams of the original architects of Australian Studies.

CRASTE’s recommendations favoured the drawing together of coalitions of Australian interests, including government departments, agencies and universities to support “Australian Studies Overseas.” That was the strategy which underpinned our efforts to establish Australian Studies in Hungary. An obvious and inescapable assumption of the CRASTE report, and a possible source of disagreement between committee members, was the implied deployment of Australian Studies as “soft power” in international diplomacy. “Realms in which such benefits might accrue include trade, politics, social life, culture, science, the military, intelligence gathering, scholarship and education”, the Report noted, “These are not clearly distinguishable, though their cataloguing allows us to present most of the pertinent issues” (CRASTE, 1987b, p.238). A 2013 index ranks Australia highly placed among those countries which use soft power as a tool of diplomacy (Soft Power). The extent to which Australian Studies forms part of this is not certain, but it is clear that this was a lever CRASTE was prepared to pull—in order to gain greater investment internationally. The attractiveness of Australian Studies in Hungary for Hungarians, I observed in 1992, was its vibrant English-language culture which offset some hegemonic implications of both British and American Studies. The Australianisation of the Australian curriculum in Australia, I believed, had the positive effect of contributing to the independence and attractiveness of Australian Studies internationally.

The CRASTE Report also quoted the Department of Foreign Affairs “which pointed to Australia’s relatively small effort in cultural relations.” While highlighting, by way of comparison, Canada, which had “upgraded the role of cultural relations to give it priority alongside politics and economics in the conduct of foreign policy,” CRASTE noted:

European countries invest between 0.2 and 0.9 per cent of their national budgets on such programs, with France committing one per cent, investing the most. The US spends 0.09 per cent [...] which does not include the cost of extensive United States Information Service activities abroad. (CRASTE, 1987b, p.238)

By contrast, Australia’s cultural relations investment represented just 0.0000325 per cent of the national budget in 1985, of which only a small portion went to higher education. By contrast, the US, UK and Canada acknowledged the value of “intellectual

and educational capacities”, argued James Walter, through the “activities of the US Information Service, the British Council or international Canadian Studies programs” (CRASTE). Walter noted a reciprocal working arrangement that had grown up between the Menzies Centre, following its inauguration in 1983, and the Australian High Commission in London which “recognised the value” of academic “infrastructure and personnel” to the management of “information for London dissemination” (Carter, 2004, p.218). Even so, funding remained, at best, ad hoc. Today, there is a greater number of Australian Studies Centres across China than in Europe and burgeoning Australian Studies interest throughout India.

Left somewhat bruised by his experiences of heading up the short-lived federally supported Offshore Australian Studies reference group between 1995 and 1998, Walter, who, along with Professor Susan Lever from the Association for Studies on Australian Literature, criticised what they called departmental and policy caprice in “The Relationship Between Australian Studies and Government.” Walter and Lever concluded that the only “apparent element of continuity” in government policy “has been the assumption that cultural promotion must serve trade promotion.” Further:

The focus of successive Australian governments, and their departments, on narrow short-term goals and immediate economic returns has not only undermined overseas initiatives to develop knowledge about Australia, it has destroyed the possibility that Australian Studies can provide the avenue for improved understanding that would bring economic trust [...] The hope of economic gain was a flimsy ground for building on already existing interests in Australian Studies [...] There were perverse effects, in Asia at least—Australian economists were much more likely to be funded to travel and ended up with audiences interested in writing and film; Asian specialists in, say, literature ended up giving papers at their own conferences on comparative economic systems because they saw this as a way of getting funding that might flow onto their own centres. It was a real impediment both to serious research and to a meeting of minds around common interests. Insistence on a purely pragmatic purpose, such as trade, rarely recognises or responds to the actual needs of offshore interests. (Carter, 2004, pp.82–83)

Five recommendations had been made by CRASTE for the development of Australian Studies internationally. The first included the establishment of a joint working party by federal Departments of Education and Foreign Affairs, with representatives drawn from relevant agencies and universities to “coordinate Australia’s educational activities overseas, including Australian Studies.” This has stood the test of time through overseas missions and councils such as the Australia–China Council and the Australia–India Council, and through pro-active diplomatic missions such as the Australian Embassy in Budapest. The second recommendation was that “this coordinating body” should consult with a “wider range of professional bodies and other organisations both in the arts and humanities, and in science and technology” (CRASTE, 1987a, pp16–21). The third recommendation, in two parts, was that (a) Australian Studies should work collaboratively with English-language programs and (b) that bridging language courses should contain significant Australian Studies materials specifically for overseas students wanting to study in Australia. The fourth and fifth recommendations argued that cultural agencies, book publishers and the Australian national broadcaster should become more actively involved in the promotion and resourcing of Australian Studies internationally (CRASTE, 1987a). The Report, more generally, expressed concern about the paucity of Australian teaching materials and the general lack of print-based and audio-visual materials, which has been significantly superseded by the digital revolution.

When CRASTE was commissioned, Australia had thirteen universities. By the time of the publication of the Report just four years later, the binary divide in Australian Higher Education, separating Universities on one side from Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology on the other, was abolished. Further, under the influence of Minister Dawkins, Australian Higher Education began to be conceptualised as a market and export industry. With an influx of Australian and international students, teaching loads more than doubled between 1989 and 2007, while the number of full time staff failed to keep pace and increased by less than 20%. National and international enrolments jumped again by around one quarter in the five years to 2011 (Australian Council, 2012). Deregulation by successive governments encouraged private providers (Harding, 2014), in what was becoming a sector characterised by “demand-driven funding” (Higher Education Bill, 2014). Higher Education is now Australia’s third largest export industry, in which more than one in four enrolled tertiary students are international, the highest proportion of any OECD country. With seven percent of all international tertiary students globally, Australia had become the largest provider behind the US (eighteen percent) and UK (ten percent). Today there are more than a million Australian and international students studying at Australian Universities.

When Dawkins was first elected to parliament in 1974, fewer than ten percent of matriculation-age Australians were at University. Thirteen years later as Minister for Education, Dawkins was determined to create circumstances in which degrees would come within the reach and ambitions of the majority. The plan was simple, bold and ruthlessly effective: bring to an end an elite system by increasing the number of Universities and boosting enrolments. Such an expansion would be part-funded by deferred student loans. Universities might also pursue alternative revenue streams. Dawkins envisaged the creation of a multi-billion dollar education export industry built on international enrolments.

In 1985, Senator Ryan had set the “guidelines to provide fee-charging for international students.” Dawkins pursued the agenda with a greater sense of urgency and moved internationalisation “from the margins to the centre.” He saw new opportunities for an “education industry” capable of exporting the Australian “product to Asia”, especially, and thereby “helping to improve the account deficit” associated with expanding educational opportunities locally (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.30). Diversification of income through internationalisation thus became the order of the day, with almost all Australian institutions cross-subsidising local enrolments with full-fee paying international students. A few institutions became over exposed, as was obvious during the SARS pandemic fears of 2003 and when Indian enrolments declined sharply after 2009. As an exercise in social democracy, however, the reforms proved to be a success. The number of Australian universities doubled overnight and enrolments increased dramatically. By the early decades of the twenty-first century, eighty percent of all Australians between the ages of fifteen and nineteen were participating in secondary or tertiary education, while more than thirty percent of those aged between twenty and twenty four were enrolled in higher education.

Sadly, Bruce Bennett died in 2012 at the age of seventy-one. Many of his near contemporaries, who had contributed to the development of Australian Studies were, by this time, on the verge of retirement or had already left paid employment. On their watch, the academic workforce in Australia had gone from comparative youthfulness to being one of the oldest in the nation, with the arts and social sciences typically occupying the upper echelons in terms of age.

In 2005, University of Adelaide demographer Graeme Hugo invoked the image of a ticking “time-bomb” while investigating Australian academia’s generational dependence on the “boomers” (Hugo, 2005). A review by the learned academies seven years earlier had revealed that around half of all arts and social science

academics had won their way into higher education employment between 1970 and 1975 (Academy of the Humanities, 1998; Academy of the Social Sciences, 1998). By 2011 Boomers accounted for fractionally under half of the academic workforce (48.5%), as generational renewal became a priority for all Universities (Hugo, 2012). The Boomers' generational imprint and the "seventies experience" had powerfully shaped the disciplines and academic networks which gave rise to Australian Studies from the 1980s through to the 2000s. Properly speaking, the area had been part of the "new humanities" and social sciences which, by the time of the CRASTE report, attached "Studies" to a range of interdisciplinary descriptors, including cultural- and cultural policy-studies, feminist/gender studies, postcolonial/subaltern studies and legal studies, among many others from area- to media-studies and beyond. Some of the more spirited debates between practitioners involved challenges to traditional disciplines (such as Literature and History).

ELTE's Australian Studies specialist, Dr. Dorottya Holló belongs to an important step-generation - the "Busters" - between the Boomers and their successors. Her tireless work has seen the development of Australian Studies as a viable and ongoing discipline in Hungary. Endlessly generous, Dorottya has also overseen the development of next generations of scholars in the field. On her watch, Australian Studies has become an established feature of ELTE's curriculum, while borderless education through digital disruption opens up new possibilities and paradigms for co-creation, paving the way for further cooperation between universities at each other's "Antipodes" in Hungary and Australia.

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