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When state schools were king

Penguin, officially known as the Rev John Caulfield Miller, headmaster of St Peter's College, had asked me to attend a meeting.

What had gone wrong? I was a boarding house tutor at St Peter's and was completing a Diploma of Education. 'Saints' regarded itself as, and probably was, South Australia's leading school. We were brought up on the Nobel Prize winners and Rhodes scholars who had gone there. Premiers from all sides of politics and even the leader of the Communist Party were old scholars.

What had happened? What had the boys discussed within the school? Why did the headmaster want to meet a boarding house tutor? There was unrest amongst the staff and the 1960s student revolution was in the air. Plenty could go wrong in a boarding school. Was it on my watch? Was I to be pumped for information about the staffroom?

Problems had arisen at Westminster School the year before. As a resident master (essentially the same as a boarding house tutor), I knew that the housemaster had been rightly dismissed. The boarding houses were subsequently reorganised. I had learnt of behaviour within a school community and boarding school that would have greatly upset the respected Christian leader and principal of Westminster. Yet the possibility of scandal at St Peter's, with a housemaster of the stature and integrity of Dick Potter, was not even a possible thought.

Nonetheless, the impending interview was worrying.

Saturday eventually arrived and I was ushered into the Head's office in a state of general anxiety. On a dais at the far end of the double

classroom-sized room was the headmaster's huge desk and chair. Light streamed through the bay windows. The form of the headmaster at work could be made out. But as I entered, he rose and walked around the large boardroom table and chairs in front of wall-to-ceiling panelled bookcases to meet me.

“Michael, I want you to join the staff of Saints as a biology master next year,” he said.

This was a surprise to me because the school rarely employed fresh-out-of-college teachers. I had completed a science degree with a broad range of maths, physics, chemistry and biology. I had sized up that the then rapidly growing science of microbiology was one that would be in great demand, and the Microbiology Department at Adelaide University had been recruiting students with a background of maths, physics and physical and inorganic chemistry. We were invited to do a major and subsequently an honours degree in microbiology. This new science required people with number skills, an understanding of technology and a grasp of molecular chemistry.

I had intended to join the Education Department as a matter of course. There were only four of us in microbiology honour's year, and we were indeed sought after, with job approaches and salaries discussed about double that of a teacher. Being young and idealistic, education had an attraction for me as I believed that teaching the next generation would shape the future of our country.

“Sir, do I have the experience required to contribute to Saints?” I asked. “I attended St Peter's College from Reception to Year 12, of course, but I've only had one year as a resident master at Westminster College. It might be good for my ability to teach to gain wider experience.” Probably I was more awkward and may have messed up the thought with some ungracious statement.

“I've thought of that, Michael. That's why we would like you to apply to take up the position for two years at St Peter's, followed by

two years in England in a leading public school. Following the two years in England you would be welcomed back as a member of staff with international experience.” As I remember the exchange, he continued after what seemed a considerable time but was probably instantaneous, “In order to consider this offer, you may like to know that St Peter’s has had some applications from teachers in state schools. Indeed, I am making an appointment of a teacher who is a senior master in the Education Department.” I was given the weekend to think it over.

The Education Department of South Australia gained the best teachers. Those with permanent status, and particularly senior master status, rarely applied to independent schools. During this time state schools were king. Teachers sought to be part of them and were loyal to them. Many other independent schools were in financial trouble and not all their teachers had recognised degrees or qualifications for their subject areas.

Discussion in the Saint’s staffroom reckoned that Saints was the only independent school likely to survive financially in South Australia. With the ‘Baby Boom’ passing through the schooling system there was a teacher shortage. The state school system had a scholarship program which attracted the top 20 per cent of students to sign up for a degree and gain their Diploma of Education, after which they were bonded to teach for three years in the state school system. The only alternative for working and middle-class families was for their child to win a rare Commonwealth Scholarship. For most, a teacher’s scholarship was the only way a university course could be considered.

I did not like the idea of being bonded for three years following university, so I entered as a free agent. My first year there was indeed a struggle, paid for by fruit picking, frugal living and a generous arrangement of board with a family friend. I won a Commonwealth Scholarship which covered the university fees, but unlike the teacher’s scholarship, it did not provide income to live on. To students making their own way, those in the State Teachers’ University Training Program were rich.

At the time I found there was a distinct element of class attitude in others' responses to this decision. To the generally upper class students with whom I went through school, teaching was a low-status profession because teachers lacked financial status. State schools contracted the best teachers before they were even qualified.

Returning for the weekend to my parents' home in country Kadina, I thought about the offer from St Peter's. After church on Sunday morning, Jim Giles, Area Director of Education, came up to me to discuss my future. I suspect my father, rector of the parish, had spoken with him.

"Michael, if you really want to broaden your education and improve your capacity to teach, you won't take up the two years at Saints and two years in a similar English school overseas," he said. "You'll join the least popular school in the South Australian Education Department and learn how the others live. You'll widen your education and gain experience of their needs. State schools educate the state, not just the select few. See how our least popular schools operate. You'll learn far more."

Such an appeal to altruism and a challenge to enter unknown territory was attractive. My application went into the South Australian Education Department for the least popular school in the state. Looking back, this was the move of an idealistic, naive young man. Yet without this choice, I would never have come to understand the importance of public education or be able to tell the story describing the decline of state schooling – a story that impacts us all.

My Whyalla experience

The least popular school to teach at in South Australia, or at least the school to which the Education Department wished to send me, was Eyre High School, Whyalla West.

Whyalla was a rapidly growing mining town with steel manufacture and shipbuilding as its backbone. On certain summer days, with a strong north-westerly blowing red dust up the streets and the temperature

soaring above 40°C, a stranger in town would tell stories of visiting hell. On other days when the wind changed, smoke blowing across the city kept the illusion alive. Whether it was this occasional searing heat, dust and smoke from pluming industrial chimneys, or just the fact that Whyalla lived up to its Aboriginal name as the meeting place of the winds, no one wanted to teach there. This reluctance was fuelled by a teacher shortage across the state – student numbers were stretching teacher numbers to breaking point. Whyalla's five-hour separation from Adelaide also contributed to its undesirability.

Teachers who went there faced a huge task. The following year my new wife, Rosslyn, joined another Whyalla school, Memorial Oval Primary School, as teacher of a combined Reception/Year 1 class of about 50 five-year-olds. In 1971, with a teacher fresh out from college, a class with 50 Reception children was considered too large, so Ros was given a double classroom to teach in. Six weeks into Term 1, with the arrival of a new teacher, the class was reduced to 38, although during the year it grew to 40.

How did the Education Department cope with this kind of demand? Did real learning take place in the classrooms? Without good discipline and an organised curriculum, teaching and learning were not possible.

Eyre High School, Whyalla West, was a new school in the poorer migrant and working class part of Whyalla. Whyalla High was the established secondary school in town. Eyre High catered for students from Year 8 and was starting Year 11 and subsequently Year 12 for the first time. When visiting the school the year before starting, I was given the job of helping prepare the order list for equipment for the physics, chemistry and biology departments. The senior staff members of physics and chemistry at that time did not have degrees in their subject areas, and they told me they were unsure what the equipment on the lists was and what to order. As a new graduate appointee, I had the challenge of setting up the biology program and ordering all the equipment without any experienced senior biology staff.

The school was serving a difficult area. Today such schools would probably be struggling for control and hence little learning would be taking place. But this school was well ordered, well disciplined. This was a time when state schools were respected, especially in the more challenging parts of the state. Even in these areas, as long as teachers earned it they were given respect and classroom discipline was readily maintained. The situation in primary schools was even more favourable. Ros taught in a number of primary schools across Whyalla and discipline was not an issue.

In the secondary school, discipline had to be earned. This is illustrated by an incident in which Year 8 students were shooting shanghais at the French teacher.

“All of those students who were shanghaiing the French teacher” – a pause follows as I think – “please, you have a choice. Those of you with the guts to own up, line up on the right hand side of the door. Those who are innocent or not prepared to take the responsibility, line up on the left hand side of the door. Those who have been shanghaiing the French teacher will be given one stroke of the cane.”

I am addressing about 45 students in my 1970 Year 8 class. The classroom is new. As their maths and science teacher, I also have the pastoral care role as their class teacher.

“You may think it is stupid to line up and admit your involvement and by so doing receive the cane. This is the honour system. Your honour and integrity is at stake. My grandfather at your age, the age of 12, lost an eye as a result of a student shooting shanghais. It is dangerous.”

The mood in the classroom is slowly changing. “As Form Master of this Year 8 class it is my job to make sure this classroom is safe for all. Due respect must be given to teachers as well. If you own up, you know you will receive one cut of the cane, and that is the end of it. You will also gain respect for your own integrity, respect for the person you have to live with for the rest of your life.”

This being my first year of teaching, I had already discussed the matter

of the shanghaiing with the principal, Mr George Williams. Corporal punishment was the norm for serious offences. I was required to speak with the principal because, as a junior teacher, I had no authority to cane students. Canings had to be done with the authority of, or by, a senior teacher. Now I left the students to think about what I had said and went to Mr Williams' office. He wrote on a sheet of paper that I had authority to cane the students who admitted to the shanghaiing. Their names were of course unknown. No one might be prepared to own up.

With the authority in hand, I walked confidently back to the classroom. There I had the shock of my life. Out of the 45 students a number of girls had lined up with the expected numerous boys. My whole education from Reception to Year 12 had been in an all-boys' school. Both boarding houses had been all male. I had not believed that Year 8 girls would be shanghaiing the French teacher. Indeed, one of those girls was the daughter of the Regional Director of Education.

I knew that caning the boys with one whack across the backside would have a salutary effect. It hurt. But whilst I was brought up with corporal punishment, I was always uncomfortable administering it. My personal rule was to cane only those students who had accepted the punishment. The alternative may have been an after-school detention or worse. Another personal rule with students was to keep my promises. Fair, firm and friendly were the bywords of discipline. These three words were reinforced by the example and good practice of teachers during my student days. Consistency in treatment of students was a prerequisite for good classroom discipline.

By this time I was wondering how in the heck I was going to discipline the girls and keep my promise. I was caught between a promise and my values. I had promised one whack of the cane for those who owned up. They had had the courage to own up.

The boys had come and gone, one at a time, clearly sore and repentant. The girls were all in tears but there was no way they were going to receive the same treatment as the boys. So with the one-foot ruler in hand, flat

side down, a tap on the hand was administered to the already crying and remorseful girls. Justice and honour were maintained. The classroom environment was drawn into line and the students were clearly proud of themselves. There was no more shanghaiing.

When I sent back the list of names caned to the principal, however, there was a very quick knock on the door, and an anxious Mr Williams asked me, "Did you cane all of those students on the list?" When I answered yes, he said, "You had better come and see me. Caning girls is forbidden by the Act."

I tell this story to give an insight into the way that even a first year out teacher who made a wrong commitment in dealing with discipline of girls was quietly supported. There were no parental complaints. The principal, whilst pointing out my error, gave me support. Such was the respect and authority of teachers in general in the community, and the respect for the principal of the school, that I was able to continue a teaching career.

Under-resourced but successful

Normal discipline in schools is essential for effective learning. In the 1960s and early 1970s even a state school loaded with migrants from the wrong suburb of Glasgow and migrants from Spain brought in to provide a workforce for BHP's steel works and shipbuilding, plus the most working-class Australian students, was a school of learning. Yet Eyre High School also had a smattering of upper-middle-class and professional-class students. The Area Director of Education (later to be the Director General of Education for the state) sent his own children there. Although it was a school without an established reputation, out west in Whyalla, the Area Director of Education had confidence that it would be successful and sent his own children there. If this was true for one of the least popular and prestigious schools in the state, then the state system could rightly, with all its difficulties, hold its head high. State schools were indeed king.

There were, of course, times of trouble. With the drastic teacher shortage, a class of 45 seemed normal. At one point, to make up the numbers, a failed first year medical student was appointed to teach. Another teacher, who in my opinion was cynical, lazy and behaved irrationally with students, was held in disdain by both the students and the school. He lined his classes up at the door so that when the bell went, he could rush out to play cards in the staffroom. One day a bucket of gravel was tipped from the roof two storeys up, and as he was rushing off to play bridge, the gravel landed on top of him. I don't know that the students were actually ever caught.

Looking back now, I see that this action was a challenge to the authority of all teachers. Yet back then I did not feel threatened. I knew that the tech studies master, backed by a deputy principal, Miss Grant, had the authority and discipline of the school in hand. Formal school detentions, cleaning up the yard and other forms of possible discipline



Eyre High School Year 10 combined level maths class, 1971

such as the cane were something students wished to avoid. Even the bottom class was disciplined.

Why did this school succeed? Today it would be regarded as outrageously under-resourced.

Curriculum in the '60s and '70s

The inspectors were coming. One was known to wipe his fingers over the top of the doorframes to check for dust.

It was not a good day for a Junior Class B teacher to be demonstrating physics by apparently lying on the front bench. There was no knock on the door. In walked the science inspector, Mr Russell. He was an experienced teacher and author of the biology content in the science textbooks.

The students had been told that the inspectors were coming to check up on them and how much they knew. This, of course, was strictly true. However, checking up on the learning also meant assessing the teacher. The students backed their teachers against the foreign inspector. Our programs were looked at and the testing was reviewed. The students felt a little embarrassed and yet pleased that they were important enough to be reviewed. The motto for the inspectors and the Education Department could well have been: "What you don't inspect, don't expect."

How thin can you spread? The curriculum of schools was yet to become crowded. Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic were regarded as the three Rs and the basis for primary school education. Nature science, social studies and health education were taught and there were a few special days such as Arbor Day. But the pendulum was already swinging towards a broader curriculum. Learning by doing was challenging the pure rote learning of previous years. In themselves all the curricular additions sounded worthy and new subjects such as road safety, sex education, protective behaviour, anti-bullying, physical education theory,

technology education and computing were added. Over the coming years, special days or weeks for indigenous education, world conservation, the Red Nose and Daffodil appeals, grandparents' day, school open days and other school-based activities would push into the curriculum. If there was a problem in the general community there was a growing expectation that schools would fix it. Yet schooling packed to solve all our societal problems risks overloading the curriculum, undermining those necessary skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Schools had a curriculum document that was content-based. Students learnt the phonics method with word groups such as mat–cat–rat. Spelling was seen as a progression with word lists for each year level. Science was a formal subject with a program. Maths covered number, space and measurement. Standards were high and inspectors visited the school to ensure that the curriculum was being taught and students were learning. Teachers felt valued. The modern discussion about teacher performance, inspection, pay and recognition was not an issue – these things were already in place. There were the superior 'Classification A' teachers and the lower 'Classification B' teachers. The visit was important to be promoted to Junior Class A. With the principal's recommendation and support of inspectors you were able to achieve Classification A status. Pay was involved, as was self-esteem.

In secondary schools the timetable was weighted heavily towards mathematics, science and English literature. From Year 8 both maths and science were timetabled with twice as many lessons as any other subject. A foreign language (French and/or German), home economics/art/tech studies, geography, history and religious instruction made up the program. I kept my Year 10 science overhead transparencies for 33 years and discovered I could use them in 2002 to teach Year 11 and 12 physics. In 1970 the Year 9 and 10 science program also had a double subject weighting. Like today, junior science was 19th century science; unlike today, it had an extensive mathematical foundation. Science had a belief that it was teaching hard facts. Experiments were performed, graphs

drawn, mathematical equations written to explain the observations. The inclusion of biology into junior science was an innovation.

In terms of accountability, public examinations were the order of the day. “Public examinations are the only fair assessment in a democracy,” we were told. “After all, the Chinese have used public examinations over thousands of years to establish a meritocracy in their Public Service.” External assessment was done at Year 7 (Progress Certificate) to ensure all graduates to high school could read, write and do arithmetic. There were also public examinations at Years 10, 11 and 12. The schools had formal exams in Years 8, 9 and 10. Parents had confidence that their children were learning.

In June 2007 Professor Dean Jaensch wrote about the 1950s secondary school in an article entitled, “Lessons from the past can serve us into the future”.¹ He attended a state country high school. The school and staff set high levels in academic and social matters. Jaensch writes, “We had external examinations in Years 10, 11 and 12 to establish whether we had achieved the standard. If we didn’t, we failed and came back the next time. I failed Year 11 and repeated it with a much better expectation of what was expected.”

The role of external examinations in the success of secondary schooling in the 1960s and ’70s can easily be overlooked. These exams ensured much more than the fact that content had been taught and duly learnt. As a student you respected teachers because they were on your side. Teachers were critical in enabling you to pass the exam. Homework and academic standards were supported by this external threat. The public exam was the 100% measure for the whole year. It was a make-or-break written examination. If you were sick on the day it was unfair. The exams underpinned the academic rigour and classroom relationships.

Freedom to learn

While schools focused on basic academic skills and knowledge, they also had a lot of freedom for teachers to give students extensive social,

physical and spiritual skills as well. After-hours, school-based sport and other activities in state schools were normal.

Let me give a rather hair-raising example to illustrate the freedom given.

The Natural Science Society I ran at lunchtime and after school decided to go caving in the north-eastern Flinders Ranges. The best man at our wedding, David Bullock, came up to take us through some very narrow and frightening caves. He led us down into the pitch black and the students eagerly followed on their stomachs like snakes slithering down a hole. We only had carbide torches as we pushed through the narrow openings, using our feet as paddles. I was tail-end Charlie and no one was to be left behind unless I was stuck. Since I was somewhat bigger than the rest of the group, this prospect seemed all too real.

At the time I did not realise the enormous trust and confidence given to us newly out-of-college teachers by both the school leadership and the parents. Down in the cave I was wondering where this trust and confidence came from. We were heading into the unknown, yet students were learning leadership skills, teamwork and about 'us' as a collective rather than 'me' as an individual.

We were heading into the unknown in the classroom as well. The school curriculum, whilst prescribed, tested and reviewed, did not occupy all the learning time. In science, for example, we worked together to build telescopes. We ground an eight-inch (20 cm) lens from two circles of plate glass, which took many hours. This was achieved by an afternoon roster of students carefully grinding by hand on the end of a 44-gallon drum. The resultant concave lens was then silvered and inserted into the end of a rolled steel tube.

There was an expectation in state schools that there would be out-of-hours co-curriculum activity. I ran the Natural Science Society with about 54 students who went caving, camping and exploring and held evening lectures at which presentations were made to parents.

We had time after school hours to encourage exploration, thinking and teamwork. Students learnt that by working together they could achieve more. The learning achieved in such co-curricular activities cannot be underestimated.

Here is another example of the freedom schools enjoyed. In my third year at Eyre High School I was assessed as eligible to be appointed as a senior science master in another school. With shipbuilding and steel product manufacture growing, Whyalla was booming and a third high school was being built even further west. I was appointed to it as a senior master in my fifth year.

In the first week of teaching at Stuart High I got something of a shock. A student told me, "Sir, my mum makes drink at home in an open pot. Potato peelings and vegetable scraps all get chucked into it, we add some sugar and it bubbles and ferments and then we distil it." As a young teacher with a microbiological background, I was rather horrified by the potential production of retail alcohol along with methyl alcohol in this homemade brew. Methyl alcohol causes eventual blindness and is a major discouragement from drinking methylated spirits instead of vodka.

We grew wine grapes at our home in Whyalla. With our row of Rhine Riesling and Shiraz vines we made excellent Riesling. Using this experience and my microbiological background, I was given permission to develop a new course called 'Alcoholic Science'. If the students were going to make alcohol at home, at least they would understand the science and dangers of this potent brew. The course was written to teach the content of our existing science curriculum in a new way, which in 1974 was very radical. My wife had signed the anti-alcohol Temperance Union pledge as a state primary school student. Wine-making in schools was unthinkable. Yet in Whyalla I was allowed to proceed by John Lyon, the previous deputy principal at Eyre High, who was now principal of Stuart High.

Distant clouds gather

Such was the general climate in state schools in the late 1960s and early '70s, but it was not to last. Dark clouds were over the horizon, and the seeds of the future decline of state education were being planted. Some of the problems could be seen, even if only in hindsight, during my time in Whyalla..

With the great teacher shortage of the late '60s and early '70s, there were a lot of new appointments and rapid promotions. All senior staffing positions, including deputy principals and principals, were tenured for life. This meant that the vitality and contribution of energised professionals seeking to establish long-term careers was temporarily ensured. A tiny minority who sought appointments for income, personal gain and a feather bed for life were also entrenched. Soon the bright and able, along with those seeking just a salary, saw that the leadership positions were filled permanently. This system ensured that newcomers' career paths were limited. Young teachers quickly become disenchanted, and the heavy responsibilities of a teacher's load became a burden as the real work was shared unevenly. Resignations of those who could leave started as a trickle that grew.

This was also a time when people began to feel that the school curriculum was overly prescribed. The leadership of the Education Department may well have grown up in an era when the Director General of Education could stipulate that on Friday at 10.30 am, all Grade 5 students would turn to their arithmetic books and do page 53. By the late 1960s the pendulum was already swinging to local autonomy. With only about half the curriculum in each subject prescribed, there was great freedom for a teacher to decide what else to include. It was not long before the position of Inspector of Schools was removed. Schools began to vary their programs and offerings. Open space classrooms were introduced where larger numbers of students were placed with a group of teachers. In some cases, no specific teacher was responsible for the progress of the individual child, and some students stopped progressing.

With no testing and no inspections, the problems grew because teachers did not see the students who were falling behind. They were simply passed on to the next teacher since no one was allowed to fail.

Schools were given freedom, but the question arose: whose freedom? Who was in control? Students had freedom to learn by doing and exploring, but the trouble was there was a possibility students would share ignorance. It became possible for a child to miss being given a foundation in reading, writing and arithmetic. Students could miss number skill drills, miss an understanding of spelling and grammar, and miss out on developing the capacity to communicate in either mathematics or English. The curriculum was being expanded with subjects and activities designed to cure all social ills and needs. Sometimes new subjects with their own specialist teachers were added to the timetable, reducing the time available for core teaching. Sport became an activity within school hours. Interschool sporting competitions required lessons off and the best sporting students missed classes.

In the open learning classrooms students learnt the freedom of a self-exploratory curriculum, but some did not learn the basics. There is no doubt that different students learn best by different means, and for some students, this free self-discovery method of learning is indeed the best. But not for all. It is my contention that all students' education is enhanced by diverse approaches, but we still need to check that learning is taking place.

The teaching of reading also changed. The whole-word method was brought in whereby students were taught to read by recognising whole words. Phonetics – teaching by sound groups – began to decline. The phonetic method was looked on as old fashioned but the 'new' approach was not all that new – I can remember being taught by the whole word method in 1951 in St Peter's College. It was probably introduced by a teacher moving up the bureaucratic ranks.

Phonetic teaching enabled the overwhelming majority of students to learn to spell, read and communicate. In 1972, in at least two of the least

popular schools in South Australia, all students could read and write and knew their tables. I taught the bottom students science in class 9H. The traditional high level abstract science program was beyond them, so I chose an English textbook with many short experiments and hands-on practicals, and this was successful. (Today this group of students would often not even attend school. They would be illiterate and violent.) At teachers' conferences other teachers did not raise concerns about poor student literacy and numeracy, or about absenteeism or systemic failure, so I believed that all Year 9 students in the most deprived schools in South Australia were at least as able as ours in Whyalla. They were literate and numerate.

Whilst the policy of the 1960s was on its own restrictive, it certainly worked. The curriculum was rigorously assessed, monitored and held accountable, with students and teachers working together to pass exams. This was backed-up by the capacity for self-discovery, adventure learning and a sense of fun, teaching students about teamwork rather than about just the individual.



Memorial Oval 1971, Rosslyn and Reception class with five absent

Lessons learnt

In Whyalla I discovered that some things worked and some were unhelpful to student learning. Here are the lessons I learnt from both the good and bad.

1. At Eyre High School, students had their own classrooms and teachers moved from one room to another. In contrast, teachers should be based in their own classroom and the students come to them because:
 - a. This gives teachers time to tidy up and prepare for their next lesson.
 - b. It gives students some exercise and fresh air.
 - c. Teachers can have a variety of teaching aids and resources on hand, not just those they can carry from class to class.
 - d. When there is no teacher in the room, sometimes students with idle time cause havoc, disrupting the start of the next lesson and putting the teacher on the back foot.
2. External exams were important and helpful.
3. A structured curriculum is important to students from lower socio-economic families. Parents have not always taught their children numeracy or literacy before attending school and may not have the educational resources or knowledge at home to reinforce or fill in the gaps in teaching at school.
4. The morale of teachers is not equated just to the level of resources.
5. The real possibility of failure is a vital stimulus for learning. Only those who pass core prerequisite skills to future learning should continue.
6. Industry catered for technical 'hands-on' students by offering jobs and apprenticeships at 15 years old. (Whyalla was building ships and manufacturing steel.)
7. The state school technical colleges in Adelaide were valued, leaving the high school able to provide an academic program for all of its students.