The establishment of a new university falls to the lot of very few people. It carries with it a great responsibility, to create an institution known for its scholars in the centuries ahead. King Alfred must have felt this sense of history when over eleven hundred years ago he started, in the forests of Oxford, a home for poor and scattered scholars. These people started the tradition of intellectual leadership that was to give Britain pre-eminence in generations to come. He could not have realised that it would become ultimately a source of inspiration to other centres of learning, far beyond his island home in the remote corners of the earth. In its own way La Trobe was about to carry on this tradition by creating opportunities for young people who might otherwise have missed the chance for higher education.

The University of Sydney, the oldest university in Australasia, was established by an Act of Parliament in 1850, and enrolled its first students in 1852. The University of Melbourne followed shortly after, under an Act of Parliament in 1853, with students enrolled in 1855. Both of these universities provided in their Acts that the standard of graduation should be equal to that of Oxford and Cambridge, and the older English and Scottish institutions. La Trobe University in turn linked its standard to that of Melbourne and Monash, so that the connection with a tradition of academic excellence has been preserved.

It is interesting to record the events in the post-World War II period that led to the establishment of La Trobe University. There was a world-wide recognition of the need to expand facilities for higher education. In Britain, the Robbins Committee reported in 1963 on the need for the expansion of tertiary education in that country. During the 1950s in the United States, President Eisenhower moved with great speed in establishing a grand plan to vastly expand facilities for higher education including many new universities. Sir Robert Menzies, in 1957, recognising Australia’s needs, set up a special committee to report on the future of Australian universities and invited Sir Keith Murray, Chairman of the University Grants Committee of Great Britain, to chair it. The Murray Committee, in a far-reaching report submitted in September 1957, recommended a major expansion of university facilities in Australia together with changes in administration and financing.

As a direct outcome of the key recommendation of the Murray Report, the federal government, in 1959, established the Australian Universities Commission (AUC) and appointed Sir Leslie Martin to chair it. The creation of the AUC gave the federal government a much more important role in co-ordinating and funding Australian universities although they still remained state institutions. In 1961, the Prime Minister appointed Sir Leslie Martin to chair a special committee to report to the AUC on the escalating demands for higher education in Australia. Figures for that year showed Victoria seriously lagging in university enrolments compared with all other states [See Table I]. In its 1964 report, the Martin Committee predicted a massive increase in university enrolments over the next decade [See Table II].

In its second report, in August 1963, the AUC recognised the urgency of Victoria’s situation: ‘...the resources of Melbourne and Monash Universities are not likely to meet the long term demands for university education beyond 1966. The Commission therefore is willing to support in the 1964-66 triennium the extension of University facilities in the Melbourne
Building La Trobe University

metropolitan area.' As a result of the AUC recommendation, the Commonwealth government passed the Universities Assistance Bill in October 1963 which provided a grant for the 'third' university for recurrent expenditure in 1965 of $106,000 (L-53,000) and $210,000 in 1966. The first capital grant was for 1966 and amounted to $1,000,000. These grants were to be matched by equivalent state grants. This cleared the way for a new institution to proceed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
<th>University Enrolments as a proportion of State Populations 1961</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Population aged 17-22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>332,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>244,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>130,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>78,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sth Australia</td>
<td>62,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Australia</td>
<td>29,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>878,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>878,421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE II</th>
<th>Predicted Growth of University Enrolments 1963-1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population in millions</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.21</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.45</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It should be recorded that the Victorian government had also, in 1961, set up the Ramsay Committee to report on the special needs of the State for additional educational facilities at university level over the next ten years. It reported in August 1963 and recommended an immediate expansion of university facilities but could not agree on whether to establish a third independent university or to create further campuses of Melbourne and Monash Universities which could at some future date become independent. The AUC and the Martin Committee favoured the immediate establishment of a third university because it considered the huge lag in enrolments in Victoria warranted this more positive step. This view was accepted by the Victorian government which needed the support of matching federal finance in such a major undertaking.

In April 1964, I was invited by the Premier, Mr Henry (later Sir Henry) Bolte, to chair a 'Third University Committee'. The Premier generously consulted me on the membership of the committee, so it was possible to gather a group with vast experience and knowledge. What was equally important, those selected proved to be a compatible, friendly team who could
work under pressure with commendable speed. The thirteen members were announced on 21 May, 1964 (See Appendix A). The terms of reference of the Committee were to advise the Government on all matters relating to the establishment of a third university in Victoria. This included the selection of the site, the preparation of a detailed development program, planning and calling tenders for buildings, the formulation of an administrative structure, the appointment of an Academic Planning Board and the recruitment of key staff. It was to plan, if possible, to enrol students in March 1967. The point of reference with the State government was Mr John (later Sir John) Bloomfield, the Minister for Education, who proved very supportive at every stage.

The first meeting was held on 2 June 1964 at the rooms of the Historical Society of Victoria in Victoria Street. For me, this was history repeating itself, as I had met there several years earlier as a member of the Interim Council of Monash University under the Chairmanship of Sir Robert Blackwood.

The choice of a site was a matter of urgency. It was limited in the terms of reference to one within the area of Greater Melbourne, but this in any case would have been the recommendation. Two-thirds of the people of Victoria lived in the metropolitan area and this proportion was increasing (See Table III). No other centre had a population sufficient in itself to support a new university. To have located outside the Greater Melbourne area would have necessitated the construction of extensive residential accommodation which would have involved a large capital outlay. In addition, it would have been costly for a larger proportion of the students. Attracting high quality academics to a country centre would also have been difficult, particularly at that time.

**TABLE III**

*Victorian population 1954-1970*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metropolitan Melbourne</th>
<th>Rest of State</th>
<th>Total Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At census June 30 1954</td>
<td>1,524,111</td>
<td>928,240</td>
<td>2,452,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At census June 30 1963</td>
<td>2,003,100</td>
<td>1,052,631</td>
<td>3,055,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated 1965</td>
<td>2,128,391</td>
<td>1,080,784</td>
<td>3,209,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated 1970</td>
<td>2,476,986</td>
<td>1,150,360</td>
<td>3,627,346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Fifty-seven sites were considered and twenty-seven were inspected; a number of these prospects were the result of submissions by local councils and other interested groups.

High on the list was the ‘police paddock’ on Plenty Road, Bundoora, but the ultimate choice proved to be on the other side of the road at the farm attached to the Mont Park Mental Hospital. It was located from aerial photographs provided by Mr Hepburn, the Chief City Planner, who was a member of the Committee. Dr Cunningham Dax, the head of the Mental Health Authority, was most co-operative but indicated that the loss of the farm would be serious for the hospital. An alternative site for the farm, a little further out on Plenty Road, was acquired and that problem was solved.

The search had its lighter moments. We usually travelled in black government cars and the weather at that time of the year was often bleak. When we visited the ‘police paddock’ it was little wonder a small boy approached Phil Law who was wearing a long black overcoat, and asked him whose funeral it was.

An interim Academic Planning Committee was constituted and one of its initial tasks was to consider the broad administrative structure. After the fourth meeting and much intensive sub-committee work, I was able to report the Third University Committee’s recommendations to the Government on 7th August 1964. These can be summarised from the report as follows:
1. The site of choice was the Mont Park Farm, eight miles to the north-east of the city centre. This was Crown Land so was already State owned and met the Committee’s requirements of about 500 acres. The site was large enough to provide in the future for a medical school with teaching hospitals. It was ideal for landscaping and architectural development, and services were available nearby. The location complemented Melbourne and Monash and, demographically, a metropolitan site best served the State of Victoria for this third university.

2. The administrative structure was based on a university of at least 10,000 students. The Council was to be the governing body and composed essentially of lay members. The Vice-Chancellor as chief administrator was also to be the head of the Academic Board. (Note: This need for the Vice-Chancellor to be both the academic and executive head of the whole institution was emphasised by the Murray Committee and this view coincided with that of our Committee.) The productive activity performed by the academic staff was to be organised by ‘schools’ under deans as distinct from ‘faculties’ as in other universities. Rather than a Professorial Board, there was to be an Academic Board of say twenty members which, it was anticipated, would give manageable leadership. Other key administrative positions were to be that of Registrar and Bursar (Business Manager) both reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

3. The name La Trobe University was a unanimous recommendation after considering many others. It is useful here to summarise the reason for this choice. Lieutenant-Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe has great historic significance for Victoria and Australia and his name is recognised internationally. La Trobe was not a university man (which was not uncommon in his day), but he appears to have had almost every quality one would desire in one. He had a lively interest in every aspect of life of the community, the will to work for the good of other men, and a sense of responsibility towards posterity. He came to the infant town of Melbourne on 30 September 1839 as Superintendent, and became the first governor when Port Phillip District was separated from New South Wales in 1850. He granted the sites for the State Library and Melbourne University, took the chair at the meeting which inaugurated Royal Melbourne Hospital, and was the prime mover for the establishment of the Botanical Gardens.

4. An itemised program to achieve student intake by March 1967 was submitted, just thirty-three months from the date of the first meeting of the Planning Committee. This included the timing for key staff appointments. Early acceptance of the report was requested of the Government because of the tight program. The response from the Government was prompt and the search for key staff commenced. The preparation of a University Bill was undertaken in conjunction with Parliamentary draftsman Mr John Finnemore. A great deal of care was taken in the preparation of this document and John was most helpful working with us in sub-committee on many evenings.

The Minister asked me to set out the guiding principles which had been evolved and accepted by the Committee. It may be useful to quote this letter to him dated 23 September 1964, as he quoted this in full to support his submission of the University Bill to Parliament on 30 September 1964.

Dear Mr Bloomfield

As promised I have set out in this letter a summary of the basic features of the administrative structure that we plan for La Trobe University. Naturally we are anxious to preserve some flexibility pending the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Planning Board.

We have assumed a large university of 10,000 students, so that the administrative structure must be capable of matching this size.

A university is a corporation devoted to education, scholarship and research. It should evolve in accordance with social requirements, intellectual ideals and develop-
The Planning Phase

ment in knowledge and in educational theory and practice. It is appreciated that it is largely supported by public funds.

The governing body will be the Council as defined by Act of Parliament, and it will be composed predominantly of lay membership, with a Chancellor as chairman.

The Vice-Chancellor is the leader of the academic community and chief executive of the university. The productive activity of the university is teaching and research performed by the academic staff, organised by schools. These schools will be intermediate in size between the traditional faculty and department. Each school will be headed by a Dean with a Board of Studies representative of the professors and academic staff of the school.

It is proposed that the traditional Professorial Board, which can become so large and unwieldy in a large university, will be replaced by an Academic Board of about twenty. The Vice-Chancellor, Deans and the Chief Librarian will be ex-officio members, and most of the remainder would be elected from the academic staff. The function of the Academic Board will be similar to that of a professorial Board in that it will consider academic matters which affect the whole university. The Vice-Chancellor will probably be its chairman.

A large modern university has a very heavy component of non-academic work which requires very careful consideration if the university is to achieve its objectives without serious upset. As chief executive this is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, but he must be supported by staff of high calibre if his burden of office is not to be too onerous. In our view this work is best divided into two — the first part under the registrar, covering the student services, and the second part under the bursar or business manager, covering the financial and commercial aspects and the co-ordination of the all-important budgeting and control. Sound organisation and high calibre staff here are essential, to ensure the wise use of public funds that are available.

I hope this gives you a reasonable picture of our broad plans.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) J.R.A. Glenn
Chairman, La Trobe University Committee.

'An Act for the Establishment and Incorporation of a University to be known as La Trobe University and for other purposes' was passed by the Victorian Parliament on 9 December 1964.

It will be noted that the Act does not specify the Vice-Chancellor as Chairman of the Academic Board, despite this being included in the Committee's recommendations. While accepting that this was the Committee's intention, the parliamentary draftsman pointed out the Act should avoid being so specific as it must accommodate a future situation where a departure from the normal for some reason may be necessary.

The passage of the Act paved the way for the appointment of an Interim Council. Before moving to this phase of the history, tribute must be paid to the work of the Third University Committee, and others who were co-opted to assist them. All were extremely busy people in their own fields of endeavour who were willing, without demur, to undertake long hours of unpaid work in the community interest. In a period of two months, from the first meeting on 2 June 1964 to the submission of the report to the Government on 7 August 1964, a site had been selected and the character of the new university had been established.

The Interim Council was appointed and held its first meeting on 22 December 1964 (See Appendix A). Its membership of twenty-one included all the members of the Third University Committee less Sir Michael Chamberlin, who expressed the wish to retire. Mrs Kathleen Fitzpatrick, recently retired Associate Professor of History at the University of Melbourne, although appointed, also expressed the wish to retire. The Interim Council under the Act was to have all the powers of the Council except those relating to the appointment of members by co-
option and the election of a Chancellor. The Chairman was to have the same powers and
obligations as the Chancellor.

Naturally the affairs of the University from this point on became much more formalised.
Sub-committees were appointed and delegated to take decisions and to report to Council
regularly. (See Appendix B). The chairman of each sub-committee was a member of Council
but outside members were co-opted for their knowledge and experience. For instance, the
Academic Planning Board of the Interim Council comprised the following distinguished
individuals: Professor Emeritus Sir Thomas Cherry FRS, Chairman (pending the appointment
of a Vice-Chancellor); Professor Sir Macfarlane Burnet OM, FRS; Professor J. S. Turner, Botany
Department, Melbourne; Professor Hugh Stretton, History Department, Adelaide; Professor
R. Selby Smith, Faculty of Education, Monash; Professor R. Street, Faculty of Science, Monash;
the Council Chairman, ex-officio. The other four Committees of the Interim Council were ‘Fin-
ance and Administration’, ‘Building’, ‘Colleges and Housing’ and ‘Legislation’.

The appointment of the Vice-Chancellor was a matter of the highest priority and a special
sub-committee of six members was established: J. R. A. Glenn, Chairman; Professor S. Suther-
land, Dean of Medicine at Melbourne University and a member of the AUC; Professor P. H.
Partridge, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU; Canberra; Dr J. A. L. Matheson, Vice-
Chancellor, Monash University; Sir Thomas Cherry; and Professor R. Selby Smith. It was
decided that for this particular post the appointment should be by invitation. About twenty
names were considered and finally it was narrowed down to ten each of whom was then
formally asked if he was willing to be considered. The usual interviews were conducted.

The name of Dr David Myers came as a late suggestion. Our enquiries quickly revealed
that he could be the front-runner. He had been at Sydney University as Professor of Electrical
Engineering before his appointment as Dean of Applied Science at the University of British
Columbia in Canada (See Appendix B). He came from Vancouver for an interview early in
March, 1965, and the sub-committee was greatly impressed by his understanding of the
problems ahead, his interest and breadth of understanding of university education in its
widest sense. He was also strongly supported by Dr Norman McKenzie who had recently
retired as President of the University of British Columbia. The Council agreed to his appoint-
ment on 15 March and his acceptance was immediate. He was not free to take up his appoint-
ment until September but in the interim was able to make several visits to Australia and was in
regular communication.

The appointment of the Chief Librarian was also a matter of urgency. It was decided that
such an important position might also best be filled by invitation. The successful candidate was
Mr Dietrich Borchardt, MA, the Librarian of the University of Tasmania. He was invited to
accept the position on 2 February 1965 and became the first full-time employee of La Trobe
University. He was overseas in Italy at the time and both a letter and a cabled invitation were
sent to him there. He took up full-time duties on 22 March and his work from that date speaks
for itself. The library collection was wisely established under his leadership with the careful use
of available funds. In his honour the University library is now known as the Borchardt Library.

The appointment of the Business Manager, Mr Frank Barnes, BEc, DipEd, was also a
fortunate one. He had been Assistant Secretary of the Universities Commission and later
Assistant Secretary of the Martin Committee. He was therefore well accustomed to negoti-
ations with the AUC and was favourably regarded by them. His first appointment to La Trobe,
on 1 May 1965, was as Executive Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor and he was later confirmed
as Business Manager on 1 November 1965. His flair for organisation, his drive, and his cheerful
manner were very important in achieving the opening date of March 1967.

The Registrar, Major General T. S. (Tim) Taylor, CBE, MVO, MC, took up his appoint-
ment a little later, on 1 April 1966, in time to deal with the preparation for student intake.
Again his organising ability and his decisiveness ensured that all plans came together from
March 1967. He had been a career soldier and well aware of the need for meticulous planning.

The appointment of the Master Planner had been under close examination since the
The Planning Phase

establishment of the 'Third University Committee'. A decision to appoint the firm of Yuncken Freeman Architects with Mr Roy Simpson (later awarded an honorary doctorate by La Trobe), as the responsible partner was made at the first meeting of the Interim Council in December 1964. He was requested to prepare a Master Plan for the 484 acre site at Bundoora, and he set about his task with great diligence. He wisely made a visit overseas to brief himself on developments in university planning and architecture which had seen great changes in recent years. He was also responsible for starting our art collection by introducing four generous donors, Mrs Douglas Carnegie, Lady Potter, Mrs J. M. Baillieu and Mrs R. C. M. Kimpton, who commissioned and presented to the University three important paintings of the site as it was before construction.

At the beginning of 1965 we were a University without a home. Fortunately we were able to take over the premises occupied by the AUC at 474 St Kilda Road, and we continued there for two years. The Chief Librarian moved in during April and the Administration followed in May. By the end of 1965 the total establishment had risen to thirty-five which comprised fifteen administrative and twenty library staff. St Kilda Road proved a convenient temporary location but as the library staff grew and books began to accumulate it was necessary for them to move to a warehouse in Beatrice Avenue, Heidelberg, pending the availability of the library building.

Dr Simpson, the Master Planner, will deal elsewhere in this history with the Master Plan which was accepted by the Interim Council in July 1965, but one or two observations can be made here. The clever use of the saucer shaped site will be obvious with its main pedestrian walkway (the 'red' route) at first floor level. However, it did take some time to convince the Chairman of the AUC that this novel arrangement was both economical and functional. The compact layout with its focus on the library was very much in line with the views of Dr Myers who had come from the University of British Columbia. There he had seen the University buildings scattered over a huge site of over 1000 acres, squandering the use of land and making student and staff movement time consuming. He was determined we would not repeat this mistake with our four hundred odd acres. The other influence was Professor Hugh Stretton of Adelaide who so generously gave his time to our Academic Planning Board. He felt that the buildings should be almost crowded into the centre to provide an exciting sort of 'bohemia'. We did move in this direction but he felt we had not gone far enough. The layout also provided a ring road which prevented traffic from disrupting pedestrians in the central academic area.

Having developed a Master Plan we were fortunate in having Professor Lindsay Pryor of the Australian National University as our advisor on the landscaping and the selection of tree and plant types. His plan was wonderfully executed by Mr Frank Saul, the Head Gardener, as can be seen today.

The four Schools to be established initially were Humanities, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences. The subjects to be available initially were English, History, Philosophy, Spanish, French, Sociology, Politics, Economics, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. The addition of a School of Agriculture was agreed at an early date but professional schools were only to be added as the need was substantiated. The recruitment of the foundation professors and staff began in earnest after the arrival of the Vice-Chancellor in September 1965, and most of the appointees took up their positions in 1966. The high quality, loyalty and solidarity of the staff proved a great support for the Council and the Vice-Chancellor in the difficult years immediately ahead.

The proclamation of the Governor in Council as required under article 43 of the La Trobe University Act took place on the third of August. This enabled the Council of the University to hold its first meeting on 19 December 1966. The membership of the Council was substantially that of the Interim Council with the addition of four Professors elected by the staff — E. C. Forsyth, A. W. Martin, R. D. Topsom and A. B. Wardrop. At that first meeting of Council, which was held in the council room of Glenn College, I was elected Chancellor, a position which I occupied for the next five years. Mr Bernard Callinan was elected Deputy-Chancellor.
The Coat of Arms was approved and the Chancellor was asked to write formally to the College of Arms requesting the Grant-of-Arms. The approval of a course in Agricultural Science marked the establishment of the fifth School.

At that meeting the Council paid tribute to Sir Thomas Cherry whose death just a month before had robbed us of one of our most dedicated and distinguished members. He never lost sight of the fact that the development of a sound academic program was one of our prime objectives. A little anecdote about Tom that he himself laughed about is worth recounting. One of the last meetings of the Interim Council was held in the board room of the Mont Park Mental Hospital. Tom was making a telephone call from that room and he asked the switchboard girl to connect a number for him. She asked who was calling and he replied that it was Sir Thomas Cherry. She responded: 'Are you a patient?'

To the end of 1972, the year in which I retired as Chancellor, it was interesting to see the University develop from nothing to a student population of 4,304, and from an open paddock to a well built-up campus. In that period which, in terms of government funding, spread across three triennia (1964-66, 1967-69, and 1970-72) the total sum recommended to the Commonwealth government by the Australian Universities Commission for the physical planning and construction of the new university was almost $26 million in the dollar values prevailing at that time.

The creation of La Trobe University occurred at a time when universities throughout the western world were caught up in the Vietnam protest. It was quite a traumatic period for a new institution such as ours which in any case was having the inevitable growing pains. An overly simplistic view would say that the very students we were striving to provide for were the ones who were making our lives difficult. 'Sit ins' at Council meetings and in offices, and the use of loud hails to drown out discussion were among the problems. Apart from a handful of people who went out of their way to be unpleasant, we felt that we understood the attitude of the students of that era. They had a legitimate interest in world trends that were affecting their lives. Universities throughout the free world were all caught up in the same revolt which was levelled at authority in any form. Arising out of student proposals many changes in administration and planning were made after full and frank discussion. One such change was to add student representatives on the Council and to have observers admitted. This change quickly disposed of the view that all manner of things were perpetrated in closed sessions.

Through all this turmoil the work of the University went on. As in other tertiary institutions it was the Vice-Chancellor, more than any other individual, who had to cope with the volatile situation on a day-by-day basis. I pay special tribute to Dr Myers who, throughout it all, was calm, patient and understanding. The students could not have had a better champion and I think deep down they knew it. He was fortunate in having a fine staff who supported him all the way. The Council also showed great solidarity and, as I have said, were not insensitive to those issues involving the concerns of genuine students in a changing world.

From the inception of the initial Third University Committee, the AUC and the State Government had asked us to take an innovative approach to our task. Our scope proved somewhat limited by finance and in some cases the conservatism of the AUC, but generally there was a sympathetic ear for what we tried to do.

In the early stages, consideration was given to designing the first student academic year as a general rather than a specialised introduction on the model of Keele University in Britain. This would permit a better orientation of students, many of whom enter university without any real idea of where their true career interests lie. However, it was decided that this approach would have added a year to most courses and would have been very costly to the students and to the State in time and money, so the idea was dropped for the time being.

Twenty-five years later it is interesting to observe that this concept is again being discussed in the political arena.

The concept of residential colleges, including the affiliation of all non-residential students
with a college, was strongly favoured by the Council. Many of us had been fortunate enough
to belong to university colleges at Melbourne or overseas, and knew the great benefits of the
system both in developing the whole person and in allowing scholars to meet in smaller, more
relaxed groups.

The ultimate design of about eight or ten colleges got as far as the first two — Glenn and
Menzies. There was much debate and students pressed for a central Union. This was at the
time when student protest was at its height and the more vocal students felt that the smaller
units, the colleges, would tend to divide their effectiveness. Dr Myers will refer to this later but
as the years go by there may be a realisation of the benefits of the early plan; I am sure the site
would still accommodate the concept or a variant of it. Chisholm College was added as a third
college, but it was established on a non-traditional basis.

As already mentioned, the compact layout of the University with peripheral access and a
unique walkway system (the ‘red route’) was a new concept. The plan for a school to be the
basic unit rather than a faculty certainly worked well in the early years. Other writers will
come on its subsequent effectiveness. An Academic Board rather than an unwieldy Pro­
fessorial Board was included in the original plan on the grounds that it could lead to wider
representation from the staff.

An example of conservatism attempting to stop innovation in architectural design was in
the General Science building (later called the Thomas Cherry Building). Mr Rod McDonald,
the architect, put forward an elegant economical design with the first floor slab continuous and
extended out as a cantilever. This provided external access ways and necessary escape routes
all around the outside of the laboratories and incidentally cut down the thickness of the con­
crete slab. It took some time to convince Sir Leslie Martin, the chairman of the AUC and a
scientist himself, that this was a workable plan which also had considerable safety benefits.

It is interesting to compare the growth of La Trobe University with that of Melbourne.
Melbourne started in 1855 with sixteen students and only five survived the first year and three
of them took out BA degrees in 1858. By 1890, forty-five years later, the number of students
had risen to 502 and ultimately rose to 1000 in 1909, 4000 in 1942, and 9500 in 1948. La Trobe
opened its doors in March 1967 to 552 students, and 1163 and 2052 in the two following years.
In five years the numbers had grown to 4304. These figures are given to demonstrate the
tremendous pressure on the whole organisation compared with those early Melbourne
University years. Not only did the numbers multiply rapidly but there was the complexity of
equipment, the buildings and the whole infrastructure, and the rapid build up in staff num­
bers. As an indication of the general level of effort that made this possible, the Building Com­
mittee held a small dinner party on 3 August 1971 to mark its hundredth meeting. The other
sub-committees similarly had given generously of their time.

Another historical comparison that surprised me was that in 1855 the four foundation
professors at Melbourne were recruited at salaries of $2,000 per annum (£1000) with houses
provided on campus. At La Trobe 110 years later the starting salary of the foundation profess­
ors was $10,400 per annum with no house.

The installation of the Chancellor by the Visitor, His Excellency Major-General Sir Rohan
Delacombe, Governor of Victoria, and the Official Opening of the University by the Premier,
the Hon. Sir Henry Bolte, took place at an open air ceremony at the Bundoora campus on 8
March 1967. Although initially somewhat threatening, the weather on the day turned
beautifully sunny for the opening ceremony which was attended by 2500 guests. Since then
the University has grown steadily in size and in stature and will, I feel sure, continue to fill a
vital place in our community in the generations ahead. I felt very proud to have been one of
the founders and to have led, for those eight formative years, a team of such capable indi­
viduals who possessed the highest ideals and sense of duty.