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LEADING STRATEGIC PLANNING IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

Therese Carmel Noble Howes

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Faculty of Education and Social Work
University of Sydney

August 2014
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

I. this thesis comprises only my original work towards the <insert Name of Degree> Degree
II. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used
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Date: 4/8/2014
Sharrock proposes that the introduction of strategic management in Australian universities can be categorised into two opposed positions: a sympathetic structural view and an unsympathetic ideological view (2012). The findings of this study suggest that Sharrock’s proposition can also be applied to the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities. However, while the study data clearly reveals two opposed positions, there is also a common critical thread in the reflections that suggests a more complex ideological response to the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities.

This study collected data from in-depth interviews with nine purposively selected participants, including three current and former Vice-Chancellors, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, a Dean and four members of the professoriate. The data was condensed and is presented as first-person case studies in the thesis (Seidman, 2006). The findings demonstrate that executive members of staff are likely to assume a sympathetic structural view of strategic planning, while academics not actively engaged in strategic planning at an executive level, may assume a more unsympathetic ideological view.

The strategic planning approaches described in the participants’ case studies are discussed and referenced against Mintzberg’s Ten Schools of Strategy Development (1999). The leadership styles are compared and contrasted against the four leadership styles offered by the Situational Leadership Model II (SLII) developed by Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi (1985).

The participants explain how and why strategic planning was introduced to Australian universities, what forms of leadership were most effective in driving this change and the organisational impact this had on their employer universities. Reflecting on how their approach to leading strategic planning may have changed throughout their careers, the participants offer recommendations to the next generation of leaders who will be tasked to lead strategic planning in Australian universities. The findings present the elements that should be reflected in an ‘effective’ Strategic Plan and a conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities.
I would like to offer my thanks to the staff in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney, for guiding and supporting me through the Doctor of Education program.

I am especially grateful to my supervisors, Associate Professor Debra Hayes and Professor Andrew Gonczi, for their encouragement and support, particularly in the early years when I wanted to change my research questions and study focus almost every week. Deb’s patient guidance kept me within the research parameters when my natural tendency was to diverge into other areas; her gentle encouragement helped to keep me on task. Andrew’s extensive knowledge of the Australian university sector and interest in the topic kept me motivated for the six long years it took to complete this research project. Their comprehensive understanding of the research process, and different yet complementary methodological and disciplinary expertise, provided the breadth and depth of supervision I needed to complete this study.

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own university assignment crises, computer malfunctions and shared graduation occasions. This doctorate, by the joy of weddings and the blessings of grandchildren.

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To my lovely mother Colleen, and late father Barry Noble, who sadly died before this thesis was finished, congratulations on the third doctorate in the Noble family. Thank you for instilling in me a love of learning together with the discipline and determination required to achieve a task of this magnitude. To Elva and Vernon Howes, who passed away long ago, my sisters, siblings-in-law on both sides of the family, nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews, thank you all for the joy you bring to our family life. We have also experienced tragedy and live everyday with the tragic loss of our talented and much loved nephew Malachy (2000-2013), darling niece Monique (1980-1993) and godson Edward (1987-2005).

To all my friends, especially Nicky, who travelled all the way to Newport, Wales, to watch me deliver the preliminary findings of this study at the Society for Research into Higher Education Annual Conference in December 2013, and Jane, who shared my undergraduate student journey, many thanks for a lifetime of friendship, companionship and learning.

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I will be eternally grateful for your constant encouragement, endless cups of tea, more than occasional glass of wine and for the wisdom and support you so generously provided that gave me the strength to juggle the demands of a very busy family, full-time work and part-time study over the last twenty three years. Your optimistic belief that I would one day complete this doctorate helped me to overcome all the obstacles life seemed to constantly throw my way.

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1: Preface</th>
<th>1-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The Dawkins Reforms</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 A brief overview of the study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The researcher</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 The research questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 The research methodology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 The professional doctorate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Structure of the thesis</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2: The study context</th>
<th>15-45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Developments in the Australian university sector</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 The ‘managerialisation’ of the Australian university sector</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Australian university Strategic Plans – an overview</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 The role of the Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 The study</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 The researcher as a reflexive practitioner</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3: Literature review</th>
<th>46-78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 The strategic planning literature</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Strategic planning in the higher education sector</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Strategic planning in Australian universities</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 The leadership literature</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4: Methodology</th>
<th>79-103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Methodological overview – the research questions</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Research approach</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Ontology: critical realism</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Epistemology: constructionism</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Theoretical perspective</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Research strategy</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Data collection</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 The study participants</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: The Participant Observers</td>
<td>104-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introducing the Participant Observers</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Case study: the Professor of Education</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Case study: the Professor of Industrial Relations</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Case study: the research Professor</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6: The Academic Leaders</th>
<th>122-140</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Introducing the Academic Leaders</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Case study: the Dean</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Case study: the Professor of Higher Education</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Case study: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7: The Vice-Chancellors</th>
<th>141-163</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Introducing the Vice-Chancellors</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Case study: the Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Case study: the Former Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Case study: the Emeritus Professor</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 8: The Findings</th>
<th>164-219</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 A conceptual framework of leading strategic planning</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 The clusters</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.1 The Participant Observers</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.2 The Academic Leaders</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.3 The Vice-Chancellors</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 The research questions</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.1 When strategic planning was introduced?</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.2 What organisational impact did this have?</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.3 What forms of leadership were most effective?</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Concluding discussion</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 9: Conclusion 220-232

9.1 Recommendations for the future 220
9.2 The future of strategic planning in Australian universities 228

Bibliography 233-255

List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australian University establishment timeline</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>University finances 2011: The real shape we’re in</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Constructionism principles</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interpretivism perspectives</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Applicability of case study in this research project</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Participant demographic data</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interview schedule</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rational approach to strategic planning</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The enhanced TOWS matrix</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The search terms</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sharrock’s four archetypes of ‘good management’</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quinn and Sharrock’s dual management framework</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A conceptual framework of leading strategic planning</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: PREFACE

The ‘purpose’ and ‘idea’ of a university has often been debated over the last one hundred and twenty years (see for example Becher & Trowler, 2001; Newman, 1891; Patterson, 1997; Reynolds & Wilson, 1974; Walker, 1978). Universities have also at times been criticised as being elitist, traditionalist and male dominated institutions and slow to respond to social change (see for example Bauman, 1997; Collini, 2012; Keane, 2011; Kerr, 1963; MacIntrye, 1987; Maskell and Robinson, 2001; Rogers, 1969; Smith and Webster, 1997).

Major reforms such as the abolition of religious restrictions on university admissions were not removed in Britain until 1877 (Patterson, 1997, p.162); an increase in the number of middle-class students did not happen in Germany until the 1870s (Patterson, 1997, p.169); and the admission of women students did not occur in most Western universities until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Patterson, 1997, pp.171-172).

To some educational commentators, the fact that universities have been forced to “reinvent themselves”, engage with the broader public, educate female students as well as students from low socio-economic backgrounds and ethnic or political minorities “who find it otherwise impossible to find their voice under democratic conditions” (Keane, 2011) has been a positive development.

Faced with a surfeit of data and different ways of seeing and doing things, higher education becomes a force for humility, an open space for publicly handling conflicting perceptions of ‘reality’ … when universities function well, they champion the search for commercially viable knowledge and organise resistance to commercialism. They support government initiatives and cultivate suspicion of government ideologies and injustices. Universities deal with the powerful and speak in defence of the weak. They give voice to the ironies of the human condition. They champion the public ethos of pluralism, lending it institutional force, so potentially placing the university on a collision course with ignorance, confusion, lies and nonsense – and all the other material forces of the 21st-century that threaten its multiple commitments to the public good”, (Keane, 2011).

During the twentieth century in the United Kingdom and in Australia, successive governments reviewed, restructured, realigned and reshaped their national university
systems to align them with changing national strategic priorities. In the United Kingdom, Lord Dearing’s 1994 report, *Higher Education in the Learning Society*, followed by a second report in 1996, set an agenda for British higher education that is in many respects still in place today. The Australian higher education reform agenda that dismantled the binary or two-tier system of higher education and established the Unified National System (UNS) was enacted in 1988 by the Hon J S Dawkins MP, then Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training. These Australian higher education reforms will herein be termed the ‘Dawkins Reforms’.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students from non-Western cultures, students with disabilities, students from rural and isolated areas of Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, did not enrol in Australian higher education institutions in increased numbers until after the Dawkins Reforms were introduced (A Fair Chance for All, Dawkins, Green Paper, 1987, p.21). Changes to student demographics and a rapid increase in enrolments were key characteristics of Australian higher education institutions in the post-Dawkins years (see for example Croucher, Marginson et al., 2013, pp.171-181).

The focus of this study, strategic planning, was one of the initiatives introduced to Australian universities as part of the Dawkins Reforms. In this thesis, the term ‘strategic planning’ will be used to refer to a formal planning process, led from the ‘Centre’ by the Vice-Chancellor or Senior Executive, to develop a formal, published, university-wide Strategic Plan. The data presented in this thesis clearly demonstrate that as strategic planning was progressively implemented in Australian universities, institutional leadership was gradually wrested from the professoriate and in its place, strong, central, authoritative leadership held by Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executive was installed.

1.1 The Dawkins Reforms

In 1986, two years before the Dawkins Reforms were enacted, there were 19 universities and 57 Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) in Australia, located primarily on the eastern, southern and western coastline. In 1988, this binary higher education system was fundamentally and structurally transformed by the abolition of the CAEs and the implementation of the Unified National System (UNS) by the Dawkins Reforms.
Although the Dawkins Reforms were supported by group of senior figures in the higher education sector who became known as the ‘purple circle’, the reforms were contested by other senior figures in the sector including Peter Karmel, former chair of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) and David Penington, the University of Melbourne’s Vice-Chancellor (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.31). A large number of academic staff, policy makers and tertiary education commentators submitted critical submissions to Dawkins after the release of the Green Paper in 1987 precipitating what Marginson and Considine describe as “seven months of heated discussion” (2000, p.31). However the objections were overlooked and the legislative instrument that implemented the Dawkins Reforms, the Higher Education: a policy statement (1988) (White Paper) was released just six months later in July 1988.

The White Paper conceded that “the Government’s strategy for the development of the higher education system is part of a wider agenda of reform spanning all the elements of the employment, education and training portfolio” (p.3). It contained several attachments outlining procedures for dispute resolution; staff development and staff assessment; serious misconduct; unsatisfactory performance; voluntary early retirement; redundancy; continuing employment and probation (pp.133-137) and appendixes with statistics, graphs and data comparing recurrent grants, student load, and educational trends (pp.115-131) to help the university sector manage staff dissent and evince the case for change.

The Dawkins Reforms resulted in many large and small scale institutional mergers and amalgamations so that the institutions could achieve the minimum size required for university status. For example, in the State of New South Wales, the six pre-Dawkins universities and fifteen CAEs were dismantled and nine new post-Dawkins universities were established by the end of 1989. This commenced a period of rapid expansion in which another eighteen new Australian universities were established over the next ten years. As a consequence, a mass, unified, higher education system was installed in Australia (Maslen & Slattery, 1994, pp.1-6).

Changes to the size and constitution of the governing body, Council or Senate, were also outlined in Dawkins’ ‘White Paper’. Dawkins argued that these governance changes were necessary to provide Vice-Chancellors with guidance on the new commercial (non-
academic) activities of the university. However they also provided universities with the knowledge and authority to progressively shift the planning focus from collegial academic planning to strategic planning as the data presented in this thesis demonstrates.

Minister Dawkins was aware that few if any Australian universities had Strategic Plans in 1988 therefore he outlined the essential elements an Australian university Strategic Plan should include in the Green Paper:

− a broad statement of institutional goals and detailed objectives of its component elements;
− an overview of current educational provision;
− an analysis of the adequacy of current provision in view of institutional goals and objectives;
− planned changes in provision over the following three to five years;
− mechanisms to achieve the required reallocation of resources to make policy changes at each level of institutional decision making, including research and staffing policies;
− mechanisms to identify and maintain an effective response to employer and community needs; and
− appropriate monitoring and review procedures (1987, p.52)

Arguing that while “the specific details of the strategic planning process are matters for institutions to decide and implement” (p.41), Dawkins recommended universities delegate responsibility for strategic planning to Vice-Chancellors as Chief Executive Officers and hold them responsible for the implementation process (1988, p.101-103). And although Dawkins argued that “the Government’s proposals for reform and reorientation of higher education should not distort the system’s traditional functions [my emphasis] and intellectual inquiry and scholarship” (1988, p.5) this appears to have been the outcome at two of the study participants employer universities, the Professor of Higher Education and the Professor of Education, as their case studies in Chapter 6 and Chapter 5 clearly demonstrate.

Dawkins argued in the White Paper (1988) that this leadership and strategic planning shift was necessary as “many institutions are extremely large [as a result of the mergers and amalgamations] and their budgets are equivalent to those of large business organisations. Their managers are required to exhibit high-level management skills and to show strong
leadership in meeting the institution’s corporate goals” (p.102). As a result, Minister Dawkins expected Australian universities, which had been essentially collegial, academic institutions since they were established from the 1850s, quickly develop “strong managerial modes of operation which remove barriers to delegation of policy implementation from governing bodies to Chief Executive Officers and then to other levels, while maintaining a variety of inputs to policy determination” (p.103).

The post-Dawkins era saw a rapid growth in student numbers, student diversity, as well as significant changes to government funding policies and funding formulas. The operational conditions Dawkins outlined in the Green (1987) and White (1988) Papers to evince the case for change were rapidly realised. This made it increasingly difficult for traditional collegial academic planning methods to develop and deliver the strategic organisational change mandated by the Dawkins Reforms.

Maslen and Slattery (1994) conducted a large scale study of the Australian university sector five years after the Dawkins Reforms were enacted, concluding that Australian universities were deeply troubled institutions. Another Australian academic declared in the same year that the “university system has so many problems that it is no exaggeration to describe the situation as a crisis …. The state of our universities is no accident. It is caused by the way they are organised and funded, as well as the behaviours they reward” (Lowe, 1994, p.4).

By the 1990s the Australian Government’s New Public Management [NPM] agenda was entrenched in the Australian higher education sector (Hoare, 1995; Meek & Woods, 1997). This theme was reinforced by David Kemp, Liberal Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, in *New Knowledge, New Opportunities* (1999) which positioned research training at the centre of the Government’s higher education reform. This provided further confirmation of the economic positioning inherent in the Australian Government’s higher education reform agenda (McWilliam, Taylor et al., 2002). Changes were progressively made to the research funding model throughout the 2000s, culminating in the Excellence in Research (ERA) initiative conducted in 2010, 2012 and scheduled for 2015.

Dawkins stated in 2013 “When critics complain that the Unified National System – or the Dawkins revolution – was responsible for wrecking the collegiate culture of universities or
dumbing down higher education, they obscure the real purpose of the reform”, (cited in Croucher, Marginson et al., 2013, p.xii). The Dawkins Reforms transformed the Australian higher education system structurally and organisationally so that the Australian Government’s NPM higher education agenda could be progressively implemented. They also represented an “imaginative reach of neo-liberal policies towards universities” (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.27) which could be argued to be the real purpose of the reforms. And, as the data presented in this study demonstrates, as the Dawkins Reforms were implemented in Australian universities one of the consequences was a general decline in the “collegiate culture of universities”.

The impact of the Dawkins Reforms on Australian universities will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, The Findings (pp.162-216).

1.2 A brief overview of the study

The data presented in Chapters 5 to 7 describe how and why strategic planning was implemented in Australian universities after the Dawkins Reforms were enacted in 1988. However, the approach to strategic planning described by the study participants, which was consistent with the approach proposed by Minister Dawkins in the Green and White Papers, relied on the parallel implementation of supporting modern management processes (Dawkins, 1987, p.52). Particularly, the development of information systems designed to collect and analyse performance data so that universities could report progress towards achieving the Key Performance Indicators outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The strategic planning approach outlined in the Dawkins Reforms was based on the rational, strategic planning approach or ‘model’ developed in North American business schools to improve the organisational performance of North American corporations. This model of strategic planning had not been developed for use in public institutions, not-for-profit organisations, academic institutions, or universities, particularly universities on the other side of the world with a unique Australian character.

Dawkins’ strategic planning model was consistent however with other new public management [NPM] applications and the neoliberal policy agenda of the second Hawke
Labor Government demonstrated by the implementation of the ‘Dawkins Reforms’ in 1988 (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.27). This point of difference is important to the focus of the study and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Literature Review. The study participants describe a range of organisational and leadership consequences as a result of the implementation of strategic planning in their employer Australian universities. These consequences form a common thread through the case studies presented in Chapters, 5, 6 and 7 and will be discussed extensively in Chapter 8, Findings.

In 2014, Australia’s 39 universities are large, complex organisations operating in a turbulent competitive global environment characterised by cycles of government policy changes and large-scale government funding cuts. They form part of the broad Australian Higher Education sector, which includes Institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Private Providers. The Global Innovation Index 2014, launched in July 2014 by the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, Minister for Industry, clearly evidences the contributions universities, research institutes and other higher education providers make to deliver national outcomes in global innovation, as tertiary education is ranked 7th and research and development is ranked 8th on the Index (Media Release, 18 July, 2014).

The Australian Higher Education sector is one of the most technically sophisticated and globalised of the Australian industries. In 2013 the sector employed 115,810 of the nation’s most highly qualified people (total full-time and fractional full-time staff) of which 54,099 are academic and 61,702 non-academic staff\(^1\) and responsible for educating more than 1,313,776 of the nation’s most promising students\(^2\).

Australian universities are complex socio-political-educational institutions with many different internal cultures and conflicts. They are also under financial pressure as government funding only accounts for approximately 56% of their operating revenue (Finance 2011, Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and


Workplace Relations, September 2012). These factors provide background information that helps to explain the data presented in the case studies and reflect the institutional circumstances that some post-Dawkins academics have described as a crisis (Coady, 2000; Hil, 2012; Lowe, 1994; Meyers, 2012).

A common theme throughout the literature on the implementation of modern management practices in Australian universities (see for example Bessant, 1995, 2002; Bryson, 1986, 2004; Kenny, 2009) is a real or perceived polarisation of the values inherent in academic work on the one hand, and management on the other. As this tension is critical to the focus of the study, this literature will be explored in detail in Chapter 3, Literature Review.

Sharrock (2012), for example, argues that the literature relating to the introduction of strategic management in Australian universities can be categorised into two positions: a more sympathetic structural view, proposed primarily by executive members of Australian university staff (see for example Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998, 2013; Ramsden, 1998; Sharrock, 2007) and an unsympathetic ideological view presented by a number of academics and sector commentators who are opposed to the introduction of strategic management and the subsequent ‘managerialisation’ of Australian universities (see for example Bessant, 1995, 2002; Briggs & David, 2002; Bryson, 1986, 2004; Coady, 2000; Currie, 2004, Hil, 2012; Kenny, 2009; Lowe, 1994; Meyers, 2012). The findings of this study suggests that Sharrock’s proposition can also be applied to the introduction of strategic planning. However, while the study data clearly reveals two opposed positions, there is also a common critical thread in the reflections that suggests a more complex ideological response to the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities.

Organisational management and leadership theorists argue that internal organisational tensions inhibit productivity and organisational effectiveness. It is therefore important that Australian university leaders understand the origins of some of the tensions that are revealed in the case studies presented in this thesis, so that they are able to lead strategic planning in ways that will improve organisational cohesion and thereby institutional productivity. This brings me to the other key dimension of this study, leadership.

One of the key tasks for individuals leading strategic planning, is to establish a shared vision to guide the planning process that is aligned to the core values of the organisation. If the
core organisational values are not shared by all the stakeholders, and, in the case of universities, academic staff and the university executive are not thinking or planning as one, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to develop a shared vision and conduct an effective, productive strategic planning process (Shattock, 2010).

Strategy is about establishing priorities; it is about making decisions, often very difficult decisions. This means that Australian university executives must frequently make decisions that will be unpopular with parts of their constituency placing them in a difficult leadership position. “Leadership has always required the management of tensions caused by the simultaneous need for such things as short-term and long-term performance, the exploitation of existing ideas and the search for new ones, and the staffing and motivation of leadership teams with people of diverse backgrounds and capabilities” (Heskett, 2013).

Universities are some of the oldest surviving organisations in the world and have proved themselves to be resilient and adaptable to change (Clark, 1998, 2004; Sporn, 1995). Australian universities adapted to the 1988 Dawkins Reforms and in 2014 make significant contributions to national productivity and the Australian economy. However, as the literature presented in the next chapter illustrates, many Australian universities are also expressing symptoms of organisational disharmony and dysfunction that could be ameliorated by leadership (Sharrock, 2014; 2012, Shattock, 2010). A recent article by Sharrock (2014), for example, illustrates the organisational conflict that can result if a Vice-Chancellor fails to adequately communicate the rationale behind strategic spending cuts.

University Executives tasked with leading strategic planning in Australian universities have a responsibility to act in the best interest of the university. They also have a responsibility to act in the best interests of their stakeholders and these two primary leadership tasks should not be in conflict. This study aims to start an open and honest dialogue about the changes that have occurred in Australian universities since strategic planning was introduced to the sector as part of the Dawkins Reforms, and explore the role leadership played in this process.
1.3 The researcher

I elected to research this topic as I have an academic interest in leadership and strategic planning. I am also an experienced higher education manager with almost twenty years of experience leading change and developing strategy at three Australian universities. This study was designed to explore some of the issues associated with strategic planning that I have confronted and intellectualised throughout my career.

The participants recruited for this study constitute a small sample of senior academic and executive leaders [n=9] who led or observed the implementation of strategic planning in their employer universities. They can therefore be considered representatives of the generation of leaders who made the strategic planning decisions that transformed Australian universities into the modern, academic-managerial or ‘enterprise’ universities (Marginson & Considine, 2000) they are today.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) recommend “the researcher must find an insider, a member of the group studied, who is willing to be an informant and act as a guide and a translator of cultural mores and, at times, jargon or language” (p.77). By using a purposive sampling technique, a small but representative cohort of participants was constructed that includes three current and former Vice-Chancellors, a Dean, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and four members of the professoriate. Each participant currently holds or has held a range of senior leadership positions at a number of different Australian universities, and bring careers that span the pre and post Dawkins periods to this study.

Data was collected by in-depth interview. The interview data was coded, themed and analysed using qualitative methods (Boyatzis, 1998) and reduced to form the case studies that are presented in this thesis. In this way, the participants’ voices are directly incorporated into the study (Seidman, 1998).

A profile in the words of the participant is the research product that I think is most consistent with the process of interviewing. It allow us to present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time, all central components of qualitative analysis (p.102.).
1.4 The research questions

The aim of the study is to answer the following research questions:

1. When and for what purpose was strategic planning introduced to the Australian university sector?
2. What organisational impact did this have on Australian universities?
3. What forms of leadership were most effective in driving this change?

1.5 The research methodology

Multiple case study was the research methodology selected for this study, as it allows the presentation of data in a set of ‘cases’ that collectively explain how and why strategic planning was introduced to the Australian university sector.

Yin, a leading case study theorist, recommends researchers who are able to make this choice, and have the required resources, apply a multiple case study approach as it is preferable to single-case study designs. “Even if you can do a “two-case” case study, your chances of doing a good case study will be better than using a single-case design. Single-case designs are more vulnerable as they “put all your eggs in one basket”. More important, the analytic benefits from having two (or more) cases may be substantial” (Yin, 2009, p.61).

Case study allows the “study of the particularity and complexity of a case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p.xi), and enables the researcher to focus on a “contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin, 1984, p.13), important considerations for this study. The complex, social phenomena that is the focal point of analysis in this study is the introduction of strategic planning to Australian universities.

Additionally, case study’s methodological strength comes from an ability to incorporate a rich evidence chain including interviews, observations, surveys, documentary evidence to ensure the researcher addresses a broad range of “historical, attitudinal and observational issues” (Yin, 1984, p.97). Its procedural strength lies in methodological protocols that have
been established to guide researchers “beyond simple repetition of data gathering to … find the validity of the data observed” (Stake, 1995, p.109). The presentation and subsequent analysis of a set of case studies in this study, namely raw data in the form of first-person participant narratives, is therefore consistent with the multiple-case case study designs recommended by Yin (1984, 2009) and Stake (1995).

1.6 The professional doctorate

I enrolled in a Doctor of Education as a matter of personal choice. The University of Sydney’s Doctor of Education is a traditional first generational professional doctorate, consisting of coursework plus thesis providing a “different but equal” doctorate model (Maxwell 2003; see also Maxwell & Shanahan, 1997, pp.138-140; Trigwell et al., 1997, p.6). I was attracted to the Doctor of Education’s structure and its ability to accommodate research into areas of professional practice, such as leadership and strategic planning. I also appreciate the concept of ‘professional continuation’ described by Scott et al. (2004) as well as ideas of “critical reflection” aimed at improving practice described by Schön (1983, 1987).

Over the last twenty years, I became increasingly concerned that there was a knowledge gap relating to leading strategic planning in Australian universities that was impacting on my professional practice. This study therefore enables me to bring a “critical research-based perspective on the workplace” which is consistent with doctoral programs offered by UK universities, where “the discourse of researching one’s own practice is central to professional and academic work with students” (Drake & Heath, 2008, pp.127-128).

When I commenced this study, I was employed in a Strategic Planning unit in a large, comprehensive, metropolitan university. As I had frequent interactions with the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and other members of the Senior Executive, and had access to highly sensitive information, it was not possible for me to use action research methodology or locate the study within my work place as many professional doctorate candidates are able to do (Maxwell, 2003).
In order to distance myself from my professional surroundings, I changed professional positions and moved into research management at another university to ensure I was able to write the findings from a perspective of distance. This is consistent with the recommendations of Drake and Heath who advise students to “develop a critical position with respect to the research and the research setting” (2008, p.134). The insider knowledge I developed during my twenty years of professional practice helped me to identify the research questions, however, it did not provide the insights required to develop the findings: that will be the outcome of this research study.

The Doctor of Education is also a structured program which helps keep busy professionals on track and on task. The first years of coursework helped me define my research focus and develop the research questions; the steady routine of the classes and assignments settled me into the research program. My supervisors provided the guidance I needed to develop the research plan, select an appropriate methodology to conduct the research, analyse the data and develop the findings. At the centre of the professional doctorate, is the notion of critical reflection that links experiential learning with tacit knowledge (Claxton, 1998, and Eraut, 1994, cited Drake and Heath, 2008, p.128).

I also thought doctoral level research into this topic would enhance my ability to think holistically and ‘see the whole picture’ as the study by Wellington and Sikes (2006) on UK doctoral candidates illustrates. These are essential skills for strategic planners and strategists. Therefore this study should also improve my professional skills and assist me to adopt a more “reflective approach” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p. 730) to my strategic planning practice.

Professional doctorates in Australia are industry focused. My industry is the Australian university sector, itself a knowledge production economy. “Research must of necessity become an economy to be managed both within the university and within the sector as a whole, in its complex interrelationship with the policy and economic environment” (Nowotny 2001, p.35, cited Kemp, 2004, p.406). Therefore I decided to commence a professional doctorate to investigate areas related to my professional practice, leadership and strategic planning, in the Australian university sector.
During the last four decades, Australian universities have changed significantly and rapidly through extensive Commonwealth Government policy reform, new legislation and external review mechanisms. As a result, all Australian university employees, both academic and professional staff, need to constantly review their practice and develop new skills (Bourner et al., 2001, p.42) so that they can adapt and contribute effectively to constantly evolving operational contexts.

I have been employed in the university sector for almost twenty years in the post-Dawkins era when the Australian higher education sector was subject to constant cycles of legislative change, policy review and workplace reform. The Doctor of Education program therefore offered me a unique opportunity to think through and analyse my own practice or ‘professionalism’ on site (Brennan, 1995, p.20).

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis has nine chapters plus a bibliography. This chapter, the Preface, introduces the study and the researcher. Chapter 2, provides a detailed overview of the study context so that the data presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will be more readily understood. Chapter 3, presents the Literature Review, and Chapter 4, the Methodology.

The data were organised into clusters so that the case studies could be compared and contrasted. Chapter 5, presents the Participant Observers cluster; Chapter 6, the Academic Leaders cluster, and Chapter 7, the Vice-Chancellors cluster.

Chapter 8, the Findings, presents a conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities, discusses the themes emerging from the clusters in more detail, and answers the research questions.

Chapter 9, the Conclusion, presents the recommendations offered by the participants for the next generation of leaders who will be tasked to lead strategic planning in Australian universities in the future, and proposes various elements that should be reflected in an ‘effective’ Strategic Plan.
CHAPTER 2: THE STUDY CONTEXT

When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters: one represents danger and the other represents opportunity

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (circa 1962)

This thesis will present original data collected as part of a research study investigating the introduction and implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities.

2.1 An overview of developments in the Australian university sector

The British colony of New South Wales was established at Sydney Cove in 1788 as a transportation destination for criminals from England’s overcrowded goals and prison hulks on the River Thames. By 1850 the colony comprised the entire eastern coastline and almost half the continental land mass of Terra Australis, which had been claimed for Britain by Captain Cook in 1770 under the doctrine of *terra nullius* meaning ‘land belonging to no one’, ignoring the fact that as many as one million Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples occupied the land. The doctrine of *terra nullius* was not overturned until in 1992 when the High Court of Australia ruled in favour of Eddie Mabo, in *Mabo v The State of Queensland*, which then resulted in the passing of the *Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth)*.

The University of Sydney, established in 1850, was modelled on the ancient universities of England and Scotland: Oxford (1167), Cambridge (1209-31), St Andrews (1413), Glasgow (1451) and Aberdeen (1495) universities. Construction began on the landmark University of Sydney Gothic Revival Quadrangle Building in 1854 while the settlement at Sydney Town was still a British penal settlement. By 1899 New South Wales had been divided into six smaller colonies radiating from major settlements located at strategic transport hubs on the Eastern, Southern and Western coastlines.

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The colonies were federated by the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, a British Act of Parliament, which declared that the former colonies, now the States of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania would be known as the 'Commonwealth of Australia' from the 1st of January 1901. Just twelve years later, the Commonwealth of Australia had six universities – one in each State: the University of Sydney; the University of Melbourne (1852); the University of Adelaide (1874); the University of Tasmania (1890); the University of Queensland (1909) and the University of Western Australia (1911). This phase of higher education expansion was interrupted by World War I and the Great Depression. However, by the end of World War II Australia had two new universities: the research-intensive Australian National University (1946), and the University of New South Wales (1949), formerly a technical institute for training mechanics in Sydney since 1843.

One of the first comprehensive reviews of the Australian higher education sector was commissioned by the second Menzies Commonwealth Government, chaired by Keith A. H. Murray. The Murray Report, released in 1957, called for an increase in Commonwealth investment in higher education, to fund essential structural and teaching improvements to deliver the professional and technical services required to drive the Australian post-war economy. “Both governments and the public have come to be aware that the national community of our age cannot flourish without good universities” (p.7).

However, when the Martin review of Tertiary Education in Australia (1964) released its report just seven years later, higher education was still only funded to the amount of 0.8% of the Australian Gross National Product (GDP). Arguing that this level of investment was not sufficient to build a quality higher education system in Australia, the Martin Report recommended the higher education system be expanded by the establishment of Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) which commenced in 1965, followed by the Technical and Further Education sector (TAFE) which commenced in the 1970s, to train the vocational and technical workers required to increase Australia’s productivity. The Martin Committee recommended that the Commonwealth of Australia would be best served by a ‘binary’ system of higher education in which universities, and CAEs and TAFEs would provide different educational services to different population classes, a precedent well established in Australia educational history (Campbell, 2010, p.107).
Table 1: Australian university establishment timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>ESTABLISHED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Sydney</td>
<td>1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
<td>1852</td>
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<tr>
<td>The University of Adelaide</td>
<td>1874</td>
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<tr>
<td>The University of Tasmania</td>
<td>1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Queensland</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Western Australia</td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian National University</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of New South Wales</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Trobe University</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie University</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Newcastle</td>
<td>1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flinders University of South Australia</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cook University</td>
<td>1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch University</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deakin University</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
<td>1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curtin University of Technology</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond University (private)</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Canberra</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Notre Dame Australia (private)</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of New England</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Wollongong</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria University</td>
<td>1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Catholic University</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swinburne University of Technology</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Ballarat (Federation University 2014)</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Cross University</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Southern Queensland</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of the Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federation University (formerly the University of Ballarat and Monash’s Universities former Gippsland Campus)</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Many of Australia’s 39 universities are amalgamations or transformations of former teaching and/or technical colleges/institutes providing educational services for many years, some for over 100 years, before they were incorporated as a university following the Dawkins Reforms. This Table indicates the date the institution was established as a university as defined by the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA).
As Table 1 demonstrates, when Minister Dawkins released the ‘Green Paper’ in December 1987, Australia had twenty universities, including Bond University, Australia’s first private university (above the line). A period of massive growth and expansion continued through the late 1980s and 1990s in the post-Dawkins era, when an additional nineteen universities were established (below the line). Australia’s newest university, Federation University, established in 2014, is a dual-sector collaboration between the former University of Ballarat and Monash University's Gippsland Campus.

Marginson and Considine (2000) position the establishment of Australian universities within the economic and historical development of the nation of Australia, arguing that Australian universities developed unique characteristics that can be traced to the historical period in which they were founded, influencing their founding ideologies and institutional missions:

- **The Sandstone** universities, the oldest Australian universities established in each State of the Commonwealth featuring grand sandstone architecture in the model of the Oxbridge Universities, include the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide and Western Australia (UWA). The sandstone universities are all members of the Group of Eight (Go8) coalition of leading Australian Universities;

- **The Redbricks**, the most prestigious group of universities established in the post-second world war years include Monash and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) two redbrick universities that are also members of the Go8;

- **The Gumtrees**, were founded during the second phase of the post-second world war from 1960-1975 include Macquarie, Griffith, Newcastle, James Cook, Deakin and Flinders Universities;

- **The Unitechs**, the largest of the former Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) with vocational and industry emphases in both teaching and research;

- **The New Universities**, the post-1986 group of universities including Central Queensland, Edith Cowan, and Southern Cross Universities; and

- **The Australian National University (ANU)**, established in 1946 immediately after the Second World War as an Institute of Advanced Studies, is also a member of the
Group of Eight. Modelled on the collegial research academy the ANU is Australia’s most research intensive university (Marginson & Considine, 2000, pp.189-197).

In 2014, Australia’s 39 universities are large, complex, modern universities operating in a turbulent, competitive, global environment. The national funding environment has also been shaped by large-scale government funding cuts that commenced in real terms by the Howard Government after it was elected to office in 1996. Although 37 of Australia’s universities are public universities, government funding only provides approximately 56% of the 39 Higher Education Providers (HEPs) operating revenue, made up of Australian Government Grants (42.4%), HECS-HELP (11.6%) and FEE-HELP Australian Government Payments (2.3%) (Australian Government, Higher Education Statistics, Finance 2011).

There are currently several government policy barriers in place that prevent Australian universities from raising revenue in areas where there is a ready market, such as offering full-fee paying places to domestic undergraduate students who failed to achieve the minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) required for a Commonwealth Supported place in the degree program, a policy that was phased out from 2009 (Croucher, Marginson et al., 2013, p.99).

International students bring a multi-million dollar revenue stream to Australian universities. As International enrolments are not capped, and the enrolment capacity of the institution is limited only by the availability of teaching resources, this revenue generating strategy has resulted in many instances of overcrowding. International student enrolments declined by 2.7% in the 2011-2012 academic year due to a range of reasons including international currency movements, changes to recruitment practices following the introduction of a streamlined visa process in Australia, violent attacks on foreign students that are believed to be racially based, and the high cost of living in Australia. International student enrolments increased in 2013 by 3.8% over 2012, although this is still well short of the AUS$16.1 billion generated in 2010.

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These challenges are consequences of an external change phenomenon termed ‘globalisation’ that brought substantial organisational change to Australian universities, primarily by subjecting them to open international market forces. Marginson (1999a) argues that globalisation links Australian universities to a world-wide trade and finance system that is subject to constantly evolving communications and information technologies. Certainly, the global movement of people, both staff and students, has transformed Australian university campuses into multi-cultural communities of people united only through the pursuit of knowledge, resulting in a diaspora of similarly constructed global societies in universities throughout the world.

The impact this has had on academic programs (for example, the duration of programs of study to comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework and post-study work visas), the curricula, delivery models, language support, student services, quality, and assessment procedures has been substantial. Many international students from countries throughout Asia enrol in accounting and finance programs in Australian universities as this area of professional expertise provides a pathway to work visas and permanent residency status in Australia (Tadros & King, 2014). As a result Business, Commerce and Economics faculties feature some of the most overcrowded teaching facilities in Australian universities. Although, in turn, these faculties have also benefited financially from this trend over the twenty years, depending on the distribution of resources, or the internal funding model, in individual universities.

International students from India, other regions in the Asian sub-continent and the middle-East, tend to favour Information Technology, and related science degrees (Chan & McLoughlin, 2005). Prospective enrolments from India were affected by the falling Indian rupee in August-September 2013 and the sector needs to be well prepared for future shifts in International student enrolments.

For example, Central Queensland University’s (CQU) income from International student enrolments dropped from $94.4m in 2010 to $73.4m in 2012. Excerpts from a letter to the Auditor-General from the Vice-Chancellor of CQU, Professor Scott Bowman, published in The Australian reveals the financial consequences for CQU from the changes implemented by the government to the visa requirements for International students: “… the university has
changed its recruitment practices in accordance with the requirements of the streamlined visa processing system. This contributed to a significant drop in new students throughout the year and reduced the university’s net revenue by $12m in 2012” (Higher Education Supplement [HES] May 1, 2013). It is extremely difficult for universities to predict and manage revenue shortfalls of this magnitude.

The predicament faced by CQU is just one example of the impact of changes to government policy on operational aspects of Australian universities. As a result of this policy change, many universities had to find immediate savings by freezing strategic projects, delaying new recruitments and/or embarking on retrenchment or voluntary redundancy campaigns.

Currie and Newson’s collection of papers on *Universities and Globalization* (1998) offers a range of critical perspectives on the consequences of universities being subject to market forces, the introduction of business practices, performance indicators and corporate managerialism including strategic planning which is the focus of this thesis:

> The influence of the philosophy that “the market knows best” has also brought ideas from accountants and auditors and even their professional language into the quadrangle. Business practices have introduced greater and unrelenting competition for funds. Performance indicators are used to assess and measure individuals, departments, and universities against each other by the practice of benchmarking. Corporate managerialism and line management have replaced elected deans and marginalized faculty senates and academic councils, leading to a general decline in collegiality. These business practices have led to insularity among academics, greater closed individualism, and a loss of a sense of (academic) community (Currie & Newson, 1998, p.4).

There are also many internal forces that impact on the financial situations of Australian universities. For example, research income awarded by the highly competitive Commonwealth Category 1 Competitive research funding schemes, and other research funding schemes on the Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR) that are very important in peer prestige and global University Rankings, do not fund the full cost of the research project outlined in the proposal. Both the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) expect universities to meet the funding shortfall and provide the research infrastructure to ensure the project objectives outlined in the proposal are met. This poses a significant cost for all universities, particularly research-intensive universities.
Although Australian universities make significant contributions to national productivity, they are all also under financial pressure and constantly looking for ways to broaden their revenue streams so that they can finance their diverse, multi-million or billion dollar annual operations as Table 2 demonstrates.

Table 2: University finances 2011: The real shape we’re in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Accounting surplus</th>
<th>Real amount*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>$204m</td>
<td>-$38m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>$89m</td>
<td>$2.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of NSW</td>
<td>$89m</td>
<td>$7.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Trobe University</td>
<td>$84m</td>
<td>$22m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Sturt University (CSU)</td>
<td>$39m</td>
<td>$12m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of New England (UNE)</td>
<td>$12.5m</td>
<td>-$3m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Catholic University (ACU)</td>
<td>$11m</td>
<td>-$2.3m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria University (VU)</td>
<td>$8.6m</td>
<td>-$13m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University (CQU)</td>
<td>-$3.7m</td>
<td>$6.8m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The difference between the reported and actual accounting surplus is caused by an accounting convention that includes one-off grants tied to capital works, research and other activities (Prof Vin Massaro, LH Martin Institute, *The Australian*, HES, June 13, 2012).

Despite these financial and operational challenges, more than 1,313,776 students were enrolled in Australian universities in 2014. The higher education sector (including non-university tertiary institutions) is the third largest industry contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Australia, generating nearly $15 billion annually in exports, and supports approximately 127,000 jobs, of which 88,000 are outside the education sector (Universities Australia Policy Statement 2013-2016).

The financial circumstances of each university will impact on the level of investment Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executive are able to direct to new or current strategic initiatives. Financial constraints therefore can influence the level of commitment to each strategic initiative as well as the shape, scope and timeline of the university-wide Strategic Plan published at the conclusion of the strategic planning process, and as a consequence, will impact on the resulting level of support or discontent within the academic community.
If financial constraints result in funding cuts that are unpopular with academic and general staff, then the Vice-Chancellor must communicate the rationale behind the strategic funding decisions in ways that do not disengage or alienate the university community (Sharrock, 2014).

University activities comprise the largest export industry in states such as Victoria. Individual universities are also some of the largest employers in regional centres such as Bathurst, Lismore and Armidale in NSW. Minister Macfarlane, the Commonwealth Minister for Industry, recently stated Australia’s competitive performance in the Global Innovation Index, discussed in the Preface of this thesis (p.7) “shines a light on the creativity, inventiveness, business capability and the innovative spirit of Australians … building on our nation’s success and providing the right framework to encourage the next wave of entrepreneurship and investment in the industries of the future are at the heart of the Government’s industry policy” (Media Release, 18 July 2014).

Although there was a small overall decline in the 2014 world university ranking results, Australian universities perform well in international league tables, which is somewhat surprising considering the youthfulness of the sector, as the two oldest universities, Sydney University, and the University of Melbourne are only 164 and 162 years old respectively (see Australian University establishment timeline, Table 1, p.17).

In The Times Higher Education World University Reputation Rankings (March, 2014) five Australian Go8 universities were ranked in the top 100 universities in the world although the results reflect a decline across the sector. Melbourne fell slightly to 43 (39 in 2013), the ANU dropped to the 61-70 band (42 in 2013), Sydney to the 61-70 band (49 in 2013), Queensland to the 81-90 band (71-80 in 2013), and the UNSW fell to the 91-100 band (81-90 in 2013) with Monash dropping out of the top 100 universities in the world (91-100 in 2013).

Small gains were made by three of the Go8 universities in the 2013 QS World University Rankings with Melbourne rising to 31 (36 in 2012), Sydney improved slightly to 38 (39 in 2012), as did Queensland rising to 43 (46 in 2012). The ANU fell slightly to 27 (24 in 2012), Monash fell out of the top 100 (from 91 in 2012) and Adelaide fell to equal 104 (from 102
in 2012). However, the QS World University Rankings 2013 awarded 10 post-Dawkins universities QS 5 Stars: Macquarie University, the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), the University of Wollongong, the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), the University of Newcastle, Griffith University, the University of South Australia (UniSA), Deakin and Bond Universities.

The QS 5 Stars is a holistic companion to the QS rankings that evaluates universities across a broad range of criteria and thresholds instead of ranking them against the performance of competitor institution. Additionally, the QS University Rankings listed nine post-Dawkins universities in the top 50 universities in the world under 50 years of age: UTS, Wollongong, QUT, Curtin University, RMIT, Newcastle, Griffith, UniSA and James Cook University.

The 2013 ARWU Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) released in August 2013 also ranked five Australian universities in the top 100 universities in the world and seven in the top 150 universities in the world: Melbourne was ranked 54, an improvement from 57 in 2012; the ANU was ranked 66, a slight decline from 64 in 2012; Queensland moved to 85, an improvement from 90 in 2012; the UWA moved to 91, an improvement from 96 in 2012; Sydney was ranked 97, representing a slight decline from 93 in 2012; with Monash and the UNSW following in the 101-150 grouping. The remaining Go8 university, The University of Adelaide (Adelaide), was ranked by the ARWU in the 201-300 group together with Macquarie University (Macquarie), a ‘greenfields’ university established in the northern suburbs of Sydney in 1964.

This small cohort of Australian universities in the ARWU Top 150 Universities in the World includes seven of the Group of Eight (Go8) leading coalition of leading Australian universities. While it is true that the world university ranking organisations apply different methodologies, and the reliability of the results is often questioned, the fact that the same Go8 universities are consistently ranked in the top 100-150 universities in the world in all three key international league tables, provides a clear indication that these universities are performing well in the measures used by the ranking organisations to assess university performance. The ARWU, for example, ranks 19 of Australia’s 39 universities (49%) in the top 500 universities in the world.
However, over the last few years the Australian public has received many mixed messages about the Australian university sector which on one hand seems to be competing well internationally, but on the other hand, has been subject to public disputes, strikes and protests between academic staff and university executives. Many of these events have been reported in the mainstream press.

For example, in March 2013, strikes and protests held at Sydney University were reported in the mainstream newspapers and televised on the evening news. The internal dispute turned public, primarily resulting from a break-down in negotiations between members of the Sydney University Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) team, widespread lack of agreement on which areas of the university should suffer projected funding cuts, and quantitative research performance measures that would determine research investment in “identified areas of research” that were announced in *The University of Sydney 2011-2015 Strategic Plan*, particularly Strategy Six (b) and (c) (p.15) continued to interrupt the 2013 academic year.

Open correspondence from Professor Raewyn Connell, leading educational sociologist, entitled ‘Why I went on strike today’ addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Spence, published in part in *The Australian* Higher Education, posted on the National Tertiary Education Union website on 25th of March\(^8\), reveals deep divisions at Sydney University between academic staff and the Vice-Chancellor on a wide range of issues related to management, strategic planning, and enterprise bargaining.

Some of the issues raised by Professor Connell include resentment at the extensive 2011-2012 staff redundancy plan, the casualization of the academic workforce and the accountability mechanisms that were progressively imposed on the academic community following the release of *The University of Sydney 2011-2015 Strategic Plan* as the following correspondence reveals:

> University staff don’t take industrial action lightly. As you may know, a strike rarely has a single cause. It generally grows from a build-up of frustrations, setbacks and conflicts that result in a loss of trust in management. That is the

case at the University of Sydney. It is the same in much of the Australian university system, which has become more troubled, and more tense and distrustful, then in previous generations.

Universities as employers have not made it their priority to have a secure, committed workforce. Over time, university managers have responded to funding pressures by making job insecurity grow – through outsourcing of general staff work, erosion of tenure, and above all, casualization.

To management this looks like flexibility. To many of my younger colleagues, it looks like a life of precarious labour, scrabbling for short-term, part-time and totally insecure appointments. These are poor conditions for building an intellectual workforce. From an educational point of view, it means a mass of teaching done by staff who can’t build up the experience, depth of knowledge, or confident relationship with students that needed for the very best teaching.

The full-time staff too have been under growing stress. You will be very familiar with the worsening student/staff ratios in the last generation. No pretence that we can work smarter can reduce this pressure, on both academic and general staff. The industrial relations colleagues call this “labour intensification, and it is reality at the chalk face in this university.

At the same time there has been more micro-management and surveillance of how we do our jobs. The staff of this university are increasingly enmeshed in a thicket of anonymous online control systems — to document our courses, get permission to travel or to do our research, get our “performance” managed, and many other things … Have we agreed to these changes? In most cases we were never asked; they have simply been imposed on us.

That’s part of a broader decline of organisational democracy and self-management in the university. We don’t have any forum, or set of forums, where the problems of this university can be debated in a participatory way, with some prospect of influencing outcome … it appears that the university authorities these days don’t really trust the staff – to know our trades, to act responsibly, or to share in running the place.

That’s an important reason for the depth of anger about the redundancies issue in 2011-2012. We are grown-up people, we know universities have financial problems, we too want to work out solutions – and we know there are many ways for institutions to handle financial pressure. Instead of an invitation to work on the problems together, we saw colleagues threatened, tenure weakened, arbitrary rules imposed, and mysterious exemptions granted. And then a further round of redundancies was mishandled too. I don’t know what your original intention was: but as these events unfolded, staff saw the management behaving unpredictably, wrecking the livelihoods of valued colleagues, and undermining security for all the staff … there is something at stake here beyond staff morale and a particular log of claims. The future character of our university system is involved. The staff on the picket line here are the people involved in building
universities for the twenty-first century, in practice as well as in imagination … [Connell, 7 March 2013].

An editorial featuring the case of Professor Helen Dunstan, a historian at Sydney University who appealed her retrenchment for unsatisfactory research performance citing her strong teaching record and internationally recognised scholarship on 18th Century China, quotes Professor Stephen Garton, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who is managing the Sydney University dispute, saying “No one could approach this with any joy. We have a lot of good people everywhere – it’s a budget issue, not a performance issue” (The Australian, HES, March 21, 2012).

However the following week another article reports Professor Garton, confirming that the staff-cuts were both a reputational and budgetary issue. “Some other Go8 universities are pulling ahead of us in terms of research performance … many of these poor research performers are also not making up teaching hours to compensate … adding unnecessarily to level of part-time teaching expenditure. Given our current budget situation, these are things we can ill afford to ignore” (The Australian, HES, “Performance puts uni’s reputation at risk”, March 28, 2012).

There have also been several commentaries posted on ‘The Conversation’ such as ‘Collegiality is dead in the new corporatised university’ by Professor Margaret Thornton from the ANU. Professor Thornton has consistently argued that “…collegiality contrasts sharply with the top-down managerialism associated with the corporatised universities … Universities were now ruled by corrosive leadership – or bullying by another name … Corporatisation, the increase in power of vice-chancellors and the changed composition of council had led to more decisions being made by senior management behind closed doors, in the absence of consultation (The Conversation 23 February 2012, citing Thornton, 2004).

A commentary ‘Reform Australian universities by cutting their bureaucracies’ was posted by economists Professors Graves and Barnett, from the Queensland University of Technology and Professor Clarke, from the University of Melbourne, who argued that … “as Australian politicians are preparing to reform the university sector, there is an opportunity to take a closer look at the large and powerful university bureaucracy …. as only one third of university spending is allocated to academic salaries” … (The Conversation, 18

These editorials and commentaries are part of a large volume of critical responses to actions taken by Vice-Chancellors and their leadership teams that is too extensive to cover in this thesis. However, I would suggest that they are indicative of a sector in which there are pockets of dissent which could be attributed to factors associated with leadership such as communication skills and strategy (Sharrock, 2012), as well as strategic objectives that are prioritised by the executive leadership team during the strategic planning process which may or may not have the support of the academic community (see for example, Connell, 2013a).

### 2.2 A brief overview of the ‘managerialisation’ of the Australian university sector

Some of the most controversial issues in Australian universities relate to contested ideas concerning the introduction of ‘corporate’ leadership and management practices that are not compatible with collegial academic values (see Boston, in Marginson and Considine, 2000, pp.96-132).

One of the issues that receives regular attention in the higher education literature is a phenomenon known as ‘managerialism’ or ‘managerialisation’ of Australian universities. For example, the article by Mark Dodgson, ‘Loose the corporate straitjacket and set minds free’, May 26, 2010 states that managerialism and command and control management is stifling innovation and creativity. In Kessler’s article ‘Caught between a postmodernist and a hard case’ (*The Australian*, HES, June 9, 2010) he makes the case that ‘managerialists’ and ‘postmodernists’ have eroded academics sense of satisfaction in their work, whereas Malcolm Saunders argues that the forces associated with ‘commercialism’ is a ‘disease’ that is ‘killing our universities’:

Managerialism didn’t just develop because the federal government wanted control over universities for its own sake or because academics who had lost interest in teaching and research wanted to remain in the system by picking up high-paying jobs in administration. Managerialism is one of the principal ways whereby the commercialisation of our universities has been enforced (*The Australian* HES, ‘A disease killing our universities’, June 23, 2010).
The newspaper editorials cited herein are published by some of the most senior higher education journalists in Australia and should be dismissed as sensational press. However, the sector is clearly divided on these issues. Many academics remain opposed to the ‘managerialist’ university, however large numbers of executive and professional staff argue that good management and planning is essential for multi-million dollar and billion dollar educational institutions. This dichotomy is clearly evident in the case studies presented by the study participants.

A former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University (1997-2004), Sir Colin Lucas recently reflected that “The future lies in ‘very smart planning, highly skilled choice making and determining a strategic focus’” (cited Bosetti, Walker, 2010, p.17). However, as the participants in this study reveal, there is a wide range of opinion on what constitutes good strategic planning, management and leadership in Australian universities.

This can perhaps be illustrated by a petition signed in 2013 by more than twenty of Sydney University’s senior scholars constituting a vote of no confidence in the Vice-Chancellor and appeal to the Chancellor, Professor Marie Bashir, to stop the retrenchment of 23 academics at the university who failed to meet a quantitative research performance assessment. “The crudeness of the primary quantitative criterion used committed the university, at least in theory, to retaining authors of four outputs that might be mediocre at the expense of staff who publish work of higher quality but at a slower rate … depriving the university of talented scholar-teachers whom it should be striving to retain” (cited by Stephen Matchett, ‘Appeal to Bashir on job losses’, The Australian, HES, June 6, 2013).

The public airing of these internal disputes in the mainstream press brought into contemporary focus a small collection of Australian literature that is very critical of university management, leadership, the government and individual Vice-Chancellors to name a few of the concerns raised. Two very critical books appeared in 2012: Dr Donald Meyers’ Australian Universities: a portrait of decline, and Dr Richard Hil’s, Whackademia: an insider’s account of the troubled university. Both publications are highly emotive, acerbic in their portrayal of their employer universities and the Australian university sector more generally, and vehemently opposed to the implementation of strategic management in the Australian university sector. Both attracted mainstream press coverage, increasing their
influence and causing further anxiety among Australian academics and members of the public.

Other texts in this genre, termed by some as ‘doom literature’ (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2013, p.5), include *The Subversion of Australian Universities* (Briggs & David, 2002); *Withering Heights: The State of Higher Education in Australia* (Hogbin, 1988); *Why our Universities are Failing: Crisis in the Clever Country* (Maslen & Slattery, 1994); *Our Universities are Turning us into the ‘Ignorant Country’* (Lowe, 1994); and *Why Universities Matter* (Coady, 2000). As this literature clearly demonstrates, Australian universities are not immune from competing social, economic and political forces and must find ways to manage large scale change and plan for an uncertain future. Nor is it possible for universities to satisfy the demands of each student, member of staff and other key stakeholders.

### 2.3 Australian University Strategic Plans – an overview

The Vice-Chancellor of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Professor Peter Coaldrake, and recently retired Chair of Universities Australia (UA), acknowledged in *Raising the Stakes* (2013) that one of the key challenges for Australian Vice-Chancellors is to ration income and balance institutional self-interest with government policy decisions made in the broader public interest (p.230). This is particularly difficult when Vice-Chancellors are leading a strategic planning process for and on behalf of the institutional stakeholders that will result in a published, formal, university-wide Strategic Plan.

Hundreds of university-wide Strategic Plans, Faculty Plans, Divisional Plans, Academic Plans, Research Plans, Learning and Teaching Plans, Capital Infrastructure Plans, and Strategic Discussion Papers, together with a myriad of supporting financial, short and long-horizon strategy documents have been released by Australian universities since the first Australian university Strategic Plan, so far located, was released by Melbourne University in 1988. *Looking to the Future: The Strategic Plan for the University of Melbourne* (1988).

*Looking to the Future* (1988) is a comprehensive document with a format that is consistent with many plans produced today. It opens with an introduction from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Penington, followed by a Mission Statement, Aims, Guiding Values and
the Objectives of the University. “The University of Melbourne has a special place in the Australian higher education system and in the Victorian community. This derives from its history and its particular academic strengths … A commitment to excellence … an obligation to people … and a mission to lead …” (Mission Statement, pp.6-7). The Context of Strategic Planning (p.8-9) outlines the challenges that the strategic objectives will address, followed by the University’s National Role and External Relations objectives (p.10-11).

The strategic information is then organised into three themes, each containing detailed Faculty information: Teaching Aims and Objectives (pp.13-30); Research Strengths, Policy and Management (pp.31-50); and Academic Support Services (pp.51-55).

As the plan was being developed, the university was making preparations to amalgamate with the Melbourne College of Advanced Education to establish a new Institute of Education “bringing together the University’s and the College’s teaching and research in education” (p.5). The only difference between this 1988 Plan and contemporary Strategic Plans is the traditional layout and publication format of the document, and very short entry on the non-academic Academic Support Services: the Library, Staff Development and Governance and Decision-making. As this Strategic Plan demonstrates, there were no large professional units and only a small number of people employed in a non-academic capacity at the University of Melbourne in 1988.

Each contemporary Australian university Strategic Plan reveals bold aspirational statements of strategic intent that are framed positively around specific strategic initiatives, that claim for example: to improve learning and the student experience; increase research impact; strengthen connections with local, regional and international communities, the professions, industry and business; establish new global collaborations; stimulate innovation; promote sustainability; and foster a culture of staff engagement, to name but a few. In order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the origins of the conflict evidenced by the protests at Sydney University reported in the mainstream press, is helpful to look once again at the institutional strategic plan.

The University of Sydney Strategic Plan 2011-2015 outlines a total of seventeen strategies, with 100 supporting initiatives or sub-strategies developed to respond to the challenges
identified in the preceding Green (Discussion) Paper (2010) and White (Policy) Paper (2011). It is very unusual for a Strategic Plan to have more than 6-8 key strategies, so the Sydney Strategic Plan 2011-2015 outlines a very large portfolio of strategic change to be completed within a relatively short period of time, so it is ambitious. It is also practical and gives the impression of an institution determined to address the numerous internal problems identified in the preceding Green and White Papers.

The key strategic objectives are being implemented through the Vice-Chancellor’s Work Slate comprised of interdisciplinary, institution-wide Committees, led by Chairs with the expertise required to guide the specific work of the committee. This appears to be an effective implementation strategy, demonstrated by the interim report against performance issued in August 2012 that is informative and encouraging. The annual review and reporting cycle offers the flexibility that befits a large, comprehensive, university with a loosely-coupled academic structure. The statement of Purpose and Values reflects a moral commitment to the students and citizens of Australia: “We aim to create and sustain a university in which, for the benefit of both Australia and the wider world, the brightest researchers and the most promising students, whatever their social or cultural background, can thrive and realise their full potential”.

The two key values driving the strategic change are ‘engaged enquiry’ and ‘mutual accountability’. It could be suggested that the mutual accountability value generated some of the internal conflict outlined earlier in this thesis. As Dr Nicholas Riemer states in his article entitled ‘Management should pay for its mistakes’ he makes this explicit: “It has escaped nobody except, apparently, the VC and upper management, that the only clearly underperforming area of the university in the past three years has been the administration itself, whose spectacular negligence in prudent financial stewardship has triggered the current [financial] crisis”, (The Australian, Higher Education, 29 February 2012).

A brief overview of some other Strategic Plans published by Australian universities reveal many similarities and differences in the strategic leadership approaches adopted by Australian Vice-Chancellors. For example, the Melbourne University Plan 2011-2014 is comprehensive, concise, aspirational and positive. There are eight strategic goals, each with 5-6 supporting strategies with targets so that progress can be monitored and reported. Goal
5 is Leadership and Management stating the success of the Melbourne vision is dependent on “effective leadership and management [which] often results in success, while ineffective leadership and management often results in failure” (p.14). The university enterprise systems and administrative processes are framed as enablers (p.12) providing horizontal links connecting the essential supporting functions to enable the realisation of the strategic goals. The Internationalisation policy is positioned strategically to be “transformative” and “profoundly influencing” Melbourne’s pursuit of “global excellence in research, teaching and learning and engagement, and our mission to prepare graduates for intellectual, political, social, economic and cultural life in an increasingly interconnected world” (p.11).

Edith Cowan University’s (ECU) Strategic Plan Towards 2020 is aspirational, long-horizon and short, just one page, with five strategic priorities. Entitled Engaging Minds, Engaging Communities, it is supported by an extensive planning framework and reporting cycle. The Strategic Plan is strengthened by cascading plans in Indigenous Employment, an ECU staffing plan and functional plans in Teaching and Learning, Research and Research Training, International, Enrolments and Engagement. This evidences a comprehensive planning structure supported by data that perhaps reflects the disciplinary expertise of the Vice-Chancellor in science, microbiology and immunology.

Charles Darwin University is a multi-campus institution in the Northern Territory, a vast Territory in Northern Australia with a small population, dispersed population centres and high percentage of Indigenous Australians. The Charles Darwin Strategic Plan 2012-2014, ‘Change your World’ uses these attributes to its advantage, revealed in its Mission statement: “Enriched by the social, cultural and natural endowments of the Northern Territory, and committed to the advancement and prosperity of our region, Charles Darwin University enables staff and prepares students to be creative thinkers and effective contributors in a complex changing world” (p.6). The tyranny of distance is mitigated by strategic partnerships with Flinders University in South Australia, the Australian National University in the Australian Commonwealth Territory and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory.

The Charles Darwin University Strategic Plan 2012-2014 “Change the World” is an aspirational yet short-horizon plan with four strategic goals, each containing five to seven
action points. It is also a practical plan and gives the impression that the strategy is achievable. The challenges for each strategic goal are briefly summarised providing background relevant to the strategic intent without exposing any specific institutional weaknesses. The comprehensive graduate attribute matrix indicates that student outcomes are key performance indicators and the driving focus of the university-wide strategy.

The strategic intent in Griffith University’s Strategic Plan 2009-2013 is to be “Recognised as one of the leading universities in Australia and of the Asia-Pacific region”. This is the single strategic goal. All the supporting strategies and cascading plans are aligned with this goal, providing a clear, unambiguous strategic structure and implementation strategy. It is an ambitious strategic goal for a young, multi-campus Australian university that appears to be having an impact as Griffith was ranked in the 2013 and 2012 ARWU 301-400 band, placing Griffith nationally in the 10-16 cohort of Australian universities, a significant improvement from the ARWU 401-500 ranking achieved in 2011. The new Strategic Plan 2013-2017 continues to build on this strategy, while giving expression to the Griffith 2020 agenda and to the aspiration to further develop Griffith as a university of influence.

The University of Technology, Sydney’s, strategic intent statement in the Strategic Plan 2009-2018 “Own the Future” is guided by the practical and applied values “Discover, Engage, Empower, Deliver, Sustain” developed from the “Plan, Do, Review, Improve” internal performance review and planning cycle and reflects its history as an Institute of Technology.

The University of Tasmania’s (UTAS) Strategic Plan 2012 - onwards ‘Open to Talent’ is contextually shaped as a strategic recruitment strategy, which is important to UTAS as Tasmania is the only island state and is therefore geographically isolated from the mainland. The capability statement positions staff and students at the centre of the strategy by acknowledging that “UTAS can only ever be as good as the people who choose to work with us; our staff and students are our most important asset” (Priority, People and Culture).

The strategic intent in James Cook University’s Strategic Plan 2013-2017 is both aspirational and geographically specific “to create a brighter future for life in the tropics worldwide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference”. This Strategic Plan,
like the Charles Darwin Strategic Plan, draws strength from its location and student demographics, placing an academic focus on areas of expertise relative to the region in marine science and environmental sustainability to name a few.

The University of Western Australia’s ambitious Strategic Directions 2009-2013 was *Achieve International Excellence*, “To advance, transmit and sustain knowledge and understanding through the conduct of teaching, research and scholarship at the highest international standards, for the benefit of the Western Australian, Australian and international communities”. The new 2014 Strategic build on a century of success and UWA’s reputation as one of the world’s leading research universities “The plan establishes the values and characteristics of the University that infuse and guide all aspects of our operation and behaviour. It then identifies a number of strategic objectives for us to meet across our key areas of education, research, engagement and operations”.

La Trobe University’s “*Future Ready*” Strategic Plan 2013-2017 is forward-thinking stating that “Times have changed, and the manner in which we must play our part in the world as well as the complexity and cost of academic research have changed with them ...” One of the key strategic pillars is ‘Exceptional Staff’ …“our staff will be highly skilled, motivated, creative and ground-breaking, willing to act and be held accountable for results”. Recent reports of job losses at the Bendigo arising from strategic planning associated with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, have been dismissed as “ludicrous” by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Richard Speed (ABC News, “La Trobe University rejects claims 170 Bendigo jobs to be axed”, 22 July 2014).

The Queensland University of Technology’s *Blueprint 3 2011-2016*, positions its strategy within the challenges of the Australian higher education environment. The strategic intent is very practical: “The Blueprint’s role is to identify major priorities, articulate broad strategies, and drive greater coherence and coordination of our efforts”.

The University of Adelaide’s *Beacon of Enlightenment Strategic Plan 2012-2023* declares boldly “*Sub Cruce Lumen*: light under the Cross. Against the vast Australian skies the University of Adelaide shines as a beacon bright as the Southern Cross: it illuminates new knowledge and is a lodestar of enlightened learning for South Australia and the world”.

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35 | Chapter 2 The study context
Macquarie University’s new Strategic Plan *Our University: A Framing of Futures*, developed by the current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dowton, MD, is, aspirational, comprehensive and long-horizon; it is not limited by a fixed timeframe or performance metrics although there are certainly performance targets Macquarie intends to achieve. There is an empathetic quality in *A Framing of Futures* that suggests many possibilities for the future which perhaps reflects Professor Dowton’s disciplinary background as a paediatrician. A recent communique to staff from Professor Dowton to celebrate Macquarie’s Golden Jubilee, outlines his measured, consultative approach to achieving Macquarie’s strategic objectives:

Anniversaries are not only times for retrospection … We must now look to the future, for I am certain that our best days are yet to come … So there is much work to be done; but there are no surprises. The journey we have embarked upon is well planned, considered and strategic. It is the product of extensive consultation across the university, and it is clearly laid out in the *Our University: A Framing of Futures* framework we developed together. It is the way we will move from the University we have been to the University we want to become: a university of service and engagement, delivering high quality, transformative educational experiences to our students, uniquely Australian, truly international, the University of tomorrow (Professor Dowton, ‘Congratulations on fifty years of Macquarie’, 12 June, 2014)

These are just a few examples of the Strategic Plans produced by Australian universities. To the experienced eye, a Strategic Plan reveals a great deal about the leadership of the institution. However, the Strategic Plans themselves are single dimensional. They are not able to tell an interested observer how the process to develop the Strategic Plan was conducted, whether it was authoritarian, collaborative, consultative, large or small-scale, who was involved, who led it or how well the Strategic Plan was received at the end of the process. These are the questions this research project will explore, presenting raw data collected from nine study participants who led, participated in and/or observed the introduction and implementation of strategic planning in the Australian university sector.

### 2.4 The role of the Vice-Chancellor

Strategy is about establishing priorities; it is about making choices, often very difficult choices. This means that Australian Vice-Chancellors must make decisions on an almost
daily basis that will be unpopular with some parts of their constituency, placing them in a
difficult leadership position. As Sydney’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Spence,
explains:

There are two stereotypes of Australian vice-chancellors, the managerial bastard
and the academic’s academic. You can line up all the vice-chancellors in the
country and they’d be made to fit either of those two categories. I was seen as
an academic’s academic. Everything I did seemed to demonstrate that. When I
came in, we democratised decision-making and consulted people who hasn’t
been consulted before …

… But then this change management process came along because of the
financial situation we found ourselves in, and all of a sudden the academic’s
academic was acting like a managerialist bastard. Claims of fact followed this
reconstruction, that I only ever talk to senior managers … and that I didn’t drink
alcohol, and other claims which are simply untrue. It’s been interesting to see
myself reconstructed as this other kind of persona” (Malcolm Knox, ‘Out of the
box’, Lunch with Michael Spence, News Review, The Sydney Morning Herald,
May, 2012).

In Raising the Stakes: Gambling with the future of universities (2013), Professor Peter
Coaldrake, Vice-Chancellor of QUT and Lawrence Stedman seek to refute several sector
wide ‘myths’ including two that are directly relevant to this topic:

− University vice-chancellors are spineless and complicit in the destruction of public
universities and need to be more effective lobbyists for more funding; and
− Universities can regain their golden age by resisting the forces of neo-liberalism and
managerialism (p.8)

Coaldrake and Stedman concede that Australian academics are some of the least content in
the world suggesting that “the messiness of the current situation can be addressed only by
better planning, or by more reform aimed at teasing apart the different parts of the university
‘value chain’ and opening up the university black box to external scrutiny” (2013, p.7). This
is good advice, as references to organisational tension and staff anxiety feature in several
case studies presented in this thesis, which also lends weight to Professor Connell’s public
protest outlined earlier in this chapter.

There are many different views on the causes of the conflict and the best way forward for
Australian universities. It would be an over simplification to suggest that strategic planning
is the primary cause of the conflict between academic staff and the university executive,
however the evidence presented in this study suggests that strategic planning is a contributing factor.

As the Preface to this thesis demonstrated, all Australian universities are all under financial pressure. Therefore difficult and often unpopular strategic budgetary decisions regularly need to be made to direct resources to some areas and reduce the flow of resources to other areas as one study participant explains:

…none of us get enough money to do everything we could do. So you are going to be choosing all the time – should I do more of this, or if I do, I have to do less of that, or that, or that. So how do you handle all this? …we have had a very substantial internal change at [this university] which never resulted in mutinies. You wouldn’t have read about it in the press. I didn’t brag about the fact, but we actually changed the internal structure dramatically because it was our business. What I wanted to be judged on were the outcomes (Former Vice-Chancellor, Interview transcript, p.17, p.5).

Several study participants described other challenges arising from strategic planning and the difficulties associated with leading strategically in Australian universities, offering advice to university leaders in these types of situations:

“… the first thing you need to do when you are leading strategically, is persuade … [and] in terms of the persuasion process, you have got to understand who needs to be persuaded … The big job is to know your constituency, and know the dynamics of the constituency particularly if you are replenishing your ranks, which is our circumstance … We didn’t want to push these people out, but a lot of those folk have been here for 30 years plus and were getting ready to go and we had to get the institution ready, so what I did was to thank those people sincerely for their contributions and allow them to leave with dignity and a smile on their faces financially. Then, you start working on finding the right replacements” (Vice-Chancellor, Interview transcript, p.7)

“I would say that you can’t do effective strategy unless you understand how people are going to react and what their drivers are because people can undermine you so easily in universities because they do have this enormous personal autonomy” (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Interview transcript, p.17).

“…if you ignore the rank and file altogether or don’t take their opinions seriously, those pockets of dissent are more likely to coalesce and become much more important, than if you try to build a much more cohesive process. It is harder work to do it that way, but I think you have more of an enduring outcome” (Professor of Higher Education, Interview Transcript, p.5).
“You can’t run a university change process by riding over the top of people, unless it is a kind of situation where the resource position is so dire or some other major change is taking place, like a merger, which allows things to be pushed through more easily. Most of the time, you just need consent, active consent, and participant energy to implement change …” (Research Professor, Interview transcript, p.3).

2.5 The study

This study generates a contextually relevant overview of leading strategic planning that will inform current practitioners and the next generation of university leaders before they assume strategic leadership and planning responsibilities. Langley (2010) acknowledges that while it is difficult to “build a cumulative body of knowledge when Strategy as Practice interests tend to favour small intensive samples and fine-grained analysis, leading to corresponding limitations in terms of generalizability” (Golsorkhi, Rouleau et al., p.8), the ‘practice’ view of Strategy as Practice calls for insightful interpretations from researchers to “uncover the knowledge of the practitioners, render it explicit and make it available to others” (p.8). This is the primary aim of this research study.

Presenting data collected from the nine participants, who are all senior members of staff in the Australian university sector, this study therefore opens “the ‘black box’ of experience to scrutiny” as Coaldrake and Stedman (2013) recommend. The findings will contribute to the emerging field of ‘Strategy as Practice’ research which is also interested in exploring the ‘black box’ of strategy in practice that once led the strategic management research agenda (see Golsorkhi, Rouleau et al., 2010; Mintzberg, 1973; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Pettigrew, 1973).

The study participants have been employed in a range of senior academic and executive positions in Australian universities. Collectively they represent a small cohort of academic staff who introduced strategic planning to Australian universities. Demographic details of the participants will be provided in Chapter 4 Methodology (p.94). Suffice to say in this introductory chapter, that the participants collectively have an average of more than thirty-one years of experience in a number of positions in Australian universities and are therefore in a position to reflect on the implementation of strategic planning with the wisdom of hindsight.
The participants provide unique insights into the first attempts at strategic planning implemented in Australian universities, and explain how strategic planning as an executive led process developed over the years. Some participants saw this as an exciting career opportunity and welcomed the introduction of strategic planning in the sector, such as the Vice-Chancellor and the Emeritus Professor. Other participants suggest that the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities resulted in anxiety and resistance among academic staff, such as the Professor of Education, the Professor of Industrial Relations and the Professor of Higher Education. A synthesis of the data presented in Chapter 8, the Findings, explains why and how centralised strategic planning became the dominant form of planning throughout the Australian university sector and what impact this had on Australian universities.

The study participants helped me to understand some of the causes and elements of the current organisational conflict. They also collectively and individually offer advice to the next generation of leaders who will be tasked to lead strategic planning in the future. The study participants possess an archive of knowledge that deserves to shared and discussed. This study, therefore, will therefore play a dynamic role in the creation of new knowledge, stimulate cross-institutional discussion and promote further research that will help the sector understand the impact strategic planning has had on Australian universities and the sector more broadly.

This period of time in the Australian university sector is significant historically. Various push and pull factors such as globalisation, changes in the national policy reform agenda and the rapid growth of student numbers were some of the critical forces that created the environment of organisational instability. This induced a reliance on strategic planning in place of the ‘time honoured’ tradition of collegial academic planning. However, as the data demonstrates, each university shaped its own institutional response to the challenges and opportunities generated by these push and pull factors.

This research project is the first of a proposed series of studies to be conducted by the researcher. The findings may encourage other researchers to conduct small and large-scale studies that explore other aspects of leadership and strategic planning in Australian
universities, so as to increase the communal understanding of the history, challenges, opportunities, complexity and unique characteristics of the Australian university sector.

2.6 The researcher as a reflexive practitioner

I am a senior member of professional staff with almost twenty years of leadership and management experience at three Australian universities. Commencing my university education as a mature-age undergraduate student in 1991, I joined the Australian university sector as a non-academic (general) member of staff in 1995 while writing my History Honours thesis. I can also therefore attest that the primary consequences of the Dawkins Reforms for Australian universities was managing the large-scale restructures and amalgamations, growth in student numbers and developing a reliance on non-academic services, commerce, entrepreneurship and management to drive strategic development although this “was true more of the new universities than the old” (Marginson, 2005).

As a student and member of staff at three Australian universities during the post-Dawkins years, I personally witnessed the pressure borne by academic staff from the rapid growth of student enrolments without a parallel increase in government funding, the steady growth in the recruitment of non-academic members of staff such as myself, resulting in a stretching of resources, and numerous attempts to plan strategically by people who in many instances did not have the skills required to do this effectively.

I commenced this research project seventeen years later, while employed as a professional member of staff in a strategy office in an Australian university. In this role, I became increasingly aware of the difficulties associated with leading strategic planning in Australian universities, resolved to conduct a research study to examine this phenomenon, enrolled in a Doctor of Education and commenced this research project.

As I have undergraduate training in history, I applied the historical paradigm to this study, as I thought it was important to document the perspectives of a small, but representative sample of senior sector participants, in a range of academic and executive positions, with different disciplinary and institutional backgrounds, to explore what the implementation of strategic planning meant to them as individuals and as senior academic and executive members of staff in Australian universities.
As part of my role with the strategic planning office in an Australian university, I worked on the development of two university-wide strategic plans with different planning teams, as both unit leaders lost their jobs after the new Strategic Plans were released. This was symptomatic of the level of resistance and antagonism towards strategic planning that was prevalent in the academic community at this particular university. I had by then formed the view that it was very difficult for the strategic planning process, and the final published Strategic Plan, to satisfy the expectations of the diverse stakeholders interested in the outcomes, including vice-chancellors, deans, senior executive, the governing body, the professoriate, academic staff, professional staff, students, the government, the professions, industry, employers, community, the alumni and other stakeholders.

As an experienced strategic planning practitioner and higher education manager, I therefore bring a sense of “appreciation” (Vickers, cited Schön, 1987, p.32) to the study that will help me to construct meaning from the data that is both relevant to the topic (Schön, 1987) and generate new knowledge relevant to the area of study. I have also reflected on my own experience during the research discovery phase, which should ensure that the findings portray a two-way dynamic exchange of ideas from both a research and professional perspective.

I gradually formed the view that the strategic implementation phase is particularly problematic if academic staff have not actively engaged with the strategic planning process, and do not accept the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan published at the conclusion of the process. The most contentious factor, in my view, were cost cutting strategies aimed at reducing academic staff numbers based on the application of nominal academic performance targets, as academic outputs are very difficult to quantify in a meaningful way.

Applying quantitative measures such as the number of publications over a specific timeframe without taking into consideration the quality of the publication, or the discipline of the researcher, were often perceived as unfair and unreasonable by Australian academics, as illustrated previously in this chapter by the protests held at Sydney University that were reported in the mainstream press.
I studied the literature published by North American Business Schools (see for example Anthony, 1965; Ansoff, 1954, 1965, 1967, 1977; Mintzberg, 1972). However, I knew that these strategic planning models had been developed in corporate North American environments and doubted whether the literature was contextually appropriate to provide guidance for staff leading strategic planning in Australian universities.

When I joined the Australian university sector in 1995, large scale planning was the domain of building and grounds offices. My experience led me to conclude that the primary planning strategy in the immediate post-Dawkins years was to accommodate growth in student and staff numbers, a circumstance also confirmed in the literature (Marginson and Considine, 2000, p.59). For example, the Master Plan at my employer university and the Master Plans at other Australian universities I was familiar with, were long-horizon plans with supporting financial strategies to ensure staged delivery of new lecture theatres, libraries, laboratories and technologies to teach an ever increasing number of students, and new offices to accommodate new members of staff. Vice-Chancellors and Faculty Deans provided student projections to the planning teams, approved the design and layout of new buildings and identified new teaching technologies and modern research facilities. However, they left the logistics planning to the architects, builders, project managers and finance teams. Academic strategy was developed by the Academic Board, Deans, Heads of Schools, the faculties and the professoriate in consultation with the academic community.

I watched this situation change over the next ten years as the modern management practices outlined in the Dawkins Reforms were steadily introduced in my employer universities. Planning, statistics and business intelligence offices were established to generate the student data required to satisfy reporting requirements to the Commonwealth Department of Education. Senior Executives soon came to realise that this data could be used as academic performance data to develop targeted retrenchment and voluntary redundancy programs. At the same time, I became aware that the university Budget was no longer sent to Academic Board for review. Budgets were prepared in Finance, Budget or Planning Offices, finalised in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive, and forwarded directly to the highest governing body of the University, Council (Senate) for approval, without first being scrutinised or endorsed by the academic community. However, the budget decisions
subsequently made by Council (Senate) had academic consequences as the Professor of Higher Education clearly illustrates in his case study presented in Chapter 6 (pp.129-131).

The study participants describe many of these changes from their own perspectives; several attribute these changes to the implementation of strategic planning. One of the changes that will be discussed in the Findings Chapter of this thesis, is the way the role of the Vice-Chancellor steadily changed during the post-Dawkins period, as one of the study participants explains succinctly:

… the Vice-Chancellor’s role has been transformed in ways that are much more diverse …and I think this has been a major shift. … and it seems to be that the current Vice-Chancellor is trying to think like an academic, but to think much more directly, strategically. Whereas the previous Vice-Chancellor and I suspect other older academics acted more pragmatically as academics while thinking strategically, whereas this VC is trying to think strategically and doing it with different forms of expertise that he has been able to draw in (Professor of Education, Interview transcript, p.17).

Senge’s exposé of the art and practice of ‘learning organisations’ in _The Fifth Discipline_ (1990) inspired me to think about strategic planning as both an art and a science. He encourages students to look for ways to identify the separate, unrelated forces that shape organisations, so as to find ways to generate new ways of thinking that will encourage people to learn together. “The tools and ideas presented in this book are for destroying the illusion that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces” (1990, p.1).

This research study therefore was designed to develop a level of ‘mastery’ of leading strategic planning in Australian universities: not in an arrogant sense of claiming expertise in this subject area, but within the ideas of personal mastery advocated by Senge which suggests that:

Personal mastery … is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively. As such, it is an essential cornerstone of the learning organization – the learning organization’s spiritual foundation. An organization’s commitment to and capacity for learning can be no greater than that of its members. The roots of this discipline lie in both Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, and in secular traditions as well (1990, p.7).
I was encouraged to persevere with this study when the Vice-Chancellor at my employer university circulated the article published by Bosseti and Walker (2010), *Perspectives of UK Vice-chancellors on Leading Universities in a Knowledge-Based Economy*, to his Senior Executive Group. The Vice-Chancellor, however, used this publication to justify the widely unpopular strategic planning process underway at the university at the time, led by strategic planners and consultants, evidenced by folders of academic performance data.

I was intrigued by several quotes in the publication, particularly the following quote from a current UK Vice-Chancellor, “I think that universities need to be real about the world in which they inhabit and they need to be real in thinking how they are a business. They are in business with higher education at their heart. They are into marketing themselves, competitiveness and global market challenges” (cited, Bosetti and Walker, 2010, p.8).

I thought the academic “heart” of higher education should be at the forefront of the strategic planning process, supported by sound business practices. I had also seen, in practice, how information can at times be misinterpreted and used to validate poor strategic planning approaches that were not effective, thereby increasing the level of anxiety and resentment in the university that would make future attempts less likely to succeed.

Given the strategic planning context outlined in this chapter and my knowledge of Quinn’s managerial leadership competing values framework (1990) that will be discussed in detail in the Findings Chapter of this thesis (p.164), I commenced the data collection phase of this study to investigate what was happening in Australian universities and explore the topic from the perspective of a researching practitioner.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will be guided by the rubric suggested by Boote and Beile (2005, p.8) as several literature sources need to be explored to construct the context for this study. The first section will introduce the strategic planning literature, the literature on strategic planning in higher education institutions and the literature on strategic planning in Australian universities. The final section will include an overview of developments in the leadership literature.

It will only be possible to provide brief references to other relevant literatures, particularly organisational change, organisational theory, educational sociology, theories of power and persuasion, changes to academic work, academic development, and the political dimensions of change, to enable this chapter to deal sufficiently with the strategic planning and leadership literature and comply with the word limit of the thesis.

Additionally, the leadership literature review will focus on the business leadership literature, rather than leadership in educational contexts except where referenced, as the business leadership literature relates more readily to the study focus on leading strategic planning. As the case studies will be analysed from a strategic planning and leadership perspective, additional references to the literature will be made in the data analysis chapters, 5, 6 and 7.

3.1 The strategic planning literature

Although the term ‘strategy’ is often used in educational, financial, commercial and social contexts, it is actually a concept that is difficult to define (Graetz, Rimmer, Lawrence, Smith, 2006, p.72) and means different things to different groups of people. The reason for this, explains Mintzberg (1988), is that there are five formal definitions of the term ‘strategy’ that are used often, and interchangeably: strategy as a plan; strategy as a ploy; strategy as a pattern; strategy as a position; and strategy as a perspective (pp.10-17).

Strategic planning can be summarised as a management practice that clarifies the strategic direction of the organisation, identifies the specific strategic goals and develops a plan to ensure these goals will be achieved. Working out how to accomplish this set of strategies,
and developing the final strategic plan, therefore, is a combination of both planning and management (Cope, 1987).

In this thesis the term ‘strategic planning’ will be used to describe a structured, rational, central, planning process that is informed by data collected during external and internal analysis stages (see Figure 1, steps 2 and 3 below) to develop actions or strategies to enable an organisation to develop and implement its strategic goals (Hill, Jones, Galvin, Haidar, 2007, p.4). In 2014, strategic planning is a core management responsibility. Experience in strategic planning is an essential skill criteria in all management positions, including many academic and all senior professional appointments in Australian universities.

A rational or traditional approach to strategic planning is generally understood to be a structured process with five or six sequential stages that must be followed to develop a formal Strategic Plan (depending on the level of aggregation or disaggregation inherent in the model) detailed below in Figure 1:

**Figure 1 Rational or traditional approach to strategic planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Establish the strategic objectives in line with the organisation’s stated goals outlined in the mission statement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Conduct an analysis of the organisation’s internal and external strategic position;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Re-evaluate what the organisation hopes to achieve (objectives and goals);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Consider the alternatives available in line with the position established in steps 1-3;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Evaluate and select the best option – the one that ‘fits’ the organisational culture and takes advantage of the organisational strengths in terms of the internal and external environment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Implement and monitor the preferred strategy. This stage includes establishing the resources and controls to manage the plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Graetz, Rimmer et al., (2006), p.74.

Strategy itself is a concept that military leaders have studied for centuries. Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* is the oldest known strategic treatise and is frequently referenced in contemporary management texts. History students study the strategic military tactics used successfully by the united Greek city-states against Xerxes of Persia at the Battle of Thermopylae; the disastrous British and ANZAC assault of Gallipoli in World War I that is remembered every year in a day of national remembrance; and the strategic defence of the Kokoda Track by a
few battalions of Australian reserve army recruits against a brigade of trained Japanese soldiers, halted the Japanese invasion of Australia via Papua New Guinea in World War II.

Strategic management principles, on the other hand, were developed in the second half of the 20th century to assist commercial organisations position themselves in competitive, complex and uncertain operating environments. One of the first theorists to link strategy with organisational performance to determine “basic long-term goals and objectives of the enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” was Chandler (1962, p.13; see also Ansoff & Hayes, 1976; Maassen & Potman, 1990). The question that generated widespread interest in strategic planning in commercial contexts was why some businesses were more successful than others (Magretta, 2012). Michael Porter’s seminal texts, *Competitive Strategy* (1980) and *Competitive Advantage* (1985) clearly illustrate this point.

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, now widely used in contemporary management practice, is based on the work of these early theorists and first started to appear in business texts in the 1960s (see for example Andrews, 1971; Ansoff, 1965, 1957; Learned, Christensen et al. 1965; ). Modifications of the basic SWOT technique, illustrated below in Figure 2, are still used in organisations throughout the world to identify future opportunities and areas of risk and/or organisational weakness, so that strategic long-term and short-term investment and organisational decisions can be made.

**Figure 2: A basic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) table** (adapted from SmartDraw, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do we do exceptionally well?</td>
<td>Where are our areas of poor performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What advantages do we have?</td>
<td>Is it possible to do to do better in these areas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What assets and resources do we have?</td>
<td>What do stakeholders complain about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strengths do our various stakeholders think we have?</td>
<td>Where are our points of vulnerability?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What known opportunities are on the horizon?</td>
<td>What weaknesses are risks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we know of future opportunities?</td>
<td>What external barriers can we identify that need to be overcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which direction are our competitors moving in/why?</td>
<td>What significant change forces could threaten us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What emerging trends could be opportunities for us?</td>
<td>What economic conditions could threaten our financial viability?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These developments led to the publication of a plethora of literature, and strategic management and planning manuals, that were purchased by planners and managers wanting to equip themselves with the skills to guide their organisations through the challenges of the 20th century and help them to position their organisations to benefit from the opportunities that would emerge in the 21st century. Published testimonials of success motivated executives in a range of global contexts to develop skills in strategic planning, leading change and strategic management, thereby supporting the multi-billion dollar industry that benefited from the sale of these publications. For example:

The eight-step change process is a powerful one and deserves substantial critical acclaim in both academic and business circles, Samuel C. Schwab, President, S. Schwab Company (Kotter, 1996, p.ii).

The examples of the eight mistakes of managing change as well as the eight-step change process are extremely helpful. By putting the change process in the context of larger social and economic forces, Kotter reframes both previous research on change and his own earlier work, Rakesh Khurana, Doctoral Candidate, Harvard Business School (Kotter, 1996, p.iii).

As a consequence of the proliferation of the strategic planning literature, the term strategic planning gradually became part of the global management discourse, particularly as the case studies published in the literature celebrated commercial success in many shapes and forms.
The most widely referenced strategic planning framework is Mintzberg’s Ten Schools of Strategy Formation (Mintzberg, 1990). The Schools are referenced to the contemporary literature and reflect an evolution into more sophisticated models of strategy formation applicable to complex, modern organisations, as the theories developed into more comprehensive constructs. Mintzberg’s Ten Schools of Strategy Formation also confirmed that leaders were the ‘strategic architects of change’, a point also raised by Andrews (1971) and Porter (1980, 2005) (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 2009, pp.31-33).

The Design School, the dominant form of strategy formation from the 1960s and 1970s, develops strategy primarily from SWOT analyses (Andrews, 1965; Chandler, 1962). The Planning School developed in parallel with the Design School, however, its origins can be found in the work of Ansoff (1965) who developed the formal, rational planning process. The Positioning School grew from the work of Porter (1980), formulating strategy from analytics of the external operating environment.

Central to the strategy formation process of the Entrepreneurial School is the role of the chief executive as strategy ‘entrepreneur’. However, Mintzberg and Lampel (1999) later argued that as “the leader maintains such close control over implementing his or her formulated vision that the distinction central to the three perspectives begins to break down”, (p.23). The Cognitive School develops strategy from concept maps and mental models which Mintzberg and Lampel (1999) argue are prone to cognitive bias (pp.23-24). The Learning School reflects Mintzberg’s ideas of strategy as an emergent process, embedding strategists throughout the organisation so that strategy development and strategic implementation are coupled.

Proponents of the Power School formulate strategy through the processes of bargaining and persuasion. The Cultural School focuses on the common interests of the organisation and integrates these interests in the strategy to build cultural cohesion. The Environmental School illuminates the needs of the environment in its strategy formulation; and the Configuration School develops strategy that dramatically transforms the organisation, which is, Mintzberg and Lampel argue, “more prescriptive and practitioner oriented (and consultant) promoted”, (1999, p.25). Mintzberg’s Schools of Strategy Formation will be
further discussed in the data analysis chapters when the strategic planning approaches described by the participants are analysed.

The two most successful strategic management systems developed to enable organisations to “translate strategy into action” are the Balanced Scorecard, developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992), now available in software format and used in businesses around the world; and Six Sigma developed by Motorola in 1987 initially to improve the organisational effectiveness of AlliedSignal and General Electric in the 1990s (Snee and Hoerl, 2003). Six Sigma is now a multi-national business management strategy training program offered by the Lean Six Sigma Society of Professionals [LSSSP]. However, these systems have also been extensively critiqued. For example, Atkinson et al. (1997) criticised the Balanced Scorecard for failing to count contributions from the extended value chain of the organisation and for not conceding that key performance measures should be a two-way transaction.

The main methodological criticisms of rational strategic planning, Mintzberg and Waters (1985) argue, is that it predisposes a predictable, stable operating environment, which is not the case for modern complex organisations. Case studies published by Quinn (1987) indicate that when significant changes to strategy were made by large organisations, the approaches used were quite different from the rational-analytical approach referenced in the literature (p.7), later concluding that strategy development can be learned through a process of logical incrementalism in practice or learning ‘by doing’ (Quinn, 1993; see also Graetz, Rimmer et al., 2006, pp.76-77).

“The validity of strategy lies not in the pristine clarity or rigorously maintained structure, but in its capacity to capture the initiative, to deal with unknowable events, to redeploy and concentrate resources and new opportunities and thrusts emerge and thus to use resources most effectively toward selected goals”, (Quinn, 1993, p.279). Five of the case studies presented in the data analysis chapters of this thesis, particularly Chapters 6 and 7, offer different examples of strategic planning ‘learned through practice’, which became more adaptive, dynamic and flexible towards the end of the participants’ careers.
The publication of Mintzberg’s, second seminal text, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (1994) warned of the dangers of strategic planning. These ideas transformed my thinking on this topic as many of the findings resonated strongly with me, for example:

The implication in the pitfall literature is that political activity interferes with planning, that planning is an apolitical, objective exercise that is undermined by the pursuit of self-interest through confrontation and conflict. Here we wish to take this argument apart, showing first that planning is not as objective as its proponents claim, second that sometimes it may in fact breed certain kinds of political activity, and third that other kinds of political activity can sometimes prove more functional for organizations than planning (Mintzberg, 1994, p.188).

Mintzberg (1994) argued that strategic planning must be informed by strategic thinking, which he describes as a thought synthesis of innovation and creativity. “Strategic planning isn’t strategic thinking. One is analysis and the other is synthesis … planners shouldn’t create strategies, but they can supply data, help managers thinking strategically, and program the vision… real strategic change requires inventing new categories, not rearranging old ones”, (Mintzberg, 1994, pp.107-109). Further that “unfortunately, the hard data on which such systems depend often proves to have a decidedly soft underbelly” (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 2009, p.75).

The “seven deadly sins” of strategic planning (citing Wilson, 1994) proposed by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, (2009, p.13) include several overlapping and somewhat contradictory circumstances: “1. The staff took over the process; 2. The process dominated the staff; 3. The planning systems were virtually designed to produce no results; 4. Planning focused on the more exciting game of mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures at the expense of core business development; 5. The planning processes failed to develop true strategic choices; 6. Planning neglected the organizational and cultural requirements of strategy; 7. Single-point forecasting was an inappropriate basis for planning in an era of restructuring and uncertainty” (p.71).

It is interesting to note that Mintzberg later became one of strategic planning’s veteran critics (Allio, 2011), also expressing reservations about the ‘sustainability’ of the ‘universal’ Anglo/US leadership model inherent in the strategic planning models so far developed (Mintzberg et al., 2002; Mintzberg 2004).
Modern thinking about strategic planning, is succinctly reflected in the following observations of Bryson, Crosby and Bryson (2009):

… effective strategic planning is actually a complex cognitive, behavioral, social and political practice in which thinking, acting, learning, and knowing matter, and in which some associations are reinforced, others are created, and still others are dropped in the process of formulating and implementing strategies and plans …. further that the more strategic planning is reduced to a rigid sequence of steps entailing essentially impossible-to-meet information, power, and authority demands, the most likely it is a foregone conclusion that studies will show it fails

… also that abstract strategic plans out of the context, associations, and tensions within which they are produced and must be implemented – that therefore view knowledge as codified, objectified, easily transportable, and dissociated from the subject who produced it and must cope with it … will also fail (p.176, citing Blackler, 1993; Blackler, Crump & McDonald, 2003).

As the literature evidences, strategic planning, regardless of the approach adopted, provides leaders with an extremely effective, integrated, management control mechanism.

3.2 Strategic planning in the higher education sector

One of the earliest studies investigating strategic planning in universities was conducted by Doyle and Lynch (1978) from the Management Centre, University of Bradford. The authors recommended using portfolio planning concepts developed by General Electric and the Boston Consulting Group (citing Buzzell, Heany and Schoeffler, 1975; Boston Consulting Group 1972) to allocate resources strategically throughout universities to bring ‘value’ to the Strategic Plan. “The hypothesis is then that universities with more departments in bigger market areas and with large market shares are more competitive in their performance” (p.605). The authors recommended university staff classify courses into four ‘types’ so that they can make informed decisions relating to strategic prioritisation of resources:

- Star [large numbers of applicants, strong reputation];
- Prop [strong course, large market share of a small market therefore limited supply];
- Problem area [not competitive];
- Dog [small market share of insignificant national market] (Doyle & Lynch, 1979).
Many universities applied this approach to identify programs of study that were not profitable, without first taking into consideration the disciplinary and academic development benefits the courses bring to students.

Kotler and Murphy (1981) offered a more stylised, non-corporate approach for strategic planners in British universities, outlining a range of evaluation tools to help universities develop market-oriented strategies relevant to their academic activities. The authors suggested that working with academics in this way will encourage them to be more market focused and establish a collaborative institutional planning culture in the college, argued to be essential for organisations to survive challenging operating environments.

In adopting a new strategic posture, the school may also have to develop a plan for changing the “culture” of the organization. Every organization has a culture, that is, its people share a certain way of looking at things. Colleges have an “academic culture”, one that prizes academic freedom, highmindedness, abstract theorizing, and so on. The academic culture is often an outspoken critic of the “business culture” (profit as a worthwhile end) and the “marketing culture” (that institutions have to serve and satisfy their publics) …

… College presidents who attempt to have their faculties improve their teaching, spend more time with students, develop new courses for non-traditional markets, and so, often encounter tremendous resistance. With the growing shortage of students, the challenge facing the president is to develop a marketing orientation with the faculty in which everyone sees his or her job as sensing, serving, and satisfying markets. Changing the culture of an organization is a mammoth task, but one that may be essential if the organization is to survive in the new environment” (Caren & Kemerer, 1979, cited Kotler & Murphy, 1981, pp.486-487).

Conway, Mackay and York (1994) investigated strategic planning in the ‘new universities’ established in the United Kingdom following the Education Reform Act of 1988 which transformed the UK polytechnic and college sector, sharing commonalities with the Dawkins Reforms enacted in Australia the same year. The authors present a customer focused strategic planning approach to help staff develop institution specific mission statements, to guide the formation of effective, institution-wide, marketing strategies and thereby improve institutional performance. This, the authors suggest, is the central role of the mission statement in strategic planning (citing Pearce, 1982; Klemm et al., 1991; Campbell, 1989, p.29).
Dyson (2004) documented what he describes a successful strategic planning process undertaken at the University of Warwick in which an enhanced SWOT analysis was embedded in the design. Stressing that although the “SWOT analysis has an old fashioned feel about it”, Dyson argued that it is capable of incorporating ideas from new approaches “such as resource and competency-based planning and scenario development” and that its intrinsic value is keeping “internal and external factors in focus simultaneously” (p. 638).

The scenario development tool applied in the Dyson (2004) study was an iterative, modified SWOT analysis, a TOWS matrix, adapted from Weihrich (1982, cited Dyson, 2004, p.632). TOWS is a scenario driven approach in which two SWOT factors are identified and then paired. In this way, optimal strengths and opportunities are combined to identify organisationally-relevant strategic initiatives (pp.632-634).

**Figure 3: The enhanced TOWS matrix (adapted from Dyson, 2004, p.633)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario driven</th>
<th>Strengths, Resources Competencies</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Strengths-opportunity (optimal)</td>
<td>Weakness-opportunity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>Strengths-threats</td>
<td>Weakness-threat?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first publication on strategic planning in the American higher education sector, was Keller’s *Academic Strategy* (1983). Keller’s approach was to propose ‘new management wine in old academic bottles’, urging American university and college leaders to embrace modern management and strategic planning principles, arguing that the application of these principles will help leaders develop sound academic strategy that will improve financial performance. The three factors Keller argued helped ‘nearly every’ college improve its financial circumstances included: a venture capital fund; a consultant; and an academic management and strategic decision making executive professional development program (pp.168-169).

Numerous authors outlined the benefits of Keller’s *Academic Strategy* and encouraged its application in higher education institutions (see Dooris, Kelley and Trainer, 2004; Lelong &
Shirley 1990; Rosenberg and Schewe, 1985; Rowley, Lujan & Dolence 1997; Rowley & Sherman, 2001; Shirley, 1988, to name a few). Shirley (1988), for example, presented a concept of planning to help institutional planners create and evaluate an institutional plan (p.5) recommending emphases on developing the mission statement and planning from a customer focus perspective, a perspective Conway, Mackay and York further developed in 1994.

Lelong and Shirley (1990) later identified six critical decision areas for higher education institutions to address during the planning process, including developing the mission; identifying target groups of clientele; clarifying the goals and objectives of the institution; and the programs and services offered; taking into account the geographical service area of the institution; and the comparative advantage over competitors.

Rowley, Lujan and Dolence as early as 1997 declared that new models of strategic planning for American higher education institutions were needed as the “general approach to strategic planning taken by business poses a significant dilemma to institutions of higher education”, [my emphasis] (p.41). Although their study is based on one ‘successful’ strategic planning process at an American college, the authors outline a range of approaches they argue can be used in different higher education planning contexts. Stressing that as strategic planning is a very complex task, it must be led in a way that is compatible with the planning context. The authors further suggest that if strategic planning defaults to, and becomes part of, the annual budget planning process to inform the strategic allocation of resources (p.31) it will be constricted and the higher education leaders will not be able to plan strategically for a new future which is what strategic planning is supposed to do (citing Mintzberg, 1994a).

Another important insight conveyed by Rowley et al. is the issue of the locus of control which the authors argue is the fundamental difference between business planning models and models required for higher education institutions (1997, p.41). Business planning models rely on central control of the planning process, whereas in academic planning contexts control should be distributed through the institution. Keller wrote the forward of this text, arguing that it should assist strategic planners in the 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States improve their strategic planning outcomes, as the hundreds of strategic
plans so far developed in the American higher education sector “have had mixed success” (citing Keller, Rowley et al., 1997, p.ix).

Keller developed several Strategic Plans for American universities and colleges throughout his career. The last Strategic Plan he developed was for Lynn University [Lynn: 2020 focusing on our future] released in 2005. It is interesting to note that Keller, like Mintzberg, subsequently changed his position on strategic planning, arguing that Academic Strategy failed to give proper consideration to the strategic planning context. This is discussed in detail in Keller’s controversial final publication Higher Education and the New Society (2007), published posthumously, which agrees with one of the findings posed in the conclusion of this thesis.

Rowley’s next publication (Rowley & Sherman, 2001) explores the issues that make strategic planning in American colleges and universities very difficult. However, the major focus of this text is strategy implementation, which the authors argue should be the driving force of strategic planning. They further argue that the implementation process is complicated by the fact that most Strategic Plans published by American colleges and universities are generic, therefore, they lack the specificity required to develop enable effective strategic implementation plans.

Maassen and Potman (1990) outline three approaches for consideration in Dutch higher education institutions. These models include a linear approach based on the work of Chaffee, (1985); an adaptive approach, based on Hofer (1973); and an interpretive approach within which the underlying assumptions is that “reality is socially constructed” (p.400). In the linear approach, leaders plan how to counter competition to achieve the organisation’s goals; in the adaptive approach, the organization and its constituent parts are changed, either proactively or reactively, to improve alignment with consumer preferences.

However, in the interpretive approach, organisational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favour the organisation (Chaffee, 1985, p.147, cited Maassen & Potman, 1990, p.400). The authors argue that Dutch higher education leaders tend to apply elements from all three models which leads, at times, to organisational confusion during planning processes (p.403). Therefore, the authors
recommend the interpretive approach be applied because of its inherent ability to accommodate the academic characteristics of higher education institutions.

A more recent publication from the United Kingdom contains selected higher education case studies from twenty-five 2005 Fellowships in the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (Marshall, 2008) that assume either a macro or micro perspective. The academic reviewer, Huisman (2008) however expressed concern that the authors are not academics but change agents themselves. Therefore the discussion is framed in an overly positive way. He further argues that the case studies do not properly engage with the higher education literature, nor do they explore the underlying issues of power and organisational politics, assuming instead a unilateral pro-leadership stance. Huisman also suggests that as the data collection sampling strategies are not discussed, questions are raised about the validity and the generalisability of the findings and is critical of the fact that the authors do not critically reflect on the concept of ‘strategic leadership’ itself which is expected from scholarly research. “The lack of a sound dose of critical self-reflection by the fellowships in their double role of change agent and reporter seriously limits generalisability” (p. 107).

As I am also a ‘double agent’ in as much as I am a strategic planning practitioner and the researcher conducting this study, I elected to present the raw data in this thesis so that readers themselves can consider the participants’ reflections and evaluate the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, my experience as a strategic planning practitioner and decades of experience in the Australian university brings a sense of “appreciation” to the study (Vickers, cited Schön, 1987, p.32) that enables me to explain the data and construct meaning that is relevant to the focus of the study (Schön, 1987).

A global study undertaken by Zechlin (2010) examining strategic planning in higher education institutions around the world, proposes a pre-planning negotiation of ‘contracts’ between institutional (centre) management and the sub-units of the institutions to agree the critical sub-unit objectives for inclusion in the new Strategic Plan before it is developed. Arguing this will help overcome conflict between the big-picture strategy and the departments “by keeping the service providers very closely involved in the process” (p.263).
Recommending greater planning flexibility, Zechlin suggests changes to the basic ‘rational’ strategic planning model to clarify bilateral expectations and build internal consensus. The study suggests changes to the basic ‘rational’ planning model to achieve the organisational outcomes Zechlin argues are important in academic institutions, reminding readers that it is the academics, as individuals, who own the expertise that is the institutions most valuable resource (p.259) and therefore need to be engaged in the strategic planning process.

3.3 Strategic planning in Australian universities

The literature on the Commonwealth Government policy changes that transformed the Australian higher education sector from the 1980s is small in number, but rich in information. The studies cover in detail various changes in governance and management, the impact of competition, neoliberal and economic rationalist government policies, and changes arising from the forces of competition and managerialism. This literature provided the framework for the history of the developments of the Australian higher education sector outlined in the previous chapter and will not be further discussed here.

The first study investigating strategic planning in academic institutions in Australia was published by Kelly and Shaw (1987). The study compared and contrasted data collected from strategic planning surveys that were distributed to staff employed at two different types of organisations in the State of Victoria: academic institutions and manufacturing corporations. The results of the study found that all the surveyed academic institutions had a mission statement whereas only fifty-seven per cent of the corporations had a mission statement. Both groups of organisations recognised the importance of identifying market-selection strategies, although the academic institutions were less developed in this area, both had strategic goals in leadership in quality and service, while the academic institutions also had strategic goals in excellence in leadership and research.

An interesting result is that no academic institution reported failure to achieve its strategic goals, which was contrasted with twenty-two per cent of the corporation participants in the study. Academic institutions attributed poor institutional performance to the external political and regulatory environment which constrained their operations, and poor internal management (p.324). The participating academic institutions indicated less importance on
return on investment forecasts and short term cash flow benefits. In terms of corporate planning personnel, sixty per cent of the academic institutions reported that they had no corporate planning personnel, whereas eighty-six per cent of the corporations employed at least one individual in a corporate planning role. The authors explained the differences between the two types of organisations as arising from the fact they were at different evolutionary stages of strategic planning at the time the survey was conducted. The academic institutions were in an early stage of development, did not value roles in corporate planning or in the measurement of performance (Kelly & Shaw, p.332), which, the authors argue, were underdeveloped functions in the academic institutions.

These findings are consistent with the information published in the Commonwealth Government reports on the pre-Dawkins, era and the observations made by several study participants about the pace of implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities in the post-Dawkins era that are presented in the case studies (Chapters 5-7). The Hoare Committee (1995) for example, reviewed the progress Australian universities had made towards the introduction of contemporary management practices, largely through the implementation of strategic planning, finding that progress was “not even” in the sector.

The first review of strategic planning in Australian universities was commissioned by the Commonwealth Government (Anderson, Johnson, & Milligan, 1999). Although the study was commissioned a decade after the Dawkins Reforms were implemented, the study was not informed by, or positioned within, the organisational difficulties prevalent in the Australian university sector at the time thereby limiting its usefulness and applicability for Australian university leaders. The study neglected to provide guidance for universities trying to consolidate large post-Dawkins institutional mergers, many of which resulted in multi-campus or multi-state universities that made strategic planning difficult from both an organisational and management perspective.

Also, the tensions associated with strategic planning in universities that were coping with significant increases in teaching and administrative responsibilities associated with a rapid increase in student numbers including non-traditional and International students who required specialist student support services, were not mentioned. Nor was there an
acknowledgement that increasing workload pressures might prevent academic staff from finding the time to attend planning and strategy sessions.

The authors, in contrast, stated that all Australian universities “…have their strategic plans, and strategic planning is a recurring item on the agenda for the annual profiles negotiations between DETYA and individual institutions” (p.3) and are confident and familiar with the strategic planning framework recommended by the Higher Education Management Review Committee’s (the ‘Hoare Committee’) Report (1995). This is an oversimplification of the Hoare findings and is contradicted by the data presented in this study.

The discussion in the national review of strategic planning in Australian universities (Anderson et al., 1999) was single dimensional and focused almost entirely on the implementation of a simple, structured strategic planning model in Australian universities without any consideration of the complex, contradictory and somewhat unstable organisational context in which the planning was to be conducted. The authors stressed that if the ‘workers’ [i.e. academics] were more engaged in strategic planning and had the opportunity to develop a “deep sense of ownership of the plan” they would be more willing to play a key part in its implementation (p.1), thereby demonstrating a complete misunderstanding of the academic response to the introduction of strategic planning to Australian universities.

The report did not question why academic staff were not willing to ‘engage’ in strategic planning, nor did the study critique the applicability and/or utility of introducing strategic planning in Australian universities, that had been largely collegial, academic-led institutions until the last decade of the twentieth century.

There were a number of publications that had investigated a range of issues in the higher education sector that could have helped the authors to position strategic planning in the Australian higher education context, including the ‘doom’ literature outlined in the previous chapter, such as Maslen and Slattery (1994) and Lowe (1994). Critiques of the corporatisation of the administrative structures of Australian universities (Bessant, 1995, 2002); the impact of competition, new public management and neoliberalism policy on Australian universities (Marginson, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Welch, 1996, 1998); and
managerialism in Australian universities (Considine & Painter, 1986; Meek, 1997); the introduction of regulatory frameworks, competition, governance and management (Meek, 1995); changes to higher education governance and management (Meek & Wood, 1998); as well as comprehensive overviews of the problems encountered by Australian universities at the time (Coaldrake, 1995; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998).

There were also a number of Commonwealth Government reports that could have provided the context such as *The Challenge for Higher Education in Australia* (1987), *A New Commitment to Higher Education in Australia* (1988), *Setting the Course*, a Report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (1988) and *Recent Trends and Current Issues in Australian Higher Education* (1993).

The seminal text that has since provided a comprehensive overview of the evolution of new forms of governance, the introduction of modern management principles and a strengthening of executive control in Australian universities, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia* (Marginson & Considine, 2000) was not published until the following year. The empirical findings published in *The Enterprise University* were derived from a three year research study of 17 Australian higher education institutions, an evaluation of documents and supporting literature and a series of interviews conducted at each participating institution. The focus of the study was a broad analysis of all aspects of university governance, including leadership, management and strategy.

In the Enterprise University, the economic and academic dimensions are both subordinated to something else. Money is a key objective, but it is also the means to a more fundamental mission: to advance the prestige and competitiveness of the university as an end in itself. At the same time, academic identities, in their variations, are subordinated to the mission, marketing and strategic development of the institution and its leaders (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.5).

The authors cite one Vice-Chancellor as saying “The governing body simply has to become a custodian of the strategic direction set by the university … this means really serious attention has to be given to the professional development of council members … to seriously bring them in to strategic planning, and *seriously keep them out of attempting to manage* [authors emphasis]” (p.104). Suggesting, that when strategic planning is successful, strategic objectives of the university are constructed, and in so doing “reconstructs the corporate
purposes from within” (p.129). Staff below the level of executive were “drawn” to accept new strategies through the budget process and semi-formal modes of consultation that do not emphasise autonomy” (p.97). In relation to strategic planning in Australian universities, the authors conclude that at the end of the 1990s planning was driven by an entrepreneurial spirit with a strong management-centred focus. These results are consistent with several of the key findings of this study presented in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

Michael Pusey (1991), an Australian sociologist, commenced a national debate on economic rationalism arguing that Australia’s social policy, particularly educational policy, was being increasingly influenced by economic principles. He declared that this will not improve access and equity for non-traditional students, but produce a systemic reproduction of current social inequities (see also Welch, 1996, 1998, 2010; Yeatman, 1990, 1994). Yeatman (1993) also warned that important national social values would be lost if public sector management focused primarily on the “the management of scarce resources” (p.250).

From the 1980s Australian public institutions were progressively transformed by government policy framed by two key principles, individualism and ‘marketisation’ and a “belief that free markets are arenas which best enable individual autonomy and produce efficient economic outcomes” (Western, Baxter at al., 2007). As a result, the provision of social services, particularly in education and health, were framed in terms of deliverables derived from market driven economies, termed, neoliberalism. This economic strategy was adopted by all levels of government from the 1980s (Campbell, 2010, p.287). The first educational point of impact was in Australian schools, particularly secondary schools (Connell, 2010, 2013). The second point of impact was Australian universities.

The literature demonstrates that the enactment of the Dawkins Reforms and the introduction of strategic planning and other modern management practices in Australian universities, represented a conscious decision by the Commonwealth Government to extend neoliberal policies into the Australian university sector (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p.27. See also Considine & Painter, 1986; Davies, 2005; Marginson, 1997a; Marginson, 2000; Olsen & Peters, 2005, for a full discussion on this topic).
Academics are scholars and teachers. They must be confident that the contribution they make, as highly qualified teachers, is valued by both the student and the university (Kessler, 2010). Educational sociologists such as Connell (1985) argued three years before the Dawkins Reforms were enacted that teachers’ work, in the context of secondary schools, is affected by the “social relationships and structures that surround them” and influenced by “the workplace, the labour process, and the social relations of work” (pp.1-2).

What teachers can do with their students is create new possibilities, build paths into regions that have never been explored before. And that is very close to the heart of teaching. It happens on a small scale every time a teacher teaches well. We need to translate it to the large scale (Connell, 1985, p.206).

Higher education researchers also argued that academic work has been affected by neoliberal forces thereby impacting on educational quality (Welch, 2010, 2002, 1998, 1996) and precipitating a decline in academic morale (see for example Bellamy, Morley, Watty, 2003; McInnes, Powles, Anwyl, 1995; McInnes, 2002; Winter & Sarros, 2002; Winter, Taylor, Sarros, 2000). It can therefore be concluded that in order for academic staff to be productive and engaged, they must have confidence that their contribution to the pursuit of excellence in their academic endeavours, and engagement in the teaching process to deliver the best possible learning experience for their students are valued by their employer university. Therefore, it could be suggested that any attempt to plan for the future, either at the strategic or operational level, without engaging academic staff in the process, will not be effective and may limit the university’s ability to maximise its academic, educational, social, and financial potential.

From a leadership perspective, the timing of this study is beneficial. The findings from a two-year study into leadership in Australian universities conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, states that a transformational leadership handover from one generation of university leaders to the next is rapidly approaching (Hare, 2008).

There is increasing evidence that Australia is facing a significant higher education leadership succession challenge … A large cohort of senior leaders is about to depart. Yet many institutions report not having a coherent succession plan in place or a clear picture of what is needed to fill the gap in high-level expertise that will result from this departure (Scott, Coates, Anderson, 2008).
The primary objective of this study is to collect and analyse data from senior university staff who led, participated in, or observed, the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities the post-Dawkins era. Therefore the participants constitute a small sample of the departing leadership cohort referred to by Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008), as they were responsible for introducing strategic planning to Australian universities and bring their insights to this study which can be shared with the next generation of leaders. As Chapter 8, the Findings, reveals, the higher education sector has a great deal to learn about leadership from individuals leading strategic planning over the last twenty-six years.

3.4 The leadership literature

Leadership is a relatively new theoretical construct, and like the term ‘strategy’, ‘leadership’ is a word that is often used, yet difficult to define. An analysis of the literature that will be discussed in the following section reveals the complexity of leadership theory which suggests that leaders must be “all things to all people” (Jackson & Daly, 2011) something extremely difficult to achieve in practice.

“To lead is to live dangerously because when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear – their daily habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking – with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility … and people resist in all kinds of creative and unexpected ways that can get you taken out of the game: pushed aside, undermined, or eliminated (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, cited Jackson & Daly, 2011, p.21).

Effective leaders should be able to demonstrate a range of personality traits, such as self-confidence, honesty, integrity, be assertive (but not aggressive), motivating and inspiring, and be emotionally stable and sincere. Task related traits leaders require for effectiveness include, flexibility and adaptability, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, emotional intelligence, empathy, together with competence in managing relationships and building networks.

Leaders need a high social power motive, achievement motivation and a strong work ethic. They also need high level cognitive skills: such as mental agility, intelligence, openness, problem solving skills, lateral thinking, and creativity, the ability to communicate and share insights and be knowledgeable about the business being transacted by the organisation. They
should also have stable personalities without destructive or narcissistic tendencies (Conger, 1988). Effective leadership skills also include the ability to inspire, direct, support and motive others to ensure the organisation can achieve its strategic goals (DuBrin & Dalglis, pp.29-45).

In order to appreciate the relevance of the leadership literature to the focus of this study, leading strategic planning in Australian universities, a detailed discussion of the evolution of leadership theory from the early studies to the revisionist theorists will follow.

Most of the early leadership studies conducted in the mid to late 20th century considered leadership and management as two complementary expressions of the same function. It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that theories of leadership started to be constructed that were distinct from those of management (Bennis, 1990; Kotter, 1990). Bennis and Nanus, for example, argued that while management seeks to control organisational activities, the task of the leader is to unleash energy, set the vision and ensure the organisation does “the right thing” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 21). Kotter (1990) claimed that “Despite some similarities, difference exist which management and leadership very distinct … leadership by itself never keeps an operation on time and on budget year after year. And management by itself never creates significant change” (Kotter, pp.6-7).

In the early 20th century a number of theorists attempted to identify the traits of ‘natural leaders’. The results of these studies were analysed by Stogdill (1948) who suggested that ‘leaders’ exhibited common traits of intelligence, intuition, self-confidence and persistence, as well as the ability to dominate and control. Although, he also concluded that an individual does not necessarily become a leader simply from possessing these traits (Stogdill, 1948, p. 64). Mann (1959) also analysed the literature in an attempt to correlate relationships between various psychologies and leadership performance, identifying six personality traits, including intelligence, which agreed with Stogdill (1949), however, found that empirical correlations between the other personality traits and leadership were weak.

The inconsistencies in the results of the trait research led to Stogdill to suggest that leadership is situationally contingent (1974). This finding made a significant contribution to leadership theory and stimulated interest from researchers in a variety of disciplines. For
example, behavioural researchers investigated leadership characteristics and personalities, and psychologists and psycho-biologists researched leadership genetic abilities, thereby revealing a number of other factors that influence leadership other than situational contingencies (Grieves, 2010).

Miner (1965, 1978) for example, documented leader behaviour traits in an attempt to establish ‘universal’ leadership behaviours. Mann’s (1959) six leadership traits included intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion and conservatism (Northouse, 2010, p.17), which are now understood to be Western, male traits. The process of identifying universal leadership behaviours, traits, or personalities has since been critiqued by revisionist leadership theorists who will be introduced later in this chapter.

The major focus of leadership research over the next six decades was an attempt to identify the characteristics of effective leadership, the ‘Holy Grail’ of leadership theory. The leading researcher-practitioner in this field, who has dominated the market from the 1990s with a series of practical step-by-step change leadership publications is John Kotter, from Harvard Business School (1985, 1990, 1996, 1999, 2002). Although Kotter’s focus is on leading organisational change, his work has been exceptionally well marketed as ‘the essential’ component of ‘effective leadership’ and his books consistently appear on recommended leadership reading lists.

Results from leadership psychology assessment centres from the 1960s - 1980s suggested that some personality traits and personal abilities may predict leadership and management effectiveness in individuals, including energy level, planning skills, interpersonal confidence, cognitive competence, work motivation and self-control of feelings (Dunnette, 1971; cited Yukl, 1987, pp.71-72). Yukl (1987), one of the research leaders in this field, suggests that a high power drive is a one of the primary indicators of leadership success (pp.75-77), and that the type of power orientation evident in most effective managers is a socialized power orientation or power with good intentions (Yukl, p. 90).

Ewing (1964) had earlier proposed that the ‘Managerial Mind’ contained several core characteristics, including commitment to the organisation and supervision, is creative, innovative, adaptable, willing to delegate and kind (cited Yukl, p. 84). Katz (1955). Mann’s
(1965) later work found that effective leaders and managers rely on three core skills: technical, human relations and conceptual, which will be used in a number of different combinations according to the positional level on the organisational ladder and skills required in different organisations. The Myers-Briggs psychometric personality test was launched in 1943 to make Carl Jung’s psychological type theory accessible and useful in a range of organisational contexts. Myers-Briggs has been developed over the years and is now one of the most frequently used personality assessment tools in the world and regularly used to screen potential applicants for senior positions [MBPI® Myers-Briggs].

Leadership motivation is another area that has produced a number of theoretical concepts. For example, McClelland conducted large research projects on managerial motivation in the 1960s and 1970s, concluding that there were many variables which affected managerial power motivation. Bowers and Seashore (1966) predicted leader effectiveness using a four-factor model, making the observation that leadership is relationship dependent.

Stogdill completed a second longitudinal in 1974 which concluded that that certain physical, personality and cognitive traits can increase the possibility of effective leadership, but they do not guarantee effectiveness as this is contingent upon the leadership situation. This led to the emergence of the Contingency movement which considers how and why individuals adapt their behaviour to the leadership context. Fielder’s findings suggest that there are two types of leaders: task oriented and relationship oriented. Further developments of this theory led to the Leader Behaviour Paradigm (Fielder 1978, cited House, 1997, p.7).

The Contingency Model states that effectiveness of interacting groups or organizations depends, or is contingent, upon the appropriate match between leader personality attributes, reflecting his or her motivational structure, and the degree to which the leader has situational control and influence (Fielder, 1978, p.60).

These theorists went on to develop the Vroom-Yetton and Jago Model, the Hersey-Blanchard model, charismatic research theory, path-goal theory, charismatic leadership (House, 1997) and the Least Preferred Co-worker Score (Fiedler, 1978). They are complex theories that depend on multiple competence quotients. Some models have been tested with success, others with less success, so claims have been made that the results are not empirically reliable. Nevertheless, the contingency and situational theorists had begun to
describe leadership and management in dynamic terms although it was not always possible to predict or explain the complexity of leadership relationships in ‘real life’ organisational contexts.

In this study, elements of the Situational Leadership Model II [SLII] developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) and Blanchard et al. (1985) will be used to assess the leadership style described by the participants in their case studies in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The SLII presupposes that effective leaders will adapt their leadership style according to the situation or planning context (Northouse, 2010, pp.89-103) and, as the findings of this study illustrate, this is precisely what the participants did in practice. It should be noted, however, that as this study did not collect data from subordinates, the SLII discussion should be considered illustrative only. Additionally, as the case studies contain detailed descriptions of the participants’ approaches to leading strategic planning it is also useful to reference these self-descriptions against the four leadership styles in the SLII so as to compare and contrast the approaches described by the participants.

The leadership literature in the 1980s assumed a more practice oriented perspective, therefore makes an important contribution to this study’s focus on investigating leading strategic planning in Australian universities through a review of practitioners’ practice. Kouzes and Posner published Leadership Challenge (1987) which became a bestselling practical leadership reference book. The authors outline five practices they suggest are common among personal-best leadership experiences, which they termed the five practices of exemplary leadership: model the way; inspire a shared vision; challenge the process; enable others to act; encourage the heart (2002, p.13). Kouzes and Posner (1995) then conducted a large international survey to identify universal leadership values that have applicability across the ethic divide, identifying four traits they argue are culturally universal: honesty, strategic vision, inspiring others, and technical competence.

The authors claimed in 2002, that “recent research confirms that these five practices are just as relevant today as they were when we first began our investigation over two decades ago – if not more so”, 2002, pp.13-14). The central tenet of the text is that “leadership is everyone’s business” (2002, p.383), leadership can be learned, and leaders can make a difference. However the first challenge is to undertake a process of self-development to
discover who you are, therefore you must also self-evaluate yourself (pp.390-392). The 5th edition of Kouzes and Posner's *Leadership Challenge* (2012) remains one of the most popular leadership texts and is now supported by a multi-million dollar global professional development program.

House’s (1988) research focused on the cognitive characteristics of leaders, suggesting four characteristics that enhance leadership effectiveness: self-confidence, expertise, cognitive complexity and linguistic ability, however, conceded that these characteristics vary from individual to individual and are contextually dependent. House also critiqued some of the trait research findings, for example, studies that recruited adolescents, students and lower level managers developed findings are not relevant for high level managers and chief executives who occupy senior management positions (House, 1997, p.2). Notwithstanding these and other criticisms, the trait theorists made valuable contributions to the developing body of leadership and management theory.

Other leadership theorists examined behavioural characteristics such as achievement and power motivation, particularly McClelland (1997) who developed the Achievement Motivation and Leader Motive Profile, which provides consistent empirical results.

Not only have several defensible theoretical trait-related propositions have been introduced in the last decade and a half, there is a modest amount of empirical evidence in support of these propositions (1997, p.1).

Power and influence theorists added to the growing field of inquiry by investigating how individuals exert power and influence over others. Bass’ (1985) research demonstrates that that there are two primary leadership traits which enable individuals to influence others: charismatic and transactional leadership. Both charismatic and transformational leadership depend upon the relationship the leader develops with the group (cited Avery, 2005, pp.18-23). Charismatic leaders are generally understood to be individuals who have the interpersonal skills to build trust, confidence and communicate the ‘vision’ that others will willingly follow, however DuBrin and Daglish (2003) suggest that there are several types of charismatic leadership: socialised, personalised, office-holder, personal and divine (pp.65-74, 86-87).
Burns (1978) was one of the first theorists to discuss the ability of leaders to transform organisational contexts, which led to the development of transformational leadership theory. Transformational leaders are charismatic leaders who are able to facilitate change effectively because they can compel support from subordinates and other change participants.

Avery’s (2005) research indicates that transformational leadership is an emotion-based leadership (pp.96-98), and citing Bass and Avolio (1990), argues that transformation leaders can be categorised by four “I” behaviours: Idealized influence (charisma); Individualized consideration (praising, coaching and supporting the followers); Inspirational motivation (sharing the vision); and Intellectual stimulation (encouraging the followers to view the challenges from new perspectives), (pp.96).

Theorists generally agree that charismatic and transformational leaders must have ‘masterful’ communication skills, although not all effective leaders display charismatic and/or transformational characteristics. However, some charismatic and visionary leaders with narcissist tendencies or other personality disorders can become a detriment to the organisation (Conger, 1998; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007).

Conger’s (1998) research, for example, illustrates how cognitive dissonance can result in the development of ‘dark’ leadership characteristics in individuals which bring problems for organisations. The drive for personal recognition is so high in some individuals, that they feel compelled to distort reality to enhance their own image. Other individuals “may idealize their leader excessively and thus ignore negative aspects and exaggerate the good qualities. As a result, they may carry out their leader’s orders unquestioningly”.

Leaders in certain cases “encourage such behaviour because of their need to dominate and be admired … the danger is that [these types of leaders] surround themselves with ‘yes people’ and thus fail to receive information that might be important but challenging to the mission … and because of their overreliance on themselves and their cadre of ‘yes people’, strategic errors go unnoticed” (Conger, 1998).
Power is a complex leadership construct as power comes from a range of sources and can be exercised in a variety of ways. The types of leader power identified by French and Raven, (1959, cited by Avery, 2005, pp.42-43) include Legitimate Power (positional power); Reward Power (where rewards are offered as an incentive); Coercive Power (fear of punishment); Expertise Power (access to knowledge, information and experience); and Reference Power (individual attributes that influence the followers).

Zand’s (1997) leadership triangle explores the complex relationship between power, knowledge and trust. Other theorists suggest that leaders can increase their power if they share it with others, through delegation, or by using a range of influence tactics and behaviours to increase their power over others within the organisation. Influence therefore is a practical application of power: the leadership dilemma of using power to coerce or to obtain consent (DuBrin & Dalglish, 2003, pp.185-190; 215-227).

Fullan argues that as organisations are socio-cultural human networks, leadership is also a social process. “Context is social, not individual” (Fullan, 2003, p.2). Cultural/symbolic theories describe the shared meanings, beliefs and rituals that underpin the values and guide the actions of the group. Leadership, therefore, is socially and culturally influenced, and gives meaning to leadership actions that are situationally and contextually contingent.

This research finding is particularly relevant to the focus of this study as the unique symbolic context of academia requires different leadership skills. Smircich and Morgan (1982), for example, suggest that the relationship between the leader and the participants is socially constructed and that leadership is only effective when it is consistent with the shared cultural meaning of the organisation.

Dill (1982) agrees and further argues that effective management in universities must be compatible with, and reinforce, the organisation’s unique symbolic academic referenced meaning (Dill, p.82). Leadership, therefore, will only be perceived as effective, if it is enacted in accordance with the accepted socio-cultural norms of the organisation. However, implied in this construct are the social and cultural dimensions of leadership: such as ethics and morality which are not universal, thereby raising implications for leaders transacting
across international spheres and for leaders in multi-cultural organisations, such as Australian universities.

Cognitive theorists claim that as individuals have vastly different cognitive abilities they will exercise leadership in a variety of ways across different contexts. These considerations have fundamental implications for leaders and groups being led, as well as on communication flows. For example, Hunt (1991) proposed various schemas and cognitive ‘maps’ that could be used by groups to develop a better understanding of leader actions, “getting inside the head of leaders” (p.142).

A plethora of other theorists have focused on motivational and behavioural modification theories: expectancy and coaching theories, which explain the cognitive consequences and key characteristics of motivation, and goal setting theory, which is the specific regulation of behaviour to confirm with specific goals.

Boal and Hooijberg (2001) argue that the three cornerstones of strategic leadership are the capacity to learn, the capacity to change and managerial wisdom (p.529). This three-dimensional construct of strategic leadership influenced the design and intent of the research questions, as the questions sought to explore and learn from past experience, to lead the development of change to future practice, informed by the wisdom shared by experienced practitioners.

There is also an understanding in the strategic leadership literature that strategic leadership involves fundamental organizational change, (Davies & Davies, 2010, p.34) which may not always be the case in non-commercial organisations, such as universities. Translating Boal and Hooijberg’s eight activities of strategic leadership into four key strategic leadership actions, which Davies and Davies (2010) suggest are: developing strategic and organizational processes; leading and developing people; developing the culture and value system; and developing distinctive competences of the organisation (p.34).

Most of the studies investigating strategic leadership in educational contexts is situationally focused in schools (Bennett, 2000; Cheng, 2003; Davis & Davis, 2005, 2010). The strategic leadership approach developed by Cheng (2002) for practical application to schools,
combines the organisational theories of Bolman and Deal (1991) with Sergiovanni’s five leadership forces (1984) to develop a five-dimension framework of strategic leadership that includes human, structural, political, cultural elements, as well as educational leadership, which includes directing the learning and teaching curriculum and professional improvement (pp.56-57). “Strategic leadership in an educational institution can be considered leadership for initiating, developing and maintaining the strategic process” (Cheng, 2002, p.64).

As this literature review has established, leadership is a complex theoretical concept that is situationally and contextually contingent. Therefore it is important for researchers to study all aspects of strategic leadership in practice to develop a deeper appreciation of this complex phenomenon in a range of different educational settings, including Australian universities. Academic development researchers, in particular, are well placed to make important contributions to this area of study, although Blackmore and Blackwell (2007) argue that that “the professionalization of leadership in academic development would be a complex project” (p.378).

Initiatives such as the establishment of the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation in the United Kingdom, the Australian Council for Education Research and the LH Martin Institute in Melbourne in 2007, provide excellent foundations to undertake interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research into leading strategic planning in the university sector. Developing holistic conceptions of academic leadership that includes leadership and strategic planning may help to provide productive ways to revitalise the faculty role (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2003), integrate the roles of faculty and professional staff, and broaden the expertise of academic staff so that they are equipped with specialist leadership skills to lead in the faculty or in a central administrative unit of the university (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2007).

In the beginning of the 21st century, leadership had been the subject of thousands of research studies resulting in many complex and contrasting theories. The rise of revisionist leadership theorists demonstrate that the theory is far from conclusive as the following critical analysis of the leadership literature demonstrates.
Power theorists recognise that empowerment and autonomy are not universal principles (Foskett & Lumby, 190-191). Autonomous participatory leadership is a western concept, whereas in the Arab world, for example, “subordinates expect superiors to act autocratically” (Bjerke & Al-Meer, 1993, p.31, cited Foskett & Lumby, p.191). Morality is another principle which is not universal, and as Sergiovanni (2001) suggests, “whenever there is an unequal distribution of power between two people, the relationship becomes a moral one” (p.13).

Leadership and management theory has also been accused of being a Western concept grounded in the male, positivist tradition (Sinclair, 2005). Other theorists have argued that leadership theory itself is ethnocentric and has limited application to non-Western contexts (Foskett & Lumby, 2003). This suggests the influence culture has on leadership needs to be understood, particularly in universities, as modern university communities are multicultural, multi-racial with a broad gender and age mix of staff and students.

Leadership has also been argued to be an androcentric concept – locked in the Western male construct (Ozga, 1993). Gender provides a particularly problematic leadership/management dimension for analysis as gender itself is socio-culturally specific. Western feminist critiques of socialised gender inequality, therefore, have limited relevance for non-western cultures. This is also true for women leaders in the Australian university sector who experience discrimination in a range of ways (Bell, 2012; Blackmore, 2014, 2010, 1999, 1997; Lane, 2012; May, 2012; Jones & Lovejoy, 1980; Pyke, 2012; White, 2003; Winchester, Lorenzo et al., 2006) and in management and leadership positions more generally (Sinclair 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004).

Sinclair (2004) developed her leadership theory through critical reflective practice, looking at leadership within her own organisational context. This is a particularly useful strategy for feminist, cultural and human resource critiques as mainstream leadership theory assumes, incorrectly, that leadership has a neutral, objective theoretical framework (Sinclair, p.18). Therefore leadership scholarship needs to be continually deconstructed and contested. In Doing Leadership Differently (2005) Sinclair critiques contemporary and dominant models of leadership that she and many other feminist and non-Western researchers argue are limited by Western patriarchal constructs of power and gender. Sinclair’s subsequent publication Leadership for the Disillusioned (2007) outlines new leadership constructs that
are liberating and bring positive results for leaders and their organisations if the individuals have the leadership skills to assume different approaches.

Caldwell and Millikan (1989) suggest that culture is expressed ‘conceptually … verbally … behaviourally … [and] visually) (cited Foskett & Lumby, 2003, p.9) therefore will impact on the way leadership is actioned and on the way it is perceived by followers. Hofstede (1991) further suggests that the five dimensions of culture include: power-distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term versus short term perspectives are expressed in leadership transactions (cited Foskett & Lumby, 2003, 10-11) which will also impact on leadership effectiveness evaluated from follower perceptions.

Organisations are not innate structural collectives. They are complex, dynamic, human socio-cultural networks, therefore, the human resource dimension of the organisation needs to be managed with care, concern and integrity. The literature suggests that effective leadership depends on the establishment of a positive shared relationship between the leader and their subordinates in which the leader epitomises shared values, leads by example, demonstrates competence, and empowers those around her/him through delegation and the strategic transfer of power (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). “Leadership is everyone’s business” (p.95). Therefore, effective leadership in universities requires leaders to build positive relationships with colleagues and subordinates.

Creating a positive network of horizontal and vertical relationships through the academic departments and professional units of the university, should build engagement from a sense of shared purpose that will ensure that the university’s strategic goals can be achieved, if the strategic goals were developed on a collective, consultative basis. In this way, the organisational focus on the agreed strategic goals will strengthen and unite, not divide, the academic community.

Equating leadership with change is an idea that finds its way deep into the educational literature. In today’s world it is the leader as change agents who gets the glory and praise. But leadership should be regarded as a force that not only changes, but protects and intensifies … (Sergiovanni, 2001, 44-45, cited Gunter, 2004, p.29).
The most comprehensive publication on leadership in higher education was published by Fullan and Scott (2009). The authors argue that the current crisis in higher education provides a “golden opportunity” to redefine a new leadership future (p.155). The authors endorse Herold and Fedor’s (2008) advice on thinking about the way we lead change, recommending that leaders make a “careful entry into the new setting; listening to and learning from those that have been there longer; engaging in fact-finding and joint problem solving; carefully diagnosing the situation; forthrightly addressing people’s concerns; being enthusiastic, genuine, and sincere about the change circumstances; obtaining buy-in for what needs fixing; and developing a credible, owned plan for making that fix” (pp.47-48, cited Fullan & Scott, 2009, pp.152-153).

This resonates strongly with Fullan’s (2008) ‘six secrets of change’ which include “love your employees as well as your customers; (2) use purposeful peer interaction to change cultures; (3) emphasize capacity building over judgmentalism; (4) know that learning is the work; (5) embrace transparency of both practice and results; and (6) invest in system learning through collaboration” (Fullan & Scott, 2009, p.153).

Leading change [in higher education] via the six secrets is about managing paradoxes and reconciling dilemmas. It is about constantly figuring out how best to balance stability and change; top-down and bottom-up approaches; listening and leading; and looking inside and outside for change ideas and solutions” (Fullan & Scott, 2009, p.153).

Fullan and Scott (2009) further argue that higher education leaders should “shape and leverage the strength of existing cultures” (p.41) to improve educational quality and the student experience. The authors also argue that effective leaders in higher education must be change-savvy and have the skills to combine analytical and emotional knowledge to deliver morally robust reform (p.150). Thus, ‘turnaround leaders’ must be able to demonstrate certain combinations of personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities and competencies, such as role-specific and generic skills, to effectively manage change (p.151).
The results of an Australian academic leadership survey (2008, Scott et al; also cited Fullan & Scott, 2009, pp.106-108) clearly evidences the contrasting views of senior leaders and junior leaders in the analogies they use to describe their academic leadership role. Senior leaders, such as provosts and deans, used positive analogies demonstrating high levels of skill, commitment and expertise, such as “coaching a successful sporting team … conducting an orchestra … directing a play”, whereas the junior leaders used negative analogies that conveyed sentiments of hopelessness, such as “rowing without an oar … pushing a pea uphill with my nose … riding a bicycle on a tightrope”.

Leaders should not claim to be effective if their staff are disengaged, dispirited and disaffected. However, this appears to have been the case in many Australian universities when this sector-wide leadership survey was conducted. The senior leaders who participated in the survey consider that they are doing a good job leading teams through difficult organisational circumstances, however this view was not shared by large numbers of their subordinates.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, thousands of leadership studies have been conducted and a plethora of articles published. A perusal of the literature reveals that it has not been possible to develop a theoretical framework of leadership that is valid across multiple contexts, cultures and situations although many theorists have tried. Determining precisely what specific combinations of capabilities and competencies individuals leading strategic planning need in different organisational contexts, in different Australian universities, remains the research challenge of the future.

This study will make a contribution to this knowledge gap by presenting a conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Chapter 8, the Findings (p.169), developed from the data presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. This framework is referenced to the four priority management zones identified by (Sharrock, 2012) and Quinn’s competing values framework (1990). Therefore detailed discussion of these theorists will be deferred to Chapter 8.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Methodological overview

The purpose of this study is to examine the introduction of strategic leadership and planning in Australian Universities. The following research questions were developed to guide the research (Kumar, 1996):

1. When and for what purpose was strategic planning introduced to the Australian university sector?
2. What organisational impact did this have on Australian universities?
3. What forms of leadership were most effective in driving this change?

This methodological chapter will outline the philosophical framework of the study that shaped the research questions, established the research epistemology and guided the data collection method and analysis.

The philosophical framework is organised around the three elements recommended by Creswell (2003):

1. Philosophical assumptions relating to the knowledge claims;
2. Clearly articulated procedures by which the research was conducted; and a
3. Discussion of the strategies of inquiry including the data collection, analysis and writing, that comprise the methods used to gather the data required to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2003, p.3).

The epistemological and methodological choices that were made in designing this research study were developed after consideration of my years of professional experience in the higher education sector, specifically in strategic planning, outlined in the previous chapters.

This is an important component of the methodological approach to this study, as I have the situational knowledge to analyse and give meaning to the data collected from the study participants (Grieves, 2010, p.267). My experience provided the insider knowledge required to develop the research questions and the interview schedule to ensure meaningful data was collected from the participants.
My experience also enabled me to give consideration to the diversity required in the small participant cohort represented in this study (Sofaer, 1999) so that the research questions could be explored from as many different points of view as possible.

The research design also takes advantage of my undergraduate training in history, and is sympathetic to the values outlined in Chapter 1 that shaped my years of professional experience at three Australian universities. As a researching practitioner who has experienced difficulties leading strategic planning in Australian universities, I am well positioned to contribute to the development of a conceptual framework of leading strategic planning that illustrates the complexities that need to be mitigated by strategic planning practitioners in Australian universities.

The philosophical considerations of this research study commenced with three scholars who challenged me to think critically about leadership and strategic planning. These scholars include, George Keller’s *Academic Strategy* (1983), Henry Mintzberg’s *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (1994), and Amanda Sinclair’s *Doing Leadership Differently* (1998).

Keller (1983) stressed the value strategic planning can bring to institutions of higher education, particularly during times of financial uncertainty, which was the situation faced by most Australian universities in the 1990s when I first encountered this text. This was followed soon thereafter by Mintzberg’s (1994) extensive critique of strategic planning, which seemed to have no impact on the way strategic planning was being implemented in my employer universities, even though Mintzberg’s ideas offered a range of new and exciting possibilities of planning differently.

I then encountered Sinclair’s (1998) critique of leadership, which transformed my own leadership practice and the way I conceptualised the leadership practices of others, particularly when leading strategic planning. These theorists were covered extensively in the previous chapter, Literature Review, therefore further discussion is not warranted here.
4.2 Research approach

Research is a dynamic discovery process. It is a journey of interaction informed by the literature designed to incorporate the most appropriate methodologies to answer the research questions (Davis, 2007). “Method is the attribute which distinguishes research activity from mere observation and speculation” (Shulman, 1981, p.5).

The focus of this study is an investigation of leading strategic planning from a range of practitioner perspectives. Therefore, the first methodological consideration was whether the research questions would be best answered using a qualitative or quantitative perspective.

After developing the research topic and questions, it became clear that it would not be possible to answer the research questions by testing a hypothesis or applying a narrow methodological orthodoxy which are features of quantitative and positivist approaches (Patton, 2002, p.264). As Tesch (1990) argues the quantitative process of measuring variables and constructing concepts is inherently positivistic (cited Punch 2007, p.134) and therefore is not a suitable methodological perspective for this study. As this study examined the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities, a particular event in a unique geographical and organisational environment, it would not have been possible or appropriate to attempt to answer the research questions by the quantification of concrete concepts, causal relationships or statistical variables. Moreover, this is not the aim of this study which is to explore leading strategic planning from the practitioner perspective.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, not only tolerates but encourages engagement with multiple methodologies and research strategies. “‘Qualitative research’ therefore is not a single entity, but an umbrella term which encompasses enormous variety” (Punch, 2007, p.134). This study presents case studies in the participants’ voices so that the practitioners themselves describe the events and circumstances leading to the introduction of strategic planning in the Australian university sector, and reflect on this strategic management and leadership innovation from their own personal and professional perspectives.

One of the criticisms of qualitative research is that it more difficult to build trustworthiness and credibility into the methodological process as the perspectives offered by the participants are subjective. However, as a qualitative researcher I do not see this as a limitation but as a positive contribution to research, for qualitative research delves deeply into a particular phenomenon to find out what we don’t know about the “important realities
and relationships” and reduce collective “uncertainty about important phenomena or questions” (Sofaer, 1999, pp.1102-1103). As the aim of this research study is to ‘delve deeply’ into the practice of leading strategic planning in the Australian university sector, qualitative research is therefore the most appropriate research approach for this study (Sofaer, 1999, p.1105).

Qualitative research relies on the skill of the researcher to design a study and incorporate the most appropriate methods to collect and analyse data to report the findings. Yin recommends that qualitative researchers do this in a methodological way to make the research process transparent by describing and documenting the research procedures in detail, so that readers and examiners are able to appreciate precisely how the research was conducted and make their own judgements about the validity of the findings (2011, p.19).

Another supporting strategy suggested by Yin is to make the data available for inspection so that the findings can withstand close scrutiny by other researchers (citing Yardley, 2009, pp.243-250). This study follows Yin’s advice and presents raw data, in the form of ‘case studies’ that bring the participants’ voices directly to the study. “The general idea is that others should be able to scrutinize your work and the evidence used to support your findings and conclusions” (Yin, 2011, p.19). This study will incorporate both aspects recommended by Yin and is therefore essentially “qualitative research from start to finish” (Yin, 2011).

Qualitative research can be distinguished from other kinds of social science research by the following five features identified by Yin (2011):

1. Studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions;
2. Representing the views and perspectives of the participants in a study;
3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;
4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour; and
5. Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone (pp.7-8).

For the reasons outlined above this research study was designed to conform to the qualitative case study methodology outlined by Yin (2011).
The next methodological questions that needed to be addressed to develop the design of this study are provided by Crotty (1998). These questions will be discussed in reverse order:

- What methods do we propose to use?
- What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?
- What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
- What epistemology [and ontology] informs this theoretical perspective (p.2)?

### 4.3 Epistemological and ontological questions

Ontology is the way human beings structure reality and explain the nature of their existence: “Ontology is the study of being” (Crotty, 1998, p.10). The ontology selected for this research study is critical realism. Not “naïve realism” described by Guba and Lincoln (1991, p.193) for defining one’s sense of being is a complex and dynamic cognitive task. Critical realists recognise that events of the social world can only be understood, if the structures that generate those events and discourses are identified; and that this process of identification can only be achieved through the practical and theoretical work of the ‘social sciences’ (Bhaskar, 1989, p.2, cited Bryman, 2001, p.13).

Social scientists therefore explain the ways events are interpreted by people as they relate to each other within different social contexts. This approach is necessary as people conform to a multitude of socio-political-cultural-gendered constructs that are embodied in their sense of being, which in turn governs the way they view the world. ‘I am what I am and have seen what I have seen’. It is not possible for any of us to disassociate ourselves from the realities of being who we are and for this methodological reason I have positioned myself in this study.

Epistemological questions on the other hand are concerned with meaning, whether that form of meaning exists within or outside consciousness and also what form it takes (see for example Neuman, 2006; Stake 2000). “Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (Maynard, 1994, p.10, cited Crotty, p.8). Epistemological considerations therefore govern questions of ‘what is’ or what could constitute ‘acceptable knowledge’, and question whether a greater understanding of this
knowledge can be investigated using the same ethos, principles and procedures as the natural sciences (Bryman, 2001, p.11).

Qualitative researchers would argue that this is not possible, nor is it desirable. Therefore, different research procedures need to be used in order to explore the vast presentations of human-socio-cultural complexity that constitutes the lived experience.

4.4 Epistemology: constructionism

Constructionism, or the construction of meaning, is an appropriate epistemology for qualitative research and the position adopted in this research study. Constructionists argue that meaning is not fixed or created; it is constructed. “Constructionism is not subjectivism. It is curiosity, not conceit” (Crotty, 1998, p.52). Constructionism challenges notions that constructs are pre-given and cannot be changed or refashioned (Bryman, 2001, p.17).

Strauss et al. (1973), after extensive research of a psychiatric hospital, concluded that the organisation was best described as a ‘negotiated order’ (cited Bryman, 2001, p.17), further suggesting that organisational ‘givens’ are not fixed concrete rules, but ‘general understandings’ (1973, p.308, cited Bryman, 2001, p.17) that are in a constant state of change.

Subjectivity in research is an issue that raises methodological concerns and is a variable that must be carefully controlled (Gilbert, 1978 cited Drapeau, 2002, p.1). Some researchers argue that subjectivity has no place in scientific research (e.g. Mucchieli, 1979, cited Drapeau, 2002). However there is an opposing view that is also well documented in the literature that suggests researchers who utilise subjectivity by drawing on their own experience, can bring a more enhanced understanding to the study (Rennie, 1994, Schneider, 1999) and thereby achieve a reconciliation of modern and postmodern epistemologies (Rennie, 2000).

Self-reflexion is another important aspect of the epistemological position adopted in this research study. The concept of a *bricoleur* proposed by Denzin and Lincoln as a “Jack of all trades” is a self-reflexive individual who is focused on getting the job done merely asks “can I do it?” Research in constructivist vein, in the mode of the *bricoleur*, requires that we not remain straitjacketed by the conventional meanings we have been taught to associate with the object. Instead, such research invites us to approach the object in a radical spirit of
openness to its potential for new or richer meaning. It is an invitation to reinterpretation (Crotty, 1998, p.51), an issue that will be further discussed in the Findings Chapter.

The following table summarises the key concepts of a selection of influential constructionism theorists and relates these concepts directly to the focus of this study to support the methodological decision to select the epistemology of constructionism.

**Table 3: Constructionism principles adapted from Crotty (1998, pp.46-52)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The <em>bricoleur</em> makes something new out of material that had previously made up something different</th>
<th>Levi-Strauss, 1966</th>
<th>Did staff introduce strategic planning in Australian universities with or without self-reflection? Was the model outlined in the Dawkins Reforms implemented with or without making sense of what it means? Was the meaning inherent in the signals made by colleagues interpreted to understand, where the meaning was shared or not shared?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bricolage as ‘self-reflexive’ informed by cultural studies that are self-reflective and asks “Can I do it?”</td>
<td>Denzin and Lincoln, 1994</td>
<td>Did the staff leading strategic planning ask themselves, “Can I do it? Should I do it?” Did they give consideration to the relationship between the task and values of the university?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture consists of symbols that guide human behaviour and without them we become ‘unworkable monstrosities’ (p.49)</td>
<td>Geetz, 1973</td>
<td>Universities are human-cultural organisations with many symbols of meaning. Were the staff leading strategic planning in Australian universities guided by the culture and symbols of their employer university? Or did they ignore these symbols or reframe these symbols and give them new meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All meaningful reality, including emotions, is socially constructed</td>
<td>Harré, 1986</td>
<td>Did the participants in this study reconstruct the social meaning in strategic planning to bring new forms of reality to their leadership actions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Theoretical perspective – interpretivism

The theoretical perspective, or the philosophical stance behind the methodology in this study, is interpretivism which is a way of understanding and explaining human and social reality. Positivist approaches identify what they term ‘universal’ characteristics of human social interactions, whereas an interpretivist approach pursues “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, pp.66-67).

It is beyond the confines of this thesis to engage in an extensive debate of the philosophical and sociological foundations of interpretivism that is often attributed to Max Weber (1986-1920) and neo-Kantian philosophers Wilhelm Windelband (1948-1915) and Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936). Suffice to say that Weber argued that the human sciences are concerned with developing a deeper understanding (Verstehen) of the human condition which is associated with the interpretative approach, which was contrasted with positivist explanations (Erklären) of the causality found in the natural sciences (cited Crotty, 1998, pp.67-68).

Philosophers generally concede that the natural sciences search for consistencies, rules or the ‘law’ (nomos) is distinct from the concerns of the individual (idios), the idiographic, which are essentially cognitive, therefore decisions of the mind. Interpretivist investigations of the social world therefore tend to “focus on exactly those aspects that are unique, individual and qualitative” (Crotty, 1998, p.68). Thus, a distinction is made between the natural sciences, which seek to establish general laws, and the cultural sciences, which isolate individual phenomena in order to trace their unique development (Crotty, 1998, p.68).

The following table briefly explains the evolution of interpretivism perspectives from Weber (1970) to Seidman (2006) which helps to strengthen the case made for selecting interpretivism as the most appropriate theoretical perspective for this study.
Table 4: Interpretivism perspectives adapted from Crotty (1998, pp.66-72)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is the individual who is the carrier of meaning of the conduct</th>
<th>Weber 1970</th>
<th>What meaning did this have for the individuals in this study? Is there a common meaning – or did the individuals convey different meanings to different parts of the organisation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretivism rests on the emphatic denial that cultural phenomena can be understood in causal terms.</td>
<td>Silverman, 1990</td>
<td>Causation in terms of how the sector was reconstructed in 1988 and how it is positioned now can be discussed, also the role that strategic planning might have played in this organisational change process. However the findings of the study cannot be presented in causal terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human sciences require research methods different from those used by the natural sciences.</td>
<td>Blaikie, 1993</td>
<td>This study will use in-depth interview which is the dominant mode of data collection in qualitative methodology (Yin, 2011, p.134).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing provides insight into understanding the meaning people make of their lived experience.</td>
<td>Seidman, 2006</td>
<td>Documenting the perspectives of the participants through interview brings the participants’ voice to the study and allows them to convey the meaning of their lived experience in their own words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 Research strategy: case study (Yin, 2011)

After careful consideration of various research strategies, particularly hermeneutics and grounded theory, multiple case study was the research strategy selected for this study. This is because of case study’s ability to focus on a particular aspect of a phenomenon, which in this study is leading strategic planning in Australian universities, and its ability to tolerate a multi-case study approach. “Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p.xi).

Robert Yin is one of the leading advocates of case study. He has soundly addressed criticisms raised by other theorists who claim that case study research lacks rigour, lends itself to research bias, that the findings of case studies are difficult to generalise, time-consuming, generate large amounts of incomprehensible data, and that case studies are not able to demonstrate causation.

In response, Yin declares that these criticisms are largely irrelevant as case study methodology has been developed to allow the researcher to focus on a contemporary
phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 1984) so as to develop comprehensive understandings of complex social phenomena. He further argues that its unique methodological strength comes from an ability to incorporate a rich evidence chain including interviews, observations, surveys, documentary evidence to ensure the researcher addresses a broad range of “historical, attitudinal and observational issues” (Yin, 1984, p.97).

As more than one participant perspective was required to investigate the complexity inherent in leading strategic planning in Australian universities, I followed Yin’s advice and collected multiple sets of data to establish a case study database, or a set of case studies, so as to construct a general explanation from an analysis of the data. “In a multiple-case study, one goal is to build a general explanation that fits each individual case, even though the cases will vary in their details. The objective is analogous to creating an overall explanation, in science, for the findings from multiple experiments” (2009, p.142). Yin offers the example of an analytical multi-case study approach used by Moore (1966, cited Yin, 2009, p.143) that presented a set of historical case studies to explain the transformation from agrarian to industrial societies in six countries which made a significant contribution to history.

Case study’s procedural strength lies in methodological protocols that have been established to guide researchers “beyond simple repetition of data gathering to … find the validity of the data observed” (Stake, 1995, p.109). He argues that case study suits researchers who have an inquiring mind, are intellectually agile and willing to be adaptive and flexible (Yin, 1984, p.64), thus providing opportunities for investigators to explore the case and the units of analysis without being confined by rigid, experimental, methodological research designs.

Merriam (1988) agrees and describes case study research as a means to “explore the processes and dynamics of practice” (p.xi). “The case itself [will be] important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent” (p.11). Stake also suggests that understanding the phenomena of the case needs a multi-focal analysis that looks “at a wide sweep of contexts: temporal and spatial, historical, political, economic, cultural, social and personal”, (1995, p.43).

Case studies therefore “concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation” and is therefore an appropriate research strategy for this research project (Stake, 1995, p.43).
The following table summarises and relates some of the key concepts of case study as a research strategy to support the methodological decision to use case study as the research strategy for this research project.

**Table 5 Applicability of case study in this research project (adapted from Yin, 2011)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study as a means to explore the processes and dynamics of practice in its natural setting.</th>
<th>Merriam, 1988</th>
<th>This research study investigated the introduction of strategic planning as a management practice in Australian universities. Developing a better understanding of why and how this occurred and what impact this had on Australian universities, the natural setting, is one of the key research questions in this study.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case study allows researchers to ask how and why questions to improve understanding of the phenomena and what it may represent.</td>
<td>Merriam, 1988</td>
<td>The study design enabled the researcher to delve deeply into the participants’ recollections to investigate the phenomena to contribute to existing knowledge on leading strategic planning in the Australian university sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies focus on the ways particular groups of people respond to specific situations – generating a holistic perspective of the situation.</td>
<td>Stake, 1995</td>
<td>This is the value of the qualitative case study approach and therefore is the most appropriate research strategy for this research study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.7 Data collection: in-depth interviews**

A 2010 study of Vice-Chancellors conducted in the United Kingdom was one of the first studies to use the data collection strategy of interview to investigate strategic leadership in British universities. One of the study participants, a former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University cited in the publication suggested “The future lies in very smart planning, highly skilled choice making and determining a strategic focus” (Bosetti & Walker, 2010, p.17).

This agreed with an earlier study conducted in the United States of America in 2008 which stated that the question of “whether it [strategic planning] works and how it works, in what ways, for whom, when and why is certainly [still] open” (Bryson et al., 2008, p. 173).
The authors suggested that “viewing strategic planning as practiced as a way of knowing offers a very useful way of knowing what we do” (p.203), however, were not able to extend this line of argument into a discussion of what the consequences of strategic planning might be for organisations such as universities.

Nordqvist and Melin (2008) argue that that the critical element in organisational analysis are the dynamics inherent in people-to-people relationships, and therefore describe strategic planning champions (SPCs) as “strategy practitioners who introduce, promote and guide the strategic planning process in an organisation” (p.326.). And although the authors outline implications for practitioners they did not gather sufficient data to discuss the impact that SPCs might have on organisations.

Seidman (1998) explains that “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 1998, p.3). As this is the primary objective of this study, in-depth interview was selected as the data collection method for this study. The data collection and data analysis was conducted with strict attention to the methodology outlined by Seidman (1998) to ensure accuracy, consistency and the reliability of the data and study findings. The step-by-step process will be outlined in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

4.8 The Study Participants

Fifteen senior academic and executive members of staff, with a wide range of disciplinary expertise and leadership experience at different Australian universities were identified as the initial target population to provide the ten participants proposed for the study.

Although a participant cohort of ten individuals could be considered small and may perhaps limit the generalisability of the findings, a small participant cohort was needed for this study so that the case studies could be published in the thesis within the word limit.
The participants were identified by entering a combination of unique search terms in Google therefore adopting a purposive sampling approach (Neuman, 2006; Punch, 2007) to maximise the variation in the small cohort of participants recruited for this study.

The search terms were grouped and entered in Google to identify people with a diverse range of disciplinary expertise, in a wide range of senior academic and executive positions across the Australian university sector. The term professor was included in every search as academic seniority was an essential study criteria. The search terms entered into Google have been separated and presented in alphabetic order below so that the individual searches cannot be replicated and the individuals identified:

**Figure 4 – The search terms**

| Australia, address, applications, AUQA, chair, college, competition, comparative, college, council, dean, disability, emeritus, education, employment, deputy, family, globalization, governance, head, higher, history, industrial, institute, key, leadership, management, neo-liberalism, new, note, NTEU, occupational, parenting, policy, programs, physics, private, provider, relations, research, review, sector, senate, science, society, spokesperson, strategy, teaching, tertiary, therapy, university, universities, vice-chancellor, women, work. |

Unique combinations of these terms were systematically entered into the search engine Google. One individual was randomly selected from the list of individuals retrieved by Google after the results of each individual search were presented.

This process was repeated fifteen times until fifteen initial individuals were identified using maximum variation sampling of roles and different institutional types (Tagg, 1985) across the Australian higher education sector. These fifteen individuals formed the initial participant target cohort.

This approach enabled me to construct a cohort of participants covering disciplines as diverse as education and physics, bringing perspectives from the sciences and the humanities, with philosophical commitments on both the left and right of politics, all with a comprehensive understanding of the Australian Higher Education system.

The participants recruited for this study are able to offer historical perspectives on the introduction of strategic planning to the Australian university sector informed by decades of professional experience; comprehensive knowledge of leadership and management in the
Australian university sector also based on years of experience; an understanding of the impact of the forces of competition and neo-liberalism; the perspectives of researching scientists funded by competitive research schemes; knowledge of feminist scholarship and the literature on industrial and employment relations; experiences that includes active National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) involvement; in-depth knowledge of institutional governance and experience leading strategic planning; experienced gained from participation in national higher education reviews; leadership and strategic planning in faculties, disciplinary schools and executive organisational units based on decades of experience; as well as the perspectives of researching scholars in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

Ten participants were then randomly selected from the initial participant target cohort to form the first sub-target participant group \([n=10]\). Invitations were posted to this initial participant cohort six days after Ethics Approval was confirmed in writing from the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. Nine participants accepted the invitation to participate in the study. One participant declined, providing an acceptance rate of 90% which was consistent with researcher expectations and justified the establishment of a very small initial participant target cohort. As soon as the acceptances were received, the process of confirming interview dates, times and locations was commenced, as several months’ notice was required to guarantee availability.

While the interviews were being organised for the nine confirmed participants, invitations were posted to the five remaining individuals in the initial target group. Three participants from the second sub-group agreed to participate in the study, one declined and one failed to respond, providing a total of twelve confirmed participants.

However, two participants from the first confirmed sub-group of participants were unable to commit to an interview during the data collection phase and were subsequently withdrawn from the study. This provided a study cohort of ten confirmed participants. One of the confirmed participants had a very interesting career pathway with an employment history that included four institutional types: two post-Dawkins universities, a dual-sector institution and a very aggressive, successful private provider, thereby bringing unique insights to the study not provided by the other participants. However, as this participant was well known to me, I elected to exclude her to ensure the impartiality and objectivity of the data.
This resulted in nine confirmed study participants and a final acceptance rate of 60%. Participant demographic data is provided in Table 6 (p.94).

All the participants are professors; most are professors Emeritus or will be when they retire, and reflect a wide range of academic disciplines that are represented throughout the Australian academic community. Each participant also has between three and four decades of experience in a number of senior academic and/or senior executive roles across more than twenty different Australian universities.

Some of the participants were known to me, most were not, although I knew of all of them as they are all leading individuals in the Australian university sector. Several currently hold or previously held positions on national educational committees, others have been involved in the development of national policy reports and strategy documents.

The participants all have research profiles. Some of the participants have published commentaries in publications such as The Australian Higher Education Supplement, and The Conversation while others are periodically interviewed and reported in the mainstream press. Most of the participants are therefore recognised as sector spokespersons by their peers, the media and members of the public.

Collectively, the participants bring approximately 300 years of academic and executive leadership experience in Australian universities to this study.

As a consequence, the participants are very well qualified to explain when, and for what purpose strategic planning was introduced to the Australian university sector, and offer advice to the next generation of Australian university leaders who will be tasked to lead the sector through the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.
Table 6 Participant demographic data (n=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, n (%)</td>
<td>3 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, n (%)</td>
<td>6 (66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age, mean (SD)</strong></td>
<td>65.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Chancellor (current)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Vice-Chancellors</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor of Education</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor of Industrial Relations</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor of Higher Education</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Professor</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of years in the Australian higher education sector, mean (SD)</strong></td>
<td>31.2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 The interviews

Face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the nine confirmed study participants between February and September 2011.

The interviews commenced with a general discussion of the Australian university sector to gain trust and build the rapport required to facilitate an honest and open exchange of information. This was followed by a discussion of ‘concrete details’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, pp.77-79) that included a brief history of the participants’ various leadership roles and the university contexts in which the leadership responsibilities were exercised.

The purpose of the interviews was to document the participants’ perspectives on the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities. The participants were asked to describe the first strategic planning process they participated in as well as any recent strategic planning process they may have been involved in. They were also asked to reflect on whether they would lead strategic planning using the same approach if they were leading strategic planning now, and offer advice to the next generation of leaders who will be tasked to lead strategic planning in the future (see Interview Schedule, Table 7, p.96).
The interviews were recorded, with permission, using a Phillips Voice Tracer LFH-862 and transcribed personally to avoid any potential breach of confidentiality by a third party research assistant or secretarial service. This strategy also enabled me to immerse myself in the data (Willis, 2006) and familiarise myself with the content (Silverman, 2000). There were no equity issues that needed to be resolved as all the participants were senior academic or executive staff in the Australian university sector and well familiar with the research process.

The participants were treated with formal, professional respect and they responded in a like manner. I travelled interstate as required to interview the participants in a venue of their choice, which was either their office or a meeting room in their office. Preparing thoroughly for each interview, I took two copies of the interview schedule to the meeting. I gave one copy of the schedule to the participant and used the other one schedule as an interview guide.

The interviews were conducted according to the ‘semi-standardised’ typology described by Fielding (1996). This format provided the flexibility to ask additional questions to search for meaning if the information revealed was thought to be significant (Bryman, 2001). Using Taylor and Bogdan’s (1984) paraphrase and confirmation probing technique, the participants were then guided deeply into the topic. The interview was closed in a way that made it possible to arrange another interview and continue the discussion if required (Punch, 1998). Although this was not necessary, points of clarification were subsequently sought with two participants.

A phased non-assertion tactic, an adaption of Douglas’ (1976) phased-assertion tactic, was applied to enable the interviewer to assume a neutral role in the conversation. This tactic also helped me to keep the conversation flowing, maintain the rapport and encourage the participants to express themselves freely but not lead them towards a predetermined agenda or discussion outcome (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, pp.100-101). The interview was also guided by the intellectual flexibility techniques suggested by Boyatzis (1998) to ensure the pattern recognition, theme sensing and interpretation was conducted as reliably as possible.
Table 7 Interview Schedule

| Q.1 | I would like you to describe your career in the Australian higher education sector, focusing on the various leadership roles you have held? |
| Q.2 | Can you recall the first time you were involved in a strategic planning process in an Australian university? When you first worked with a group that put together a strategy that could be defined and published as a formal Strategic Plan? Do you know if this was the first or one of the first strategic planning projects at your university? |
| Q.3 | Describe the nature of this planning process? Was it authoritarian, collaborative, and/or consultative? Large or small-scale? Who led it? Who was involved? |
| Q.4 | Was a Strategic Plan published at the conclusion of the process? If so, what type of plan was it? |
| Q.5 | How was the Strategic Plan received by the stakeholders, including staff, students, the professions, alumni, industry and the government? Why do you think this was the case? |
| Q.6 | The 1995 Hoare Committee Report stated that “over recent years our universities have made progress toward more contemporary management practices, largely through the development of strategic planning and a focus on improving quality. However, this progress has not been even” (Hoare Report, Summary of Report and Recommendations). Were you working in the Australian HE sector in 1995? Do you agree with this statement? |
| Q.7 | Have you led or participated in a strategic planning process recently? If so, did you approach it the same way? Would you do it at all, if you had the choice? |
| Q.8 | What did you think when AUQA was established? What was the general sector reaction? |
| Q.9 | Were you involved in any of the AUQA Reviews? If so, what role did you play? |
| Q.10 | Would you like to comment on AUQA’s methodology and/or on the findings published? |
| Q.11 | Do you think organisational culture plays a role in the strategic planning process? |
| Q.12 | Reflecting on your career, do you think that your experience leading, developing or avoiding strategic planning processes had an impact on your understanding of leadership? |
| Q.13 | Do you think the introduction of centralised strategic planning had any impact on the internal organisational dynamics of your university and/or the sector in general? |
| Q.14 | What advice would you give to the next generation of individuals who will be tasked to lead the development of new Strategic Plans in Australian universities? |
| Q.15 | Is there anything else you would like to add? |
4.10 The interview transcripts

The first stage of the data analysis was the insertion of punctuation marks in the verbatim transcripts (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 2006, p.116) before the verbatim transcripts were returned to the participants for verification. Lincoln and Guba suggest that this process is crucial to establish the credibility of the study (1985 cited Seidman, 2006, p.66), for the punctuation marks provide signs to the participants as to how the researcher interpreted the interview data and intended to use it.

The draft verbatim transcripts were then posted to the participants with a return stamp addressed envelope, thereby providing the participants with an opportunity to correct information inaccurately recorded or out of context. The nine participants all returned the transcripts with minor corrections thereby confirming the reliability of the data collection and recording process.

The marked changes were made and the verbatim transcripts were finalised as a true record of the interview in readiness for the next step in the data analysis stage, which was to reduce the interview data to produce the case studies.

Hard copies of the verbatim transcript were then read thoroughly, several times so that I could immerse myself in the data and stimulate a receptive theme sensing state, before the data reduction phase was commenced.

4.11 Developing the case studies

One of the most popular forms of analysing in-depth interview material is to develop a vignette, case study, or profile in the participants own words (see Seidman, 2006; Terkel, 1972).

One key to the power of the profile is that it is presented in the words of the participant. I cannot stress too much how important it is to use the first person, the voice of the participant, rather than a third-person transformation of that voice (Seidman, 2006, p.121).
In order to develop the case studies from the verbatim interview transcripts, the sequential process outlined by Seidman (1998, p.102-104) was followed precisely.

During the first stage of the data analysis each transcript was read several times. The passages that were most interesting and relevant to the topic were marked using a process described by Seidman as ‘winnowing’ (p.100).

The marked passages were then labelled and copied into a new word file to form a condensed version of transcript of approximately 3000-4000 words in the participants own words (Seidman, 1998). Characteristics of verbal communication such as ‘um…’ and ‘well...’ were deleted from the condensed versions of the transcripts as the participants would not normally include these terms in a written testimonial.

Each case study was then read multiple times to ensure that the data in the reduced case study was consistent with the data collected in the interview. The condensed transcripts were then further reduced to produce a case study of approximately 1500-1700 words for publication in this thesis. In this study the term ‘case study’ is used instead of the term ‘profile’ preferred by Seidman.

This part of the data reduction process was the most difficult, as it was very hard to discard raw interview data. Therefore, it was undertaken with an open mind so that the data was reduced inductively, not deductively, which is consistent with the constructivist paradigm described by Crotty (1998), and one that is based on ‘curiosity’ rather than subjectivity, thereby generating an “invitation to reinterpretation” (p.51). Linking words and phrases were then inserted as required so that the condensed text in the case study was not disjointed.

The draft case studies were then returned to the participants to check again for accuracy. Permission to publish the case studies in the thesis was requested and a pseudonym was suggested for consideration. All nine participants checked the case studies, made minor amendments and returned them by mail agreeing for them to be published in the thesis. One participant requested the pseudonym to be changed which was duly actioned.
Having the participants confirm the accuracy of the case studies was an important part of the data validation process, as the case studies presented in this thesis are in reality a combination of verbatim data from the interview transcripts and linking text written by the researcher (Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2004, pp.219-220; Mostyn, 1985; Seidman 2006, pp.120-121).

This step was critically important as I had been responsible for the reduction and reconstruction of the raw interview data to develop each case study. And, as I proposed to publish the case studies in the thesis, I also required informed consent from each of the participants (Seidman, 1998, p.54).

Returning the reduced case studies to the participants for validity checking, mitigated the possibility of influencing the data analysis process and thereby the findings, and provided an opportunity to share the ownership of the study data with the participants (Yow, 2004). “Interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p,62).

The changes, as marked, were then made and the case studies were finalised for analysis and publication in this thesis. Applying this particular methodology also provided an opportunity for the participants to be actively engaged in the analysis of the data, which is consistent with postmodernist or fifth movement qualitative research approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, pp.28-29).

The case studies were photocopied to provide three complete sets, one set for the analysis required to answer each research question. The case studies were then read thoroughly, and passages of interest were marked, labelled, cut and filed into folders for each research question (Seidman, 1998, p.103).

The case studies are presented individually in this thesis and not “collapsed together and reported as one” so that the multiple perspectives and differences provided by the participants can be analysed and discussed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, pp.80-81).
As many of the participants’ voices are well known within the sector, it was not possible to publish the verbatim interview transcripts in the study. Additionally, as the participants often referred to colleagues and specific strategic initiatives implemented at individual universities during the interview in an identifiable way, it would have been a breach of anonymity and confidentiality to publish the verbatim interview transcripts in this study.

However, by applying Seidman’s method of studying, reducing and analysing the text to produce a summary of the key issues discussed (Seidman, 1998, pp.99-100; see also McCracken 1988, Miles & Huberman, 1984; Wolcott, 1990), the interview data could be shared as anonymous case studies that bring a condensed but true and accurate record of the interview to the study.

4.12 Thematic analysis

The case studies were themed and coded so that the initial categories could be developed. The codes were reviewed and checked against the case study data which resulted in an adjustment of some of the categories.

After the checking process was complete, the coding was completed and answers to the research questions were developed and presented in Chapter 8 of this thesis. The strategic planning approach and the leadership style described by each participant was then analysed to develop the findings of this thesis which is presented in Chapters, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

This methodological approach enabled me to fully utilise the data collected from the study participants, and enable inferences to be drawn to support cross-sector generalisations (Neuman, 2006). This form of thematic analysis allowed the social construction of meaning to be interpreted and articulated consistently to that a description of social ‘facts’ or observations were able to emerge (Boyatzis, 1998, p.xiii).

This thorough and meticulous methodological approach ensured that opportunity to capture bad data had been eliminated (Bryman, 2001, p.113). I also kept an interview diary containing reflective notes recorded after each interview that I was able to refer to during the analysis phase which contributed “to the richness of the research” (Willis, 2006, p.261).
As the case studies demonstrate, the participant cohort was constructed on the principles of diversity to maximise the potential for variety in the responses, which helps to explain the points of disagreement in the findings. Fullan suggests that conflict and diversity can be a very useful focal point when exploring change. “Conflict … is positively associated with creative breakthrough under complex, turbulent conditions” (1999, p.22). De Gues agrees, suggesting that successful organisations are ‘particularly tolerant of activities on the margin’ (cited Fullan, p.22). Senge further argued that “when we understand creative tension and allow it to operate by now lowering our vision, vision becomes an active force” (1990, p.153).

The participants were assigned a pseudonym that would layer the case study with disciplinary meaning. This pseudonym either conveys the level of positional responsibility held by each participant, for example, Vice-Chancellor, former Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Dean, or the disciplinary background of the participant as a member of the professoriate.

This enables the case study to be considered within the context of the participants’ disciplinary expertise and allowed data to be attributed to the participants without breaching their anonymity or the confidentiality of the interview data. References to individual universities and named persons were changed or deleted during the first data reduction phase to protect the privacy of both the participants and other individuals, locations or institutions that were discussed during the interview.

The case studies presented in this study include reflections from Australian academic and executive staff who introduced or witnessed the introduction of strategic planning in traditional, metropolitan and regional pre-Dawkins Australian universities, post-Dawkins universities and pre-Dawkins Colleges of Advanced Education.

Using the epistemology of constructionism meaning was constructed from the data which was analysed using the experiential lens of the researcher that is then referenced to the strategic planning and leadership literature. “Meaning is not discovered, but constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p.9).

This research strategy enabled me explore contextually relevant connections between leadership and strategic planning to bring an element of reflexivity to the study and layer the findings with perspective and meaning. As I have insider knowledge and experience in the
practice of strategic planning, a meaningful, contextual analysis was developed and is presented in the findings.

For qualitative researchers, a deep appreciation and understanding of the context is critical. The publication of the raw data in this thesis also enables the findings to be referenced to the data and relevant theory. As Neuman suggests “theorists who proceed without linking theory to research or anchoring it to empirical reality are in jeopardy of floating off into incomprehensible speculation and conjecture” (2006, p.77).

4.13 The clusters

The case studies are presented in three clusters: the Participant Observers [n=3]; the Academic Leaders [n=3]; and the Vice-Chancellors [n=3].

The participants shared many career and academic characteristics therefore it was initially difficult finding a point of differentiation to define the cluster boundaries. However, as the data analysis progressed, a differentiation criteria gradually emerged from the data (Holloway & Jefferson, 2007, pp.107-113). This was the degree of active engagement each participant was able to demonstrate in relation to leading strategic planning at an executive level in their employer Australian universities.

All the participants were involved one way or another in episodes of strategic planning. However, some participants were actively involved in strategic planning at the executive level, and others less so for reasons that are quite diverse. The clusters contain many overlaps and should be considered indicative rather than exclusive. They are however a useful way to illustrate why some participants were involved in strategic planning at the executive level, and as a result, were able to exert influence over the process. Others were less involved for reasons that will be explained in the following chapters.

The case studies provide multi-dimensional insights into what is going on inside the participant’s minds (Garro, 1998, cited Denzin & Lincoln, p.289) and the meaning they give to their lived experience (Seidman, 1998, p.3). Presenting the data in clusters also enables the different university circumstances, the strategic planning approach and the leadership style adopted to be compared and contrasted.
The findings of this study will be of interest to researchers and practitioners investigating a range of post-Dawkins Reforms issues that are still impacting on the Australian higher education sector.

The raw data presented in this thesis can also be subject to analysis by other higher education researchers, who may elect to analyse the case studies as independent data sets, or a combined data set, using a contrasting research lens, such as the emergence of the national quality regimes.

Quantitative researchers may wish to subject the data presented in this study to statistical analysis to delineate and expose the leadership approaches and traits described by the participants. However, the methodological approach adopted in this study is intentionally qualitative, for the reasons extensively outlined in this chapter.

4.14 Ethics

The study has approval from the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. All the participants signed and returned written consent forms and agreed to have the interview recorded for the purpose of transcription. Before the interview commenced each participant was reminded that participation in the study was entirely voluntarily and that the participant could withdraw any time.

During the transcript coding and analysis, the participants were assigned a pseudonym and all the data was de-identified to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. As these individuals are well known to many in the Australian university sector, I felt it was necessary to include a few erroneous facts and change distinguishing aspects of some of the participants’ case studies to actively disguise their identity, guarantee anonymity and the participants right to privacy (Seidman, 2006, p.67).

The next three chapters will present the raw data in three, sequential, three case study sets, positioned within the cluster framework outlined previously in this chapter.
CHAPTER 5: THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVERS

5.1 Introducing the Participant Observers

The three participant observers presented in this cluster include a Professor of Education, a Professor of Industrial Relations and a research Professor. The Professors of Education and Industrial Relations have strong research profiles, full teaching loads and currently hold or have held positions with management or administrative responsibilities. The research Professor has a very strong research profile and holds a research only appointment with no teaching or line management responsibilities.

In 1988, when the Dawkins Reforms were enacted, there were 21,392 full-time and fractional full-time academic staff employed in Australian universities (White Paper, p.109) however, only 3,644 academic staff were employed in positions above senior lecturer level. As strategic planning is conducted at the executive level of the university or the Faculty, therefore approximately 17,748 members of academic staff were excluded from participation in strategic planning because of their lack of seniority, such as the Professor of Industrial Relations. As the data presented in this chapter indicates, the three study participants in this cluster did not engage actively in strategic planning at the executive level for three very different reasons.

The Professor of Education held several executive leadership positions including Dean and acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor during his career while maintaining teaching and supervisory commitments in the Faculty. He enjoyed the benefits of what many of the participants in this study describe as a ‘traditional’ academic career. He was promoted within the first ten years of his first academic appointment and benefited from numerous leadership opportunities most male academics took for granted. He could therefore have been involved in strategic planning at the executive university level, and was involved in executive planning at the Faculty level, however he did not see any commonalities between this new form of leadership and the form of academic leadership he was familiar with, so he elected not to actively participate in the introduction of strategic planning in his employer university.
The Professor of Industrial Relations is a Director of a research unit, supervises a large PhD cohort, maintains a full teaching load, has chaired several inter-departmental committees and held several Faculty and Departmental leadership positions relating to student matters. However, she has not held an executive leadership role in the Faculty or her employer university because of what she describes as systemic, gender based discrimination. Therefore she was denied the opportunity to actively engage in strategic planning at the executive level.

The research Professor elected to follow a research-only career path. He admits that he did not look for positions with management or administrative responsibility as these positions did not interest him and would have limited his research productivity. Therefore, as has not held an executive leadership position the research Professor has not been required to lead strategic planning as part of his positional responsibilities. Nevertheless, he has published on various aspects of the Australian higher education sector and is therefore able to bring perceptive insights to this study as a researching social scientist and critical higher education observer.

5.2 Case study: the Professor of Education

After I returned from overseas, I took a position at a regional university before I returned to my alma mater as a lecturer in the beginning of the 1980s. The Vice-Chancellor was an old traditional type of academic who had been at the university since the Second World War. By the end of the 1980s I was promoted to Associate Professor, then Head of Department which although were academic leadership positions they provided cross-institution perspectives. Promotions were based on academic grounds, principally on research, and this put you into leadership positions. Within a couple of years I was one of the Deputy Chairs of the Academic Board which had policy making responsibilities in those days as it was the only body centralised sufficiently to have an overview of what was going on in the Faculties. This has changed now; but back then it played a strategic role while retaining an academic focus.

Then a new Vice-Chancellor was appointed who was not an academic but had a lot of experience in tertiary administration. When the Dawkins amalgamations were implemented we took thousands of new students. This had a very large impact on the university and raised the issue of ‘standards’. The research culture was also uneven as not everyone was activity engaged in research in those days.

The first university audits started in the last year of the Keating Government. They were dealt with by the Chair of the Academic Board and a small ad hoc working party. A more formal audit process started after Dawkins and we didn’t really know how to deal with it as we weren’t used to being accountable to outside organisations.
We were responsible to Senate and through legislation technically to the Parliament. The change that came with the emergence of DEETYA caused a great deal of concern as we did not want to be subject to these types of scrutinies. As a result academics were suddenly thrust into a planning role - I don’t think it was so much strategic planning but policy making at the central level. I then became Dean and watched the power shift progressively away from the Academic Board. By then we had a new Vice-Chancellor who restructured the university and the senior executive committees. A number of new appointments were made and I think by about 1997 to 1998 you could say that the university was starting to think and act strategically. The Deans had to develop strategic plans, develop objectives for the next few years and work out ways to achieve them. But part of the problem with this is that when you start to think strategically you start to think corporately.

Many people thought the focus should have been on academic matters such as the pursuit of knowledge, teaching and research. But the new breed of people who were becoming Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors tended to think we needed to achieve the corporate mission so that we can do all this academic work. So in the 1990s the ‘privatisation’ of the student body started to take place. Some universities created private colleges and other institutions set up campuses overseas to get away from the restrictions of Canberra. The Vice-Chancellor was focused primarily on research but managed to bring in lots of good students. It looked like he was producing like a CEO and this satisfied both the governing body and the academics.

If you thought about it now, you could see there were problems in the sector in the 1980s. There clearly was a drift but the pace of change also had an impact on this. Critics in The Australian and elsewhere claimed we were not efficient and not producing the knowledge base that the nation needed. The Hawke-Keating government had restructured the economy so why would they leave aside a big public funded sector like education which was so important to economic growth? So you could see that change was coming but we initially thought we could handle this in our traditional way through the Academic Board. But by then the Academic Board did not have any control over the resources as money was now distributed from the centre based on student enrolments.

A lot of the planning I saw during this period was what you might call ‘institutional’ planning. It took place during the enrolment weeks and it was very ad hoc but very important because it you didn’t get enough students you wouldn’t get the money you needed. We also continued to have off-campus planning sessions once or twice a year and what is interesting about this period is that non-academic staff started to be invited to these sessions. Now this was a significant leadership change. Universities established new units in Planning and Strategy that gave status to non-academic staff which started to change the culture and meant that people talked more about strategy and the corporate mission. The planners produced data relating to performance and the status of the ‘God Professor’ started to erode because they did not have the knowledge needed in order to make the corporation work.
The Centre was becoming bigger and employed highly paid professional people to look after some of the non-academic areas such as Finance and Legal and once you start thinking in a corporate way you need to operate in corporate ways. It didn’t really have an impact on the academics at the time but it did increase the size of the Centre. Academics couldn’t do anything about it because we did not have that type of expertise. The strategy sessions were essentially to create morale and build collegiality between academic and non-academic staff although I am not sure it worked. The divisions were still there and we would say ... “we are the true university people because we do the research and we do the teaching”. Another interesting thing that happened in the sector was that non-academic Deputy Vice-Chancellors were appointed and when that happened we had non-academic staff in the executive structure. I don’t know in the future whether it will be possible to keep the division going. I just don’t know because academics are not going to take on these roles as they are not within their area of interest or expertise. This raises questions about how these two parts of the university can come together and preserve academic values.

Part of what happened here was driven by size, but on the other hand we had the advantage of size, because it meant that although some of the changes were pushed from the centre they could be diffused because of the size and complexity and the strength of the Faculties. In smaller universities, I think, things were able to be driven much more top down and forced. All universities were affected by many countervailing forces that pushed us towards a corporate model, and away from the old notion of what a university used to be and what many people thought it should still be. We kept planning but it was all a bit constrained as the main planning was taking place at the centre and academics had to work within those parameters. It wasn’t until some years later that we started to develop an overall planning notion. I think the first institutional Strategic Plan was released in the late 1990s and had a five year horizon. It was drawn up in the Centre and then each Faculty was required to respond to it. And from what I can remember, this by-passed the Academic Board, which would not have happened prior to that time.

When I was acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor in the early 2000s planning was highly centralised but really thinking about it, it was more about responding to government initiatives rather than an attempt to engage in strategic planning. I don’t believe that our Vice-Chancellor believed in planning but we needed a Strategic Plan – everyone needed to know where we were going and why we needed to do this or this or that. The Deans had to look at the Strategic Plan and develop a plan for the Faculty but in reality most planning was focused on our student enrolments: did we have enough students to pay ourselves and how we were going in research? These two issues were crucial. So, it was difficult for a Faculty to suddenly redirect itself and launch into a new direction. The biggest change that occurred when I was Dean, strategically, is that we amalgamated with another discipline. This wasn’t planned in fact it wasn’t even in the Faculty Strategic Plan. Yet it had planning implications and brought changes to the Faculty structure that I had to deal with. I think probably this was occurring within other institutions although there are institutional differences and dimensions in terms of size and traditions and countervailing forces – like the old traditional ideas of what an academic role should be. I also think the Vice-Chancellor’s role has been transformed in ways that are much more diverse. They have to think strategically about the outside world, how they are represented in the public domain, how and who they negotiate with and what staff they need to give them corporate advice. I think this has been a major shift which has brought significant change to the sector.
The Professor of Education describes the evolution of centralised strategic planning from the ‘ad hoc’ institutional planning that was the dominant form of planning at his employer university in the 1980s-1990s, when the university was finalising the undergraduate enrolments, to the release of the first university-wide Strategic Plan in the 1990s.

In the early years of the Professor of Education’s career, academic leadership positions were awarded on academic merit and, at the time, Academic Board, “played a strategic role while retaining an academic focus”. The appointment of a non-academic, tertiary education administration manager as Vice-Chancellor coincided with the implementation of the Dawkins Reforms and several institutional amalgamations, which brought a rapid increase in student enrolments and significant organisational change to the university.

The Professor of Education’s case study identifies three of the major themes that will be discussed in Chapter 8, The Findings. The first major theme identified by the Professor of Education is the impact of the appointment of Vice-Chancellors whom he classified as ‘non-traditional’ as they had educational administration or management backgrounds and were not ‘traditional’ researching and teaching academics, on the leadership of Australian universities. The second theme that resonates throughout his case study is his view on the establishment of university leadership opportunities in non-academic areas such as finance, planning and strategy, which resulted in the appointment of senior non-academic professional staff with the skills required to lead these new commercial activities of the university. As the Professor of Education himself acknowledges, academic staff no longer had “the knowledge needed in order to make the corporation work”.

The third theme identified by the Professor of Education is the change in the Vice-Chancellor’s role which he argued became more ‘strategic’ and led to the centralisation of leadership power in the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive. The Professor of Education also held the view that he did not have the skills to participate in the new leadership opportunities that were becoming available. “Academics couldn’t do anything about it because we did not have that type of expertise”, thereby creating a leadership vacuum that was filled with non-academic and academic staff with the requisite skills.

The Professor of Education does not refer to the establishment of professional development programs to train the professoriate so that they could take on these new leadership roles, nor
does it appear that the professoriate were encouraged to do so. His case study reveals the
development of a new leadership paradigm in this Australian university and the recruitment
of senior professional staff to the new executive leadership roles. As a result, the Professor
of Education laments the fact that by the 2000s the status of the ‘God Professor’ had been
diminished as leadership authority “flows to the one who knows” (Adair, 2010).

It may not have been possible for the Professor of Education and other members of the
professoriate to anticipate the organisational consequences resulting from the growth in the
number of non-academic staff in the sector, and the appointment of senior professional staff
to the University executive. However when they did realise what had occurred, it may have
been too late to remedy the situation. “Reactive evaluations, those developed as a result of
organizational mishaps, are generally ineffective in determining precise causes of problems
and are usually conducted too late to correct dysfunctions” (Simerly, 1987, p.183).

The Professor of Education also recalls that the first university-wide Strategic Plan released
by the university in the 1990s was not reviewed by Academic Board, which, he argues,
“wouldn’t have happened before”. And, although academic planning continued at the
Faculty level, he admits that the Faculty strategic planning “was all a bit constrained as the
main planning was taking place at the centre and academics had to work within those
parameters”.

The most significant change that occurred when the Professor of Education was Dean, was
an amalgamation with another Faculty that had widespread repercussions. The Professor of
Education admitted that this amalgamation was not in the Faculty Plan released the prior
year, therefore the decisions that had to be made to consolidate the new Faculty structure
were made outside the formal planning process, indicating that formal planning was still
conducted on an ad hoc basis in some organisational units of the university. The change in
leadership and organisational circumstances described by the Professor of Education also
occurred in many if not most Australian universities during the post-Dawkins era (see for
example Coates, Dobson, Edwards, et al. 2009; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999; Currie &
Newson, 1998; Harman & Meek, 2007; Meek, Goedegbuure, & De Boer, 2010; Meek &
Wood, 1997; Slaughter, 1998; Slaughter & Lesley, 1997).
The strategic planning approach described by the Professor of Education is not consistent with the model of an ‘entrepreneurial’ university with a shared-governance and strategic planning framework recommended by Shattock (2010, 2002). Nor is it an example of an attempt to “synthesize elements of the old and new, to invent its own internal culture, and to self-organise a unique form of university” outlined by Marginson and Considine (2000, p.2). The approach outlined in his case study divided the executive and academic communities and installed a new form of executive leader in Australian universities, leadership offered by a strategic Vice-Chancellor and an emerging academic and professional executive.

Other leadership interventions that might have helped to install a synthesising and “more modern approach to collegiality” recommended by Shattock (2010, p.77) and engage and involve the academic community in strategic planning to ensure the process benefited from the combined expertise of both academic and professional staff, appears not to have been considered.

5.3 Case study: the Professor of Industrial Relations

I started my career as a junior academic in a College of Advanced Education (CAE) during the pre-Dawkins years. I was very, very conscious of the way the Dawkins reforms would change the focus of our work and personally witnessed the Dawkins ‘strategic shift’. I was teaching with CAE employees who were very good teachers but felt threatened by the research agenda. This was a huge shift – particularly as our teaching load was very heavy. I knew that if I was going to have a career in the tertiary sector I needed to do a PhD; it was part of the credentialing process but it was also part of a realisation process that academics were researchers as well as teachers. I took leave without pay to do a PhD so I wasn’t directly involved in the organisational restructure that transformed the CAE into a post-Dawkins university. However I was aware of the growing tension between academics and their superiors and I found this period very stressful.

I don’t recall any consultation with academic staff during the planning process. It was definitely top-down and authoritarian. It was also contested quite strongly but I don’t think it made much difference. I moved to this university as soon as I completed my PhD. Interestingly, most of my leadership roles have been informal leadership positions. There really needs to be a gender dimension to this discussion as this really is a male dominated university - there aren't many formal leadership positions for women. Over the years I nominated for positions such as Associate Dean however my nomination was always politely declined. I have had Departmental roles such as undergraduate coordinator – duties include timetabling, curriculum development, staffing, assessment procedures and liaison with the students and I have also been Honours coordinator.
I was invited to Chair a committee on Harassment and Early Career Researchers and was the Department representative on the selection committee for the new Dean. I lead a research group which is significant in terms of its external profile, and also in relation to the issues we are examining, such as how do we stimulate policy debates in the community and how we provide a bridge between the research we do as academics and achieve the social impact we need to make a difference? These are important issues for business/management schools. We only receive short-term internal funds so we need to bring in contract work to supplement our funding base, am always having to make decisions about whether I can do this research or respond to this policy initiative because I also have a full teaching load. I teach two postgraduate courses each year with 70 students in one and 150 students in the other, a first year course with about 300 students, have a full cohort of PhD students and have been Honours coordinator.

I am a member of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and held several leadership positions in the NTEU over the years. The approach to strategic planning has changed considerably or at least it has at this university over the last 10 years or so. I can recall a planning process in about 2000 – I don’t remember much about it but I do remember the slogan that resulted: it was very catchy and it had a considerable impact on the way we approached our work. There was a consultation phase although I wasn’t involved, and I also remember that the strategic document required us to be much more globally focused, which was a big shift for my discipline. There was an emphasis on research that would take us out of our nice comfortable research culture – increasing our research outputs became very important. The Dean restructured the disciplines and grouped them together differently and although it was ostensibly a collaborative process, we didn’t really have much say. We were kept informed which is not the same as being consulted, and we knew there was no way of stopping it. There was a form of consultation at the discipline level as we were asked to choose which Department we wanted to join and we decided to join the School that was stronger financially. These Schools have since been dissolved because the barriers caused too much internal friction and the Faculty is now structured quite differently.

If I were leading a strategic planning process today I would look at the world-class business schools and start a dialogue with my colleagues in those schools so that I could think about what we could be doing here. I would also initiate a really good internal review and I would talk to the Heads of the Departments and everyone else who was outspoken in some way. It would not matter if they had different views, as I would be interested in their ideas and what they thought was going on. I would also involve the State and Federal government, the business community, the not-for-profits and the unions. These are the groups I work with in my research role so I would really just replicate these connections at a higher level. You also need to ask lots of questions, even question yourself, and think carefully about who we are trying to serve. This is actually a very important point – if I ever got to a senior leadership position, I would keep some teaching as this keeps you in touch with your key stakeholders – the students. I think it is good for your understanding of what is going on in your own institution, and a good way to get your subordinates on your side, to help them out in this way.
In the late 1990s and early 2000s there was conflict in the sector between the increasing ‘managerialisation’ of the university which was at odds with the traditional academic way of doing things. Although I think this tension is less obvious now, it has not been resolved. Academics have become slightly better managers, but they still don’t like being managed. There is a funny paradox in academia where we tell each other that we are colleagues, but we are actually incredibly competitive and individualistic at the same time. I also think that universities have not gone about their management practices the right way. I say this from a union point of view, but this is also an area of my own expertise and I will state categorically that pay for performance has been a complete failure at this university. It is not done properly, academic managers do not have the training to carry it out, people don’t really know what they are supposed to be doing and there have never been sufficient resources to follow through with the development side of it. So, in my view, it has just been one fiasco after another.

We also seem to be constantly under review, from AUQA, the professional organisations and so on and although we keep filling in the forms we do get annoyed about it. Another problem has been caused by the income generated from full fee-paying domestic (now discontinued) and International student fees. This created unevenness in wealth and also in workload in this Faculty which generated resentment among the academics. Also the shift towards counting research outputs is having repercussions everywhere. I am the Editor of a high ranked Journal and we have seen a spike in submissions since ERA because we are one of the few high ranked Australian journals in the field; people are desperate to get their papers published in the Journal so that they can meet their KPIs. This Faculty has very good IT support which helps keep track of your research outputs, publications and streamlined CVs which is an area where management can really make a difference, but this university is a bit like an old fashioned series of kingdoms at war with each other because really we want to work independently and do not like being told what we must or must not do.

I am wary of the term organisational culture because it masks the different allocations of power within the institution that comes from various histories, traditions and the people. This institution has had a very self-centred, self-satisfied culture for a long time, built around an old boy’s network. And in fact they seem to feed it all the time so it very hard now to break it up. We are in the middle of another strategic planning process at the moment. The Vice-Chancellor has had Town Hall meetings with the Faculties, but to me it has been about informing people rather than actually asking them what they think we should do. When there is a leadership group in power, they bring their own people with them and nothing actually changes. For instance, the strategic change process I discussed earlier with the catchy slogan actually changed what we were doing. We might have laughed about it, but it did change our behaviour. I am not sure that the current planning process has achieved the same result. I think people are a bit unsure about what we are supposed to be doing. I don’t even know what the strategic focus is?
The big question that we don’t seem to be asking is about the role of the university in Australia today. It is almost an expectation now that most HSC students will go to university so the undergraduate classes seem like a continuation of high school. However we are also supposed to be research leaders so how does research fit with undergraduate teaching, and how do we service the global environment and all our different cohorts of students?

These factors need to be thought through carefully. Good university teachers need some research experience but do you need research leaders teaching first year accounting courses? I don’t think so. When I look at my colleagues, especially my young male colleagues, they have gone straight to a PhD after their undergraduate study and after some teaching, have been promoted to management positions in the Faculty. They will end up as Deans and Vice-Chancellors all around the world. You can’t do that if you have career interruptions and you do a lot of teaching and have administrative responsibilities. But if you take this fast track to a senior position – are you really in touch with the students and do you really know the business that you are tasked to lead? This is the question you need to ask.

The first strategic planning process the Professor of Industrial Relations could recall occurred when she was employed at a newly established post-Dawkins amalgamated university. She remembered that it was led by the Vice-Chancellor with little consultation with academic staff. “I don’t recall any consultation with academic staff during the planning process. It was definitely top-down and authoritarian. It was also contested quite strongly but I don’t think it made much difference”.

In the early 2000s after she joined her current employer, a large traditional, comprehensive, metropolitan university, she could recall “a consultation phase” held during the pre-planning phase of the development of the new Strategic Plan. However, she was not personally involved, as she was not a member of the Faculty Executive at the time. During a subsequent Faculty restructure she admits that her discipline was consulted and permitted to choose the Department they wanted to join as part of the Faculty restructure, although she adds that “although it was ostensibly a collaborative process, we didn’t really have much say. We were kept informed which is not the same as being consulted, and we knew there was no way of stopping it”. As a long-standing member of the National Tertiary Education Union [NTEU] the Professor of Industrial Relations considered effective and meaningful consultation during strategic planning as critical to the success of the process. This is also one of the key areas of concern raised by Connell (2013) in her Open Letter to the Vice-Chancellor at Sydney University referred to earlier in this thesis (pp.25-26).
Collegiality, the governance model that served universities for centuries before the advent of the modern strategic management era, relies on an academic led, collegial and consultative approach to planning, supported by leadership characteristics of openness, information sharing, a willingness to engage in meaningful consultation, and a commitment to ensure major decisions are made by a majority of academic representatives in accordance with the governance structures and established lines of authority. This is the type of leadership Australian academic staff had come to expect in universities and was therefore deeply ingrained in the shared leadership values still held by many members of the Australian academic community.

In 2011 an editorial published in the NTEU newsletter, submitted by Virginia Mansel Lees argued that “Lack of genuine consultation about issues has also become corrosive … So, to borrow a few terms from the new performance development framework this approach to staff is not respectful, collegial, accountable, or open and transparent!” (NTEU, 5 December, 2011). More recently staff at the University of South Australia, in response to the university’s decision to video record lectures without meaningful conversation with the academic community, argued “There is much concern about the lack of consultation, lack of communication, lack of training and the ad-hoc approach that this initiative has taken. Staff have expressed concerns about a number of issues involving their rights under this system” (NTEU, 17 October 2013).

The Professor of Industrial Relations’ employer university was in the midst of a new strategic planning process when the interview was held. She was not engaged with the process, nor was she impressed with the forms of consultation underway arguing that “although the Vice-Chancellor has held Town Hall meetings with the Faculties, to me it has been about informing people rather than actually asking them what they think we should do”. She is also critical of the ‘managerialism’ of the Australian university sector, representing a view that is consistent with the ideological, unsympathetic, view of the introduction of strategic management proposed by Sharrock (2012, p.324) discussed in the Preface to this thesis (p.8). The Professor of Industrial Relations stresses this view from both a NTEU perspective and a management perspective, as management is one of her areas of academic expertise. She also presents an alternate model of strategic planning to guide the next generation of leaders that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, the Conclusion.
The Professor of Industrial Relations’ case study identifies one of the major themes that will be discussed in the Findings chapter of this thesis: that gendered leadership constructs discriminate against Australian women academics in multiple and complex ways that make it difficult for individual women to challenge or overcome. In this particular case, discrimination marginalised the highly qualified Professor of Industrial Relations with specialisations in economics, management and industrial relations from both the faculty and university executive strategic planning teams. If she had been included in the university-wide Executive Strategic Planning team, her long-standing involvement in the NTEU may have assisted this university to develop strategic plans and implement the new strategies in consultation with the NTEU, which could have avoided the extensive industrial action that was subsequently taken at this university.

Individuals who benefit from the dominant leadership paradigm will work in overt or covert ways to maintain the status quo according to the Professor of Industrial Relations. “This institution has had a very self-centred, self-satisfied culture for a long time, built around an old boy’s network. And in fact they seem to feed it all the time so it very hard now to break it up”. It is unlikely that individual female academics, even senior female academics like the Professor of Industrial Relations, will be able to challenge the dominant leadership paradigm until alternate constructs have become accepted and enculturated in the organisation (Sinclair, 1998, pp.110-111). What is particularly interesting about the Professor of Industrial Relations’ insights into the gendered characteristics of the leadership she describes at her university employer, is that her employer university is also her alma mater therefore she should been able to access the alumni privileges, networks and connections made available to her male colleagues.

This suggests a leadership discrimination issue in Australian universities requiring ongoing investigation (see for example Bell, 2012; Blackmore, 2014, 2010, 1999, 1997; Lane, 2012; Jones & Lovejoy, 1980; May, 2012; Pyke, 2012; White, 2003; Winchester, Lorenzo et al., 2006).
5.4 Case study: the research Professor

I started my career in a professional position, then I was seconded a research centre where I started to build a career in research. I was promoted from Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor and employed on one year contracts which we used to call extendable tenure. I won some ARC funding and after I completed my PhD I was offered a Readership position. I have been part of a few planning processes at the Faculty level and as a member of the University Research Committee, but we never dignified it by calling it a Strategic Plan.

Because I never made management a priority I haven’t been involved in the running of universities but I have learned a great deal from being a researching fellow in the sector. I know that you can’t run a university change process by riding over the top of people, unless it is a kind of situation where the resource position is so dire or some other major change is taking place, like a merger, which allows things to be pushed through more easily. Most of the time you just need active consent and participant energy to implement change.

Timing is everything; especially when you are dealing with the government. When an opportunity opens up you must act right away as windows of opportunity are often short term and disappear quickly. It is the ebb and flow of life that makes things possible at certain times. I also think that a lot of change is not necessarily directed; often it is just the interactions of different forces that produce results no one has forecast or planned which has knock-on effects somewhere else. Universities are complex environments that can be manipulated, but they also have a unique inner logic of their own that makes things happen or not happen despite the wishes of all the participants for good or bad. This is very different to ‘Strategic Planning’ which should be more explicit about what it wants to achieve.

There have been a wide range of approaches taken in Australian universities with different levels of density in terms of detail and different rhythms of consultation. Variables lie in the amount in which the plan changes as it goes, and the level of consultation involved. Some planning starts with a period of consultation; others continue the consultation as the plan is being implemented. Some planning is entirely consultation driven; others do not consult at all – there has been a great deal of variation. The other thing is that quite different kinds of leadership and approaches can be successful. There have been charismatic leaders; visionary leaders; the first among equals; the consulter; and the person who goes off on their own and then comes up with a great idea and brings everyone with them despite the fact that they weren’t consulted. There is not a hard and fast rule about it.

In a good strategic planning process you must be able to imagine new things, be flexible enough to respond to changing events, and also to deal with unintended consequences, both positive and negative, and understand what those shifts mean. You also need someone who sits in between the constituencies affected by the plan and the larger environment, who can pick up signals from the constituents and feed that information into the process.
The most important thing is that the plan reflects a good reading of the trends and a good understanding of context because you need to know what is possible at that particular time. Some of the planning will be driven with the budget process which is the core central planning process of the institution. However if you base your planning solely on that, it will rigidify the plan, create a lot of inflexibilities and limits the ability to imagine things that are really different. But on the other hand it implements the plan strongly and makes it unstoppable and a very powerful change instrument. There always has to be a financial plan that is connected to it and consistent with it.

If you ground everything in the budget process it locks it all in and keeps everyone going in the same direction, but it will also mean that it is not as flexible, as visionary and not as interesting as perhaps it could be, so people might not buy in with the same level of enthusiasm. There is a kind of romantic culture about the sector and I think that connections with the mission and values are really strong motivators.

We might be primarily driven by the economy but we also see things through a system of values that we attach to emotionally in a way that we don’t attach to parcels of money. The bottom line for companies is shareholder interests. Universities are grounded in a much larger set of human values and the planning process needs to tap into that to be most effective at an affective level. The Hoare Committee came in on the mainstream trends, reflected those trends, spoke to those trends and pushed them along. It wasn’t outside what was happening in the sector.

One of the shifts that occurred in the mid-1990s was towards quality assurance and post-planning evaluations rather than on the planning process itself, primarily through the self-evaluation regimes. Evaluating quality against institutional plans and allowing institutions to essentially run their own self-evaluation process are flawed approaches as they both have the capacity for local variability and the capacity for self-marketing to take over from serious evaluation. This type of quality assurance can contaminate the objectivity of the process as you have no arms-length evaluation going on which was the AUQA model of quality assessment and assurance. It did have nuisance value which meant that everyone had to manage it but basically what it could do and say was limited. You can excuse any form of performance in terms of fitness for purpose as you can set the bar as low as you like if you are doing badly in an area. The AUQA model did create a reflexive culture but whether that was translated into continuous improvement is a much argued proposition. I don’t really think that self-evaluation drives improvement, competitive pressures do.

The problem with strategic planning has always been its rigid nature and the fact that it becomes a type of ideology that managers require everyone to adhere to, whether it is working or not, whether it was well based or not, whether there was enough feedback or potential for evolution. I think we should be more flexible in our planning and produce more flexible plans.
We have data systems that allow us to modify things as you go which the best managers do instinctively as they work: they are driving a car according to the traffic they can see, not according to some pre-programmed notion of where the car should be going regardless of the obstacles that are in the way.

One of the other complicating factors lies in the dual loyalties people have to the institution and to their particular discipline or field. This is where leadership is crucial. There are plenty of academics whose real loyalties are not to the institution, but to their field outside the university and also to their internal academic unit. The fitness for purpose quality assurance approach allows diversity and makes life easier for managers to implement the change, which is important when you have a good deal of variability at the coal face. But you pay a price in terms of consistency, internal validity and external standards as well.

Strategic planning should be more than that. It should allow you to imagine forward and start again. This is a bit of an illusion because path dependency still plays a huge role in the process but it is useful to be able to readjust the settings as you move forward. Strategic planning can create scope for transformation if it is framed by forward thinking and an attempt to align resources with objectives prospectively into the future. Strategic planning is central and instrumental but you can’t divorce it from the rise of the strategic Vice-Chancellor, the executive group around the Vice-Chancellor, the DVCs and PVCs and the move towards Executive Deans who manage down primarily rather than managing up as they are aligned more with the centre than with the troops, and the transfer of discipline leadership down to the department or school level.

All this complexity is part of the mix. I don’t know how Strategic Plans can get at those core issues, maybe the answer is that you can’t drive everything from the inside, yet strategic planning is basically an inside job as there is no such thing as an external plan. Some of the strategies in diversity and equity are engineered and may not work because of that. But thankfully governments do not run universities: academic managers do.

The important thing is that you have to get all the different parts of the puzzle right. You have to fit strategic planning and quality assurance into the larger map of management and organisational change as well as the political economy of the sector. We also need to take heed of the large shifts that have occurred over time as they are meaningful.

The research Professor has researched many aspects of the Australian higher education sector extensively and is well informed about the multiple organisational internal tensions leaders need to manage when they are leading strategic planning in Australian universities.

Although he readily admits that he has not held positions with management responsibilities, and has therefore not led a strategic planning process, he offers a comprehensive, informed overview of how strategic planning in Australian universities should be led by Australian
Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executive. The first planning process he could recall being involved in, was the development of a faculty plan in the post-Dawkins era, however, adds that “we never dignified it by calling it a Strategic Plan”.

He acknowledges that many different approaches to planning can be successful and different types of leadership can drive the process and resulting strategic change effectively. The key to success, in his view, is “that the plan reflects a good reading of the trends and a good understanding of context because you need to know what is possible at that particular time. He warns against “riding over the top of people” suggesting instead that “most of the time, you just need active consent, and participant energy to implement change”.

The leadership attributes and skills described by the research Professor reflect a highly experienced, intellectualised style of leadership that is attuned and shaped by the planning circumstances, in terms of both the situational context and comprehensive understanding of what is possible to achieve at particular times.

In the following discussion, parallels will be drawn with situational leadership models and the ‘organic’ leadership paradigm offered by Avery (2004) that has been developed to help leaders meet the organisational complexities of the 21st century. The situational theorists can be traced initially to Bass and Stogdill (1948) who undertook a comprehensive analysis of leadership theory which until that time was based primarily on the identification of specific leadership traits of ‘great’ (male) leaders. The findings of their research indicated that the effective leadership must be situationally contingent which led to the emergency of the contingency theorists.

Bass’ later work (1990) argued that leadership practices can be explained using a leadership continuum with autocratic practices at one end and democratic practices at the other, and that leadership practices are also influenced by an involvement moderator, from laissez-faire to highly involved (see also Avery, 2004, pp.17-18).

Situational leadership theory is premised on the notion that different situations demand different kinds of leadership and is therefore composed of directive (leader) and supportive (employee) dimensions. Situational leadership models first developed by Hersey and
Blanchard (1969) have been refined over the years. The Situational Leadership II (SLII) model developed by Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi (1985) is dynamic and identifies four different leadership styles that result from an increase and decrease in directive behaviours combined with an increase and decrease in supporter behaviours and is used extensively in professional development and leadership training programs (Northouse, 2010, p.89).

The Situational Leadership II (SLII) model is divided into four quadrants each featuring a different combination of high and low directive behaviours and high or low supportive behaviours (Northouse, 2010, p.90), producing four leadership styles that are applicable to different settings. The first quadrant features high directive-low supportive behaviours, termed the directing style of leadership. This represents what is commonly referred to as authoritative top-down leadership. The second quadrant, the coaching style, is an extension of the directing style however although the employees are engaged in the leadership practice, the leader is still responsible for making the decisions on what needs to be done and how it should be done.

The fourth quadrant features the delegating leadership style that consists of a low supportive-low directive behaviours. In this style of leadership, the leader delegates the planning task and control for the outcomes to the group thereafter exerting little control or influence over the process. The third quadrant outlines the supporting leadership style that involves high supportive-low directive behaviours. In this leadership style, the leader, although focused on the goals, actively involves employees in the planning task using supportive behaviours such as listening, asking for input and providing feedback and praise (Northouse, 2010, pp.91-92).

The effective leadership outlined by the research Professor contains several elements from the supporting situational leadership approach in quadrant three. Leaders exercising this leadership style would also need high levels of intelligence, empathy and excellent communication skills. They would need to have confidence in the members of their planning teams, and a very good understanding of the planning context so that they could modify their leadership behaviours to adapt to the situation and the changing needs of the employees.
The insights offered by the research Professor are theoretical and very astute. He identifies many of the key leadership themes that will be discussed in Chapter 8, the Findings. The insights provided by the Professors of Education and Industrial Relations are both insightful and practical, layered with meaning learned from a range of career experiences.

The three participants in this cluster represent three of the reasons why many Australian academics did not become actively involved in the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities: some academics held the view that they did not have the skills to participate in this new form of university leadership nor were they willing or able to develop these skills; other academics had not been promoted to executive leadership positions and were therefore excluded from participation due to discriminatory promotion practices or lack of career opportunities; while other academics immersed themselves in their academic work and did not seek roles in which strategic planning was a positional responsibility.

The Participant Observer’s cluster therefore makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of the themes presented in Chapter 8, the Findings, of this thesis. The next chapter presents the case studies in the second cluster, the Academic Leaders.
6.1 Introducing the Academic Leaders

The next three participants, the Academic Leaders, present case studies that demonstrate extensive involvement in strategic planning at an executive level. The first participant, a Faculty Dean, was involved in the development of a large-scale academic Divisional Strategic Plan as Head of School and led the development of several Faculty Strategic Plans as Dean. The second and third participants developed university-wide themed plans for inclusion in the university Strategic Plan; one in Teaching and Learning, the other in Research.

Of the 3,644 full-time and fractional full-time staff employed in Australian institutions of higher education as senior lecturers, Associate Professors and Professors in 1988, only a small fraction of this senior group of academic staff would have held executive leadership roles in the immediate in the post-Dawkins years. There were also only 20 universities in Australia in 1987, the year before the Dawkins Reforms were enacted, including two universities established that year, Curtin University of Technology and Bond University. Therefore as few as 20 Vice-Chancellors supported by small cohorts of executive and senior academic staff were charged with the task of implementing strategic planning in individual Australian universities in the immediate post-Dawkins years.

The three participants presented in this cluster exercised strategic planning as members of the university Executive. However, they all approached strategic planning from a different leadership perspective, resulting in three very different experiences and strategic planning outcomes. The three Academic Leaders therefore offer a range of valuable insights into the introduction and the implementation of strategic planning in the Australian university sector.
6.2 Case study: the Dean

I started as a part-time academic, eventually became a full-time academic and was Acting Head of the School on and off for a while. I was then appointed Head of School and after that I decided I had enough of leadership for a while and went back to being a researcher. I then became acting Dean and was pressured to put my name forward when the Dean resigned and the position was advertised.

I never wanted to be a Dean, This was not a career path that interested me however I did put my name forward, went to the interview and was offered the position. During the interview, the panel asked me if I could ‘crash or crash through’ so I thought well of course I can. I decided to accept as I can’t bear to watch a challenge go by. There were three very clear objectives that I wanted to achieve, which I did during the initial five year term. I then agreed to stay on another two years but am leaving at the end of next year as I have seen many people staying in leadership roles for too long and don’t intend to be one of those people. There is a limit to the time people can remain effective in these positions as it is hard to have the same drive, energy, enthusiasm, creativity, and innovation over a long period of time. Five years is also enough time to put change in place. If you want to see the results, and want to refine, tidy up and get to the things that you didn’t do the first time around, then you might need more than five years, particularly in a university because the pace of change is so slow. The first strategic planning process I was involved in would have been in the mid-1990s. Our institution had recently amalgamated with a university so we hired consultants and changed the name of the School which was actually a very big shift as it required people to think strategically about what we wanted to achieve. I don’t remember much else about that particular planning process.

The first large-scale strategic plan I worked on that I still remember very well, was a Strategic Plan for our Division which was comprised of five Faculties, lots of Schools and about 10,000 students. The planning process was led by the Head of the Division, interestingly not by the Vice-Chancellor. It was both collaborative and consultative and reflected the person driving it who was data focused, so the Plan was very data focused and had a very clear vision of what we needed to do. I also remember that the Head did not tell us what to do, or tell us the way it would be done. The Head actually inspired us by asking us what we can do together. I think that the personal style, the vision and the aspirations of the person who drives the planning process comes through in the Strategic Plan. If you have someone who is accountable and responsible for strategic planning who has a vision of where you would like to go, then you will get there. If you have someone who has been tasked to do strategic planning because it is part of their responsibilities, then you will get the result of that. The Divisional Plans varied enormously because of the different approaches. But what I remember most of all is that although I was only a Head of School, I felt involved, I was listened to, and also the feedback that I brought from our School was taken into account.
It certainly wasn’t top down, although there were a few disgruntled people in my School because we were still coming to terms with being part of a university and used to running things our own way. The Plan was high-level but it was more than aspirational; it was also quite practical. If, for example, you said you were going to increase the number of enrolments of Indigenous students, then clearly if you didn’t have the data to measure this how would you know if you had achieved that objective? The final Plan reflected the things people were genuinely concerned about and were implemented by the cross-Faculty committees established to drive the major issues. I think it was successful because it belonged to the people involved. This is one of the most important things.

In the 1990s many institutions were still trying to bed down the changes arising from the Dawkins Reforms and it was difficult to focus on quality because I don’t think we really had any understanding of what it meant. There was always pressure to increase enrolments, as there is now with the removal of the caps, and many institutions will over-enrol without thinking about what the consequences might be for the students, or for the processes relating to quality – this is really a conflicted path. Numbers will defeat any attempts at quality which will have been designed, if they are there at all, for small scale. I think this is a real issue and certainly government policy needs to look at it. We just released a new five year Strategic Plan. We started by doing a lot of data analysis against the objectives in our current Strategic Plan so we knew what we had achieved, where we had fallen short of our aspirations and what we hadn’t started. This produced some very useful information. We also looked closely at the external environment so that we knew what our competitors were doing.

We did this while we were waiting for the University to commence its new Strategic Planning cycle. We didn’t start our period of consultation until after the university released its discussion paper outlining the new strategic directions for the institution, as there was no point starting our planning cycle until we knew what we needed to achieve. The consultation process came up with a very big strategy, some of it was horizontal; some was vertical and although it was good I felt there wasn’t a point of differentiation. I hadn’t been involved in the process and was concerned that the draft Plan only reflected what the staff thought they could achieve. So we worked on it again and I brought in the professional staff to really mix things up and I asked everyone to think about the things that will set us apart. We then came up with something quite radical and exciting and I think we have now got a really good new Strategic Plan with some unique differentiation markers which should address some of the student concerns. Some of it is controversial, some of it is innovative and not well thought through yet in terms of being well conceptualised, but people have bought the idea of wanting to do something better for our students.
I think what is really interesting is that two of our new goals are in areas that were not in our previous plan. We attract very bright students and I don’t think we challenge them enough which helps to explain the high dropout rate. These students can move onto other careers where they can be leaders, where they can be entrepreneurial and express their creativity. The school system drives really high achievers into high demands areas like ours and we really don’t do enough for them. The Strategic Plan has now been endorsed by the Faculty and being presented to Council shortly so it is almost a fait accompli. I think that there are too many strategies in the University-wide plan, and although it is useful in that it reflects a two year period of reflection, it does not help us run our academic unit which is in reality a revenue generating business. But then again the University is made up of revenue generating units and revenue eating units so it needs quite a different sort of Strategic Plan.

Our new Faculty Plan is short, only about 3 pages outlining the 5 Goals and then there is a longer version which has lots of detail. If we achieve all of it we will look different, vastly different, but will it all be achieved? Possibly not. It is now being translated into work plans with KPIs and responsibilities and it is all online with a reporting component that is systemised and structured yet flexible so that it does not stop us building on opportunities as they arise. The difficulty with any Strategic Plan, is that management has to have mechanisms and metrics to monitor performance yet the Plan also needs to be flexible.

We have also just finished an AUQA review and although I know that we need a quality agency – this model is very labour intensive. A reflexive environment doesn’t hurt, but it costs a lot of money and I am not sure AUQA offers value for money. And TEQSA? I don’t think any of us know. It depends how they interpret it and how they apply it and I feel that it is still part of the 1990 - 2000s risk environment which shows that we haven’t really moved forward in terms of developing a more sophisticated understanding of quality. We are in a socio-historical period of risk management and regulation and that is not where you will necessarily get great breakthroughs in quality. Strategic Planning needs to be led by the leader. I didn’t feel any need to lead the last process at all but I had to in the end to get the point of differentiation as the process had become a bit adrift.

It didn’t matter in the long run because it was salvageable so it wasn’t a problem. Did it waste people’s time? I don’t think so, but it is interesting to see the different outcomes you get when you change the leadership. But seriously, in terms of Strategic Planning - if you are the boss own it. Have somebody else do all the consultations; don’t get involved at that level because you have got to be able to – if you need to – lead people in slightly different directions and it helps to have some distance. You also need to hold the planning process reasonably tight without driving it from the top because there is no point. If you drive everything from the top nobody will come with you and then it will all have been a waste of time.
The first strategic planning process the Dean could recall occurred in the mid-1990s, after her employer Institute amalgamated with a university following the implementation of the Dawkins Reforms. She remembers that consultants were hired to lead it and it resulted in a change of name for the School which was “a very big shift as it required people to think strategically about what we wanted to achieve”.

The first large-scale strategic planning process the Dean was actively involved in, was as a School representative on a committee tasked to develop a Strategic Plan for a large academic Division of the university that was comprised of a number of faculties and schools. This experience had a lasting impact on her view of strategic planning and the impact leadership has on the process. “I think that the personal style, the vision and the aspirations of the person who drives the planning process comes through in the Strategic Plan”.

Several major themes are revealed in the Dean’s case study. Firstly, that the Divisional strategic planning process the Dean participated in when she was Head of School, was led by the Head of Division, not the Vice-Chancellor or a Deputy Vice-Chancellor; secondly, the Dean stated that the Head of Division did not tell the participants to engage with the process but “actually inspired us by asking us what we can do together”; thirdly, that it was consultative and collaborative, and she felt involved, listened to and the feedback from her School was taken into account; and fourthly, in her view, it was successful.

The Dean suggests that “The final Plan reflected the things people were genuinely concerned about and were implemented by the cross-Faculty committees established to drive the major issues. I think it was successful because it belonged to the people involved. This is one of the most important things”. Shattock (2010) agrees stating that one of the key characteristics of effective strategic planning in universities is for the participants to “feel a sense of ownership” (p.34), although the Dean admits that “there were a few disgruntled people in my School because we were still coming to terms with being part of a university and used to running things our own way”.
At the end of her career, the Dean still held the view that data collection and performance reporting is an important part of the strategic planning process. “If, for example, you said you were going to increase the number of enrolments of Indigenous students, then clearly if you didn’t have the data to measure this, how would you know if you had achieved that objective?” A similar approach had been taken years earlier by the Head of Division, whom the Dean described as very data focused which meant that the “plan was very data focused and had a very clear vision of what we needed to do”. The Dean’s approach to strategic planning therefore shares characteristics with the Positioning School of Strategy Formation which assumes an analytical view of the process (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p. 22).

When the interview was conducted the Dean was preparing to release a new five year Strategic Plan for the Faculty. She delayed the commencement of the consultation until the new university Strategic Plan was released, to ensure the Faculty outcomes were aligned with the new strategic direction of the university. During the pre-planning period, performance against the objectives outlined in the previous Faculty Strategic Plan were assessed, and an environmental scan was conducted to assess competitor initiatives.

The major departure from the rational model of strategic planning reflected in the Dean’s case study, is that she initially delegated leadership of the strategic planning process when she was nearing the end of her term as Dean. However, she later changed her mind and resumed control when she realised it had “become a bit adrift”, had not identified a point of differentiation and “only reflected what the staff thought they could achieve”. So, she overturned her decision to delegate leadership of the process, scheduled another consultation session and invited the professional staff to “mix things up a bit”, and thereafter led the development of the new Faculty Strategic Plan herself.

This experience reinforced the Dean’s view of the importance of leadership in strategic planning, reflecting that it is “interesting to see the different outcomes you get when you change the leadership”. She now argues “if you are the boss own it”. She also suggests that the leader shouldn’t necessarily lead the consultation sessions, as it is helpful for the leader to have some distance from the participants. The real leadership challenge is to find a way to “hold the planning process reasonably tight” without driving it from the top. “If you drive everything from the top nobody will come with you and then it will all have been a waste of time”.

127 | Chapter 6 The Academic Leaders
The initial leadership style adopted by the Dean in the development of the Faculty Strategic Plan conforms to the delegating leadership style outlined in the SLII model (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 1985). After she resumed control she adopted a coaching leadership style whereby, although the employees were engaged in the leadership practice, the Dean was in control and made the decisions (Northouse, 2010, p.91) that would be reflected in the Strategic Plan. The delegation of leadership described by the Dean in her case study was therefore conditional. The leadership delegation was revoked when the outcomes produced were not consistent with expectations she held as Dean, which was to develop a Faculty Plan that would position the Faculty against competitors.

The Dean demonstrated her commitment to ensuring a flexible planning process by subjecting the draft plan to an extra consultation process to identify a point of differentiation. She recognises that a Strategic Plan needs to be flexible so that the Faculty is in a position to respond to opportunities as they arise, whilst also acknowledging that management requires metrics to monitor performance. One approach made by the Dean to mitigate these two countervailing processes was to invite professional staff to attend the reconvened consultation session, providing an opportunity for the professional staff to offer suggestions for improvement and comment on the capacity of the Faculty to report against the metrics outlined in the draft plan.

Keller three decades ago (1983) warned that strategic planning should not result in the production of a blueprint that locks the university into a single path forward. “Strategic planning involves continuous adjustments to shifting conditions, with a central strategy in mind” (p.140). Shattock (2010) cautioned that many university Strategic Plans are too prescriptive and detailed, particularly for a sector where the external environment is volatile and constantly changing (pp.33-34). The research Professor also alluded to this tension stating “the problem with strategic planning has always been its rigid nature and the fact that is becomes a type of ideology that managers require everyone to adhere to … I think we should be more flexible in our planning and produce more flexible plans” (research Professor, p.118).

However, as the participants in this study reveal, this is very difficult to achieve in practice.
6.3 Case study: the Professor of Higher Education

I completed my undergraduate study in the US and my PhD in Europe which means I have personally experienced different systems of higher education. This is one of the things that helped shape my academic interest in comparative higher education. I started my career at a metropolitan University then moved to a Go8 university before I settled at a regional University for more than two decades. I was promoted to Associate Professor in the early 1990s and was a full Professor at the end of the 1990s. I had two main leadership roles at this university: as Deputy Chair of Academic Board and Head of School. In terms of strategic planning my insights would come mainly through my involvement with the Academic Board and working with the senior executive of the University on various strategic planning projects as part of this role particularly in teaching and learning. I left a few years ago to take up a position at a Research Institute at a Go8 university.

When I went to the regional university in the mid-1980s there was virtually no strategic planning as we know it today. Since that time I have witnessed strategic planning increase in terms of both importance and methodological sophistication, and of course seen the different emphases that different Vice-Chancellors give to it. The first attempts were consultative and collaborative but the end result was more authoritarian. As a process it has always been very much top-down rather than bottom-up. Even if there were opportunities for people to make submissions and attend meetings to express their views which gave a semblance of consultation, it was very difficult to get people really involved and committed to the strategic planning process.

One of my first experiences in strategic planning was probably at the end of the 1980s led by a Vice-Chancellor with a teaching, learning and management background, so teaching and learning was a major focus of that particular plan. Twenty years later at the regional university there was still a lack of an overall unified approach to developing a Strategic Plan and themed sub-plans. There were attempts to do that but it really depended upon the quality of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors in the various portfolios. If you had good Deputy Vice-Chancellors across all three areas, Research, Academic and International, you were much more likely to get a strong Strategic Plan than if the quality was variable. And for the most part, I found that the quality was variable.

There was pressure throughout the 1990s to engage in strategic planning: the government was promoting it and there was much more emphasis on strengthening management within universities which of course was one of the primary objectives of the Dawkins Reforms of 1988.
There was also an emphasis on entrepreneurialism and a push for universities to take a much more market driven approach to their planning. Universities had to be more responsive to market conditions from 1996 when the Howard Government came in, as there was a reduction of public financing of higher education in real terms, so universities had to find new markets to increase their income sources.

Hoare wanted university governing bodies to assume a more corporate board type of approach to governance which many of them started to do. This is also when Executive Deans were appointed which meant they were much more a part of the Executive than representatives of rank and file academic staff. At the same time, you saw a diminishing of the power of the Academic Board. In the 1990s the Academic Board used to have a good look at the University Budget before it went to Council. However from the late 1990s or early 2000s it went directly from the Finance Office to Council. The Executive was responsible for finance and the University Budget; academics for teaching and research and never the twain shall meet! But of course what you do in teaching and research has budget and planning implications.

There always seemed to be a sort of ‘us’ and ‘them’ development between parts of the Executive and the academic community. And I think there was a tendency for the executive, both in terms of strategic planning and setting performance indicators to measure strategic achievements, to take a compliance approach to the process rather than trying to get everyone to pull together, and work together, as an academic community. I felt caught in the middle at times, as we had the Executive on one hand and the academic community on the other hand pulling in different directions. Some of the Academic Board meetings were very fiery and I also felt manipulated by some of the people on the Executive. When the Vice-Chancellor hired consultants to gather data and write the Strategic Plan this further divorced academic staff from the planning process. When I came to this university in the mid-2000s I found it was light years ahead in terms of the overall sophistication of all its management processes, particularly in strategic planning.

By the end of the 1990s it was obvious that we needed some form of national quality assurance agency within Australia. I was involved in some of the very early discussions that developed the AUQA framework. It was thought that by adopting a ‘fitness for purpose’ type of approach AUQA would be able to assess the quality of the institution in terms of what they were trying to achieve against their own strategic goals. This did rely on universities being able to plan strategically but it also helped them become more sophisticated in conducting their own self studies. I think this became as valuable, if not more valuable, than the AUQA review itself. This is the major benefit AUQA brought to the sector in my opinion. It taught universities to cast a critical eye over their own activities.
I Chaired a Review for a University that was doing a terrific job in teaching and in the pastoral care provided to students. However, to remain a university they also had to be engaged in research. This meant they had to put Strategic Plans in place that diverted effort and money away from teaching towards research. This is an example of where imposing one particular standard can actually divert a university away from doing things they are very good at and make it hard for them to keep performing well in areas where they were valued as an institution.

Watching the development of strategic leadership and planning has certainly had an impact on my views on leadership. Being involved in the process; participating in the debates; looking at what other universities were doing in terms of their strategic positioning; chairing an AUQA Review and preparing a Review Report at my own University all shaped my attitude towards leadership. If I was leading a strategic planning process now I would put mechanisms in place to start to develop ideas much more from the bottom up. I mean, in the end, the Executive has to lead the process but part of this responsibility is to get the staff on side and engaged in the process. You are always going to have pockets of dissent. But if you ignore this and don’t take the dissent seriously then these groups are more likely to coalesce and build momentum.

If you try to build a more cohesive process, although this is harder to do, you will produce a more enduring outcome. One of the things that you realise as you become more sophisticated at strategic planning is that you actually have to bring the troops with you, and that having a ‘disconnect’ between management and the academic community is counter-productive for the institution. Strategic planning has to be almost by definition, led or initiated from the centre. But if it goes no further than that, it is probably not going to adequately serve the institution. I think there are two criteria of successful strategic leadership and planning: one is the acceptance, grudgingly or otherwise from the academic community as well as the ability or willingness to make modifications over time; but also gaining acceptance within the wider community – the stakeholders - particularly the students as they are your primary stakeholder.

Universities are very complex, large academic organisations. My advice to future leaders would be to make sure they really understand ‘the beast’ they are trying to lead. They need to appreciate what makes a university different from other types of organisations and they need to understand the particular culture and the dynamics of the university they are working in at the time because universities are all different. If they don’t take this into account, they will fail. This does not mean that they are always going to be successful even if they do understand this – because they won’t - but I am certain that if they don’t appreciate this, they won’t have any chance of success.
The Professor of Higher Education has decades of experience in strategic planning and brings valuable insights to the study from years of reflective practice. His case study represents a profile of an Australian university implementing modern management practices, including strategic planning, to comply with the directives outlined in the Dawkins Reforms. He describes the evolution of strategic planning at his employer university from a situation where there was “virtually no strategic planning as we know it today” in the mid-1980s, to a state where strategic planning had increased in “both importance and methodological sophistication”. He makes this point succinctly when he suggests that his current university employer, a large metropolitan Go8 university, as being “light years ahead in terms of the overall sophistication of all its management processes, particularly in strategic planning” compared with his previous employer, a regional, post-Dawkins university.

The Professor of Higher Education, like the Dean, reflects on the different emphases that leaders bring to strategic planning, acknowledging that the leadership approach will influence the shape, scope and vision of the Strategic Plan published at the end of the process. The Professor of Higher Education refers specifically to the teaching and learning background of the Vice-Chancellor that influenced, and was subsequently reflected, in the final Strategic Plan.

He also suggests that this leadership emphasis was not limited to the Vice-Chancellor or the individual senior member of the executive who had delegated responsibility for leading the strategic planning process, but also from other executive members of the planning team who are developing various components of the Strategic Plan. For example, the sub-themes developed in areas such as Research, Academic and International that were led by Deputy or Pro-Vice-Chancellors will vary in quality depending on the leadership skills of the individuals leading the process. “If you had good Deputy Vice-Chancellors across all three areas, Research, Academic and International, you were much more likely to get a strong Strategic Plan than if the quality was variable. And for the most part, I found that the quality was variable”.

The Professor of Higher Education’s case study is very insightful and reveals precisely how the rift between the executive and the academic community developed at his employer university. However, although the Professor Higher Education had well developed strategic
insights into the source and the cause of the conflict, and the leadership skills required to lead the university towards a more collaborative planning future, he did not have the positional power to affect the change. It is possible that if the Professor of Higher Education had been responsible for leading the introduction of strategic planning at his former university, he may have been able to find ways to engage academics in the process and the end result may have been more positive.

His case study supports the contention made by Shattock (2010) that many universities adopted planning approaches that “seem to owe a great deal to an earlier industrial age where top management teams, answering to external boards, adopt a strongly top-down, non-participative, non-empowering style of management [that] imposes an inappropriate framework for achieving academic success” (p.36.).

The strategic planning approach described by the Professor of Higher Education was not neutral or democratic. It is illustrative of several biases in the process that affected the outcomes (Mintzberg, 2000, p.168). As this case study illustrates, these biases slowly but effectively alienated the academic community from strategic planning and distanced them from the university executive at his employer university. After thinking deeply about his experience, and with the wisdom of hindsight, the Professor of Higher Education suggests that executives leading strategic planning in Australian universities should strive to build a cohesive, consultative process. “If you try to build a more cohesive process, although this is harder to do, you will produce a more enduring outcome”.

The evidence in the Professor of Higher Education’s case study and the Professor of Education’s case study presented in Chapter 5, demonstrates clearly that the rational or traditional strategic planning model was implemented in these Australian universities without modifications to shape it so that it was ideologically more compatible with the collegial planning process. As a result the Academic Boards and thereby entire academic communities, were disenfranchised from their collegial leadership role by the introduction of strategic planning in their employer Australian universities.
The major theme emerging from the Professor of Higher Education’s case study, is that the key to leading an effective strategic planning process in Australian universities, is through collaborative leadership practices that unite, not divide, the university community.

6.4 Case study: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

I commenced my academic career as a lecturer in the mid-1970s and became a Professor and Head of Department just nine years later. This was my first middle management role. However, my first experience developing a university wide strategy was in the late 1980s when, as Chair of the Research Committee, I developed a research strategy. At that time universities didn’t have Pro-Vice-Chancellors or Deputy Vice-Chancellors, those types of positions didn’t start appearing until much later but as Chair of this committee I was able to assume that type of role.

Then I won a major competitive research grant and was Director of an ARC research centre for a number of years. In many respects, the development of my strategy and leadership skills was given a significant boost in this role. I was also Head of Department for most of that period and worked with the Australian Research Council (ARC) in the early days of its establishment. I then became Head of School which later became a Division of the University so I was effectively in a Dean’s role for several years. In the late 1990s I held a senior position within the ARC which gave me insight into research strategy at a national and international level and the opportunity to work on some high level international collaborative initiatives. The Vice-Chancellor then invited me to take over the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research for an initial period of two years, which I accepted. I then successfully applied for the position two years later when it was advertised. So, I have really been involved in developing research strategy at one level or another for a large part of my career.

When I was Director of the ARC centre we did engage in strategic planning but it had a much narrower focus, although I remember initiating a major strategic planning exercise in terms of our engagement with the external community. We hired consultants and I had my first experience of listening to consultants repeat to me at the end of the process what I told them before we started!

When I was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor I saw this as an opportunity to engage in a major strategic planning exercise. There was an existing strategy document but there had been no engagement in the development of the strategy so I thought it was important to refresh it using a broad engagement methodology. A new Vice-Chancellor was appointed during this period who was very focused on developing the research profile of the university. He provided additional resources and gave me the autonomy I needed to run the Portfolio because I had been able to say “here is our Strategic Plan and this is what we are doing”.

134 | Chapter 6 The Academic Leaders
For the first two years I focused on two areas that needed serious attention: the decline in HDR enrolments and research income. I must admit, I adopted a more ‘this is what we are going to do’ approach; so it was a strategy in some respects but it was also a tactical response to a serious problem that needed attention.

I then turned the focus to the development of a much wider research strategy based on lessons from the past and engaged broadly to put that strategy together. We were informed by data gathered from what other universities were doing nationally and internationally, but at that particular time it was more about getting all the internal stakeholders lined up. I worked with a number of key internal stakeholders, particularly the Research Committee and Heads of Research in the Schools as we didn’t have Associate Deans at the time.

This produced a detailed University Research Plan – it had a three year horizon from 2006. We extended this plan for another 3 years to 2011 and subsequently developed a new five year plan which will see us through to 2014. Another priority was improving the quality of the information systems. Actually addressing this issue has been an important part of the research strategy. It was very difficult extracting and shaping the data for ERA10 so I used this example to successfully campaign for resources to improve and integrate the data systems so that data could be mined more efficiently for future initiatives.

The focus of the new Research Plan is to improve the integration of research, research training, external engagement and internationalisation, and this needs the engagement of all the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Deans. The other important part of the strategy is the alignment and integration of the various research support functions throughout the university. So we restructured the existing committees and established a research policy and strategy committee which operates at a high level, and a research management committee that looks at strategy but also at operations and implementation. There is a high level of integration between the two Committees and also with a number of my officers in the Research portfolio, which is very important.

As a result there are strong research connections throughout the university including with the research training programs, the PhDs and Masters by Research, which we see as an extension of our research. The University also established Associate Dean positions to extend the strategy into the Faculties, so we looked at the strategy from several different vantage points to achieve the change we wanted.
Some people might suggest that I assumed a strong centralist approach, however I would term it a ‘leadership’ rather than ‘managerial’ approach. By the time I suggest a particular change, I have usually thought about it very carefully and bounced ideas off quite a few different people. This helps to develop an understanding of where resistance is likely to come from and why, so that I can work out how to accommodate this before I suggest the change in the first place. I think the real value in Strategic Planning is in setting aside the time to think through what you want to do. Strategic Planning has become very stylised operationally as if it is a means in itself, but of course it is not. It is an approach to engage in methodical thinking about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the university to work out where you want to go.

We have learned a great deal over the last few decades. In the 1990s there were some areas that were operating well on a strategic basis, I think my research centre was an example of that, but the level of expertise was very uneven throughout the sector. There wasn’t an effective broad strategic planning capability at this university at the time, although parts of the university were planning and operating very well. I think that because we did not have an actual strategic framework we did not perform as well as we should have in our first AUQA Review. We were making progress in an incremental way, but were not uniformly in that position.

Strategic Planning needs to take account of the organisation and the role organisational culture plays in generating or resisting change. The willingness to adopt change has to be managed very well so that it connects with peoples broader aspirations. This is one of the things the current Vice-Chancellor is extremely good at, being able to articulate a compelling reason for change. So, in the end it is really about changing the culture. You can’t make it happen yourself and you will certainly experience difficulties if a culture of resistance is generated at the coal face. Major strategies need to be led and funded from the centre and be centrally driven, but they have to be enacted at all levels, right down to each individual member of staff. Giving central proclamations don’t work as universities are not command and control organisations. You also need to make the right decisions which means knowing your organisation very well.

There has been a tendency to appoint management style Vice-Chancellors who are not successful academics, and I think this was a mistake. Of course there were people who were successful but generally speaking most probably were not. Management Vice-Chancellors are somewhat divorced from the heart of the university, and although they might genuinely support research they can be uncomfortable working with researchers, especially scientists. We are now getting more mainstream (academic) Vice-Chancellors who are much better prepared on the management side. And although I don’t particularly warm to academic apparatchiks, the old fashioned way that people became Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors by coming up through the ranks of academia is the right way.
This seems to be re-establishing itself now; a good thing because you really need to understand the business you are in to lead and plan effectively. I try to keep research active although it is hard for me to find time to work in the lab, so experimental research is almost impossible. But I still have graduate students, I still have grants and I still interact with my people and put what I can into the conceptual design of the research that is going on.

Universities are businesses. They are very unusual businesses and the people you are dealing with are unusual however I would say that you can’t develop or implement effective strategy unless you have a comprehensive understanding of the people and the organisation you trying to lead. You must be able to connect with your colleagues because dissenters can undermine you easily in universities as they have enormous personal autonomy. The other thing to remember is that you can’t tell academic staff what to think and you can’t tell them what to do. They have to either want to do it, or understand why it is important for them to do it. That is the only way the strategy will work.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s case study demonstrates that he is a researching academic first and foremost and although he has held executive positions for decades, plans strategically as an academic with well-developed strategic planning and leadership skills (see for example Fullan & Scott, 2009, p.153; Shattock, 2010, pp.34-36). Collaborative engagement with the stakeholders of the Strategic Plan, together with a comprehensive integration of research support functions throughout the university, is a core element of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s approach to leading the development of a university-wide research strategy at his university.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor like many of the other study participants argues that successful strategic planning in universities relies on knowing “your organisation very well”. Although the Deputy Vice-Chancellor has held an executive leadership role at his employer university for more than two decades, he remains research active. He is a Chief Investigator on several externally funded research grants which keeps him engaged with his co-researchers and the external research community. He also supervises graduate students which keeps him in touch with higher degree research students at the university. This is consistent with the recommendation of the Professor of Industrial Relations who suggested that university leaders should maintain connections with students, stating that “if I ever got to a senior leadership position, I would keep some teaching as this keeps you in touch with your key stakeholders – the students” (p.110).
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s case study illustrates how important it is that individuals leading strategic planning maintain meaningful connections with the academic community, “because dissenters can undermine you easily in universities as they have enormous personal autonomy”. The appointment of management style Vice-Chancellors in Australian universities in the 1990s was another point of discussion raised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as did the Professor of Education in Chapter 5. Arguing that universities are very unusual businesses, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor is of the view that it is not possible to “develop or implement effective strategy unless you have a comprehensive understanding of the organisation you are trying to lead”.

The appointment of Vice-Chancellors with management or tertiary administration expertise was another consequence of the Dawkins Reforms. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor argues this was a mistake, as management style Vice-Chancellors didn’t always fully understand or appreciate the fundamentals of scientific research, were uncomfortable working with research scientists and were therefore “somewhat divorced from the heart of the university”. This reflection echoes a sentiment expressed by the Professor of Education who said that “the new breed of people who were becoming Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors tended to think we needed to achieve the corporate mission so that we can do all this academic work” (p.106).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor explains that this trend is now changing and the new style of Vice-Chancellors are more mainstream academics who have management and leadership skills. “… although I don’t particularly warm to academic apparatchiks, the old fashioned way that people became Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors by coming up through the ranks of academia is the right way”. As the participants in this study have evidenced, academic work is the core function of every Australian university. This means that the corporate arms of the university should support and enhance academic work. The focus should not be on the corporate mission as appears to have been the case at the Professor of Education’s university.

When the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was first appointed to lead the research portfolio, he recalls that there were several ‘serious’ problems requiring immediate attention: in particular, low competitive grant success rates and a decline in higher degree research
student enrolments. During his first two years he addressed these concerns assuming a high-
level authoritative approach that was both strategic and a tactical response to addresses areas
of poor performance. He admits that in order to do this effectively he “adopted a more ‘this
is what we are going to do’ approach”. However, once these issues were addressed and
responsibility for overseeing for implementing these changes was delegated, the Deputy
Vice-Chancellor was able to turn his insights into developing a long-horizon research
strategy for the university. He was also strategic in his decision to develop a Research Plan
in the final year of the previous Vice-Chancellor’s term so that he could present the Research
Plan to the incoming Vice-Chancellor and say “here is our Strategic Plan and this is what
we are doing”, thus surviving the university executive leadership transition to the new Vice-
Chancellor.

Shattock argues that there is a tendency for leaders to focus on short-term problems when
they are leading strategic planning however the essential characteristics of strategic planning
require it to be framed by long-term strategic thinking and actions (2010). “Although
strategic planning is billed as a way of becoming more future oriented, most managers, when
pressed, will admit that their strategic plans reveal more about today’s problems than
tomorrow’s opportunities (Hamel & Prahalad, 2010, p.15).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor was able to satisfy both functions. His strategic focus was
initially short-term as he needed to immediately address the problems that were impacting
on the university’s research performance. However, once this was complete, he was able to
shift his strategic gaze towards the development of a long-horizon strategy for the university.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor demonstrates a capacity to think strategically and practically,
recognising that the implementation of the new Research Strategy requires distributed
leadership embedded throughout the university. He achieved this by the appointment of
faculty based Associate Deans Research, an investment in a new research data information
management system, and a reorganisation of the research support committees.

The leadership style adopted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in the development of the
Research Strategic Plan conforms to the directing leadership style outlined in the SLII model
(Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 1985). The significant improvement in the research
performance results achieved by his employer university in ERA10 and more recently ERA12, provides evidence that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had the leadership and strategic planning skills to successfully address the systemic problems that limited the university’s research performance in the early years of his appointment, and was then able to lead the development of a comprehensive and effective research strategy to improve the university’s research performance.

All three participants in this cluster were able to exercise control over strategic planning in their second tier areas of executive leadership responsibility, however, they also had to ensure this conformed to the strategic direction set by the Vice-Chancellor. Therefore, although these participants held executive strategic planning responsibility they were also somewhat constrained in the outcomes they were able to achieve.

This important leadership tension will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, the Findings.
CHAPTER 7: THE VICE-CHANCELLORS

7.1 Introducing the Vice-Chancellors

The case studies of the Vice-Chancellors presented in this chapter bring new insights to the study and reinforce issues raised by other study participants. This cluster contains a current Vice-Chancellor and two former Vice-Chancellors. In order to distinguish the case studies of the two former Vice-Chancellors, one former Vice-Chancellor has been assigned the pseudonym ‘Emeritus Professor’. It should be noted however that while most of the participants are Emeritus Professors or will be when they retire, only one participant has this pseudonym.

Each Vice-Chancellor has more than 30 years of experience in a range of positions at a number of different universities, other tertiary education institutions, the public service, appointments with the government as well as state and national committees of review. The Vice-Chancellors cluster therefore provides a comprehensive overview of how, when and why strategic planning was implemented in Australian universities in the post-Dawkins era. The participants also reflect, with the wisdom of hindsight, how their approach to leading strategic planning has changed over the years, and offer suggestions for improved practice for the next generation of leaders in the Australian higher education sector.

The case studies presented in this cluster agree with several findings of the Learning Leaders survey (Scott, Coates, Anderson, 2008) particularly that “change does not just happen – it must be led, and led deftly” (p.xiii). However, as the case studies presented in this cluster demonstrate, each Vice-Chancellor approached strategic planning using an approach that was shaped by their own philosophical understandings of what strategic planning should be able to achieve within the planning contexts of their employer universities that were at various stages of institutional development facing very different organisational challenges.
7.2 Case study: the Vice-Chancellor

I have held a number of senior roles in universities and have also worked on a number of projects outside universities. My discipline areas are management, political science and public administration, therefore, time outside allowed me to both apply these skills and look reflectively on the sector. In my opinion, the best Strategic Plans are short, concise, directional documents that highlight the key priorities of the university. Strategic Plans should provide clear signals about what you are trying to achieve, but it should also be a living, breathing document that is constantly recalibrated as you achieve your targets. Our current Strategic Plan is short, it is just a few pages, with Key Performance Indicators that we use to report to the governing body. We are already big so the next step in our strategy is to become better and are raising our entry cuts offs for both domestic and international students to attract the best students. We are also building capacity in our research higher degrees as well as international and domestic undergraduate student enrolments.

Strategic Planning is a very serious process at this university. I think it is important to have a Strategic Plan that staff, students and stakeholders can refer to. Most people here know about our current Strategic Plan. All I need to say at this university is “we need to update our plan” to start the planning process. We don’t need to have a debate first about whether we need a Strategic Plan. I prefer to use non-formal channels to discuss ideas but have also used formal channels where they are appropriate. When we started developing the first university Strategic Plan several years ago, hundreds of staff turned up to the consultation forums to discuss the ideas we put forward. You can’t just walk into a room and expect ideas to pop up so we put together some ideas to start the discussion.

Some people used this as target practice which was fine because it meant that we were able to work through these issues. When we were developing our current Strategic Plan, more than 800 staff attended the consultation sessions which meant that they were engaged or at least interested in the process. Staff seem to understand that if they don’t participate in the planning process, then they can’t complain afterwards about the outcomes. I am of the view that if you build a body of support in the first stage of the process then the formal mechanisms will look after themselves. When we started planning formally nine years ago we assumed a more top-down approach because people were not as familiar with the process as they are today. Recently we started with lots of discussions percolating through from the community and used this to develop the initial ideas. We also had a dedicated website where people could discuss issues of importance and make contributions to the process. As a result, all this information was public and could be applied to the planning process. I also wrote to staff asking them to identify the key things that were not working and received more than 400 suggestions. I responded to each one, copied the people responsible for these areas, and was very pleased that most of the issues raised were things that we could address.
My experience suggests that people will engage if they think they can influence the process. I also want staff to think that it is our plan, not my Plan or the Chancellor’s Plan. I have also made it a priority to attract philanthropic investment and build relationships with people who are willing to invest in the University. Australian universities have evolved into much more sophisticated institutions since the 1990s when the financial and budgeting management systems started to become more modernised. As a result, universities have moved away from the idea of being partisan collegial institutions towards an understanding that they are complex organisations. When the Hoare Report was released, I don’t think any university took it seriously. The notion of modern management principles in a university was not popular. Some people see this as an intrusion into independence however I disagree and think it is more an intrusion into convenience.

I really don’t think there is any great problem for universities being required to have modern management processes and be working towards Key Performance Indicators to receive public money. When you start thinking about this you also need to start thinking about the difference between leadership and management as there are some people in the sector who are fancy talkers who can’t manage anything. Leadership is often seen to be the responsibility of the person at the front with a vision of a new horizon and so on, whereas management is seen to be tawdry, operational, boring stuff. I actually see it differently. Leadership is about charting the direction you want to go, but it is management that will get you there.

The other important thing you must consider is collaboration. In the corporate world, collaboration is an important part of the competitive environment. We collaborate with business and with other universities as well. We might compete for the best students with other State universities but this does not mean that we can’t collaborate, particularly on large-scale projects. Collaboration helps to position the university, the city, the state and Australia in terms of international reputation, and I think the sector needs to understand that forming strategic collaborations is a very important part of strategic planning.

Also, at times you have to be courageous. For example there are some courageous models being implemented in Australian universities at the moment and while I admire their innovative qualities, the question of whether it will work or not is a very different matter. Does the professoriate support the Plan? If not, can they be persuaded to support it? What will the implications be? An important thing to remember is that each Strategic Plan must be developed and executed in its own context. You can write a fancy plan for Yale or NUS or wherever, but it is totally meaningless if it does not relate to or appreciate the context.

The other thing you need to do when you are leading strategically is to persuade people to come with you.
You also need to invigorate your ranks from time to time as people get comfortable in their positions and lose their passion, so you have to thank them for their contribution and allow them to leave with dignity and with a smile on their faces financially. Then, you start working on finding the right replacements and build a community around them to achieve demographic change.

You also need to invest wisely and in order to do this you need to know your community. You need to know where your strengths are so that you can build on them, it is very important that you have these anchors. We are investing in areas of strength and are probably taking a bit of a risk in that a lot of our research is cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary, so it goes through a phase where people don't think it is serious research. But if it is deeply rooted research linked to deeply rooted disciplines, not shallow based research but research with deep roots, I am sure it will pay off because the big issues require a team approach from several different disciplines.

Managing performance is also important particularly in the current environment. Some universities are rising in the league tables at a consistent rate and this may mean they know how to perform and are being managed in a contemporary way. In terms of the quality agenda I must admit that I did not take much notice of the mechanics of AUQA. It came in a blaze of glory and did a round of institutional visits and audits but then it became, in most people’s minds, a bit so-so in the second round. Then the interest shifted towards thematic reviews, for example how the university was performing across the board in, for example, its International strategies, and after a while the institutional specific reviews became a bit same old, same old. However it is a useful process if you learn from the reporting experience. You should also be able to prepare properly and professionally while continuing business as usual. A small number of people will be responsible for writing the report and they will consult widely with a large number of people about the accuracy and adequacy of it. You should obviously think about the line of questioning but in my view you don’t need to over rehearse, it is better to bring some spontaneity to the process. This requires maturity and you also need to be able to learn from the criticisms and work through them to improve performance.

We also conduct whole institution staff surveys and compare the results with previous years to measure internal progress. Some people are very cynical about these things, but I think staff surveys are a very useful way to measure engagement and connectedness. More than 80% of the respondents who completed our last survey said they were very proud to work at this university. This to me is rolled gold. There are two measures that are very important from my perspective: the first is the response rate, because if people are not prepared to engage, well then that is your first problem. If they are prepared to engage, but are critical - well it is not always nice to hear critical things but I am encouraged by the fact that people are engaged so you have a chance of getting through to them.
The second thing is how you respond to the criticism. You might not be doing so well in some areas and in my view it is OK to say, well we tried, and we will try again. I am relaxed about the criticism that results from open dialogue with your colleagues.

A Strategic Plan should be short and concise. It should showcase your key priorities, include information on culture and sustainability, your values and contain your Key Performance Indicators. We include a snapshot of our key statistics: number of student enrolments, annual turnover, number of Rhodes Scholars etc. and also highlight our achievements, which for us has included building philanthropic donations from external donors, and increasing the number of staff with fortnightly payroll deductions which fund student scholarships. Strategic Planning is about building a community. It is linked to issues of pride and a sense of ownership that brings a very special dimension to the university. This is really the key – capturing the hearts and minds of your people.

This case study presents a profile of an Australian university that is led by a decisive Vice-Chancellor with a clear institutional objective that is strategically directed to “achieve and sustain” success (Shattock, 2010, p.30). This is consistent with the strategic management objective for higher education proposed by Shattock (2010) who argues that “managing universities is a holistic process in which all the interlocking elements need to work together” (p.30). The Vice-Chancellor’s disciplinary expertise is in management and public administration, therefore he views strategic planning as a core leadership function. His approach is consistent with the New Public Management or neoliberal agenda and in many respects, the university represents an ‘ideal’ post-Dawkins university. Acknowledging that “strategic planning is a very serious process at this university” the Vice-Chancellor accepts that it is his leadership responsibility to set the strategic direction of the university.

Unlike several other participants in this study, the Vice-Chancellor describes the changes arising from the Dawkins Reforms as a positive change initiative. In his view, the Dawkins Reforms brought a modern management influence that encouraged Australian universities to view themselves as complex organisations and no longer merely “partisan collegial institutions”. He is proud of the fact that he successfully prosecuted the internal organisational change outlined in Dawkins Reforms at this Australian university, and implemented initiatives that improved institutional performance that are consistent with the Commonwealth Government’s national higher education agenda.
The Vice-Chancellor’s approach to strategic planning shares several characteristics with the rational approach outlined by the Dean, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, discussed in the previous chapter, as well as the utilitarian or rational model previously discussed in this thesis, including Mintzberg’s formal Planning School in the School of Thought on Strategy Formation matrix (1999, p.22; 2000, p.3). A departure from the rational model is reflected in the Vice-Chancellor’s extensive on-going consultation with the university community, and the two-way learning process that shaped the way he led strategic planning at this large, comprehensive, metropolitan university.

In his case study, the Vice-Chancellor describes himself as a confident leader who is open to criticism. He demonstrates the capacity to drive strategic change while maintaining organisational momentum, although he does state that “it is not always nice to hear critical things but I am encouraged by the fact that people are engaged so you have a chance of getting through to them”. He appreciates one of the key effective leadership tasks for individuals driving strategic change is that they need to be persuasive. This approach is consistent with the Power School of Strategy Formation, which develops strategy through a process of persuasion and negotiation (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p.25). As power, persuasion and influence are defining characteristics of the Vice-Chancellor’s approach to leading strategic planning, it can therefore be described as a political approach.

Persuasion is a process through which individuals reinforce or change the opinions, attitudes, or behaviours of others. Influence is an expression of power that individuals use to change attitudes or behaviour (SHRM, 2006, pp.63, p.262). One tactic of influence the Vice-Chancellor uses to persuade the community to accept new strategic ideas, is the collection and analysis of information to shift organisational thinking (SHRM, 2006, pp.78-79) and evince the case for change. He understands that this is a two-way process, which means that he must also be open to influence by others (SHRM, 2006, p.65). This is critical to building confidence in academic communities as there needs to be an understanding that staff also have power and can change the shape of the developing strategic plan if they engage with the process. The Vice-Chancellor’s strategic leadership ambition is to strengthen the staff capabilities of the university to deliver excellence in academic and operational areas. This reflects the human resource aspects of leading strategic change proposed by Fullan and
Stielgelbauer (1991). Considering the level of discontent in the Australian university sector outlined in contemporary literature presented earlier in this thesis (Coady, 2000; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998, 2013; Connell, 2013a; Hil, 2012; Meyers, 2012), it is a confident Vice-Chancellor who is willing to probe deeply into issues of discontent, to identify and resolve areas of conflict and dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, this is the dominant feature of the Vice-Chancellor’s strategic planning approach. His leadership style, like that of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, is also consistent with the directing leadership style outlined in the SLII model (Blanchard et al., 1985) discussed previously in this thesis.

When the Vice-Chancellor was preparing to develop the new Strategic Plan he wrote to all staff asking them to identity the things that “were not working”, so that these things could be addressed during the strategic consultation phase. The Vice-Chancellor was proud to admit that he responded personally to the 400 suggestions received, copying the responsible members of staff, so that the issues could be addressed and suggestions for improvement explored. He commissions a staff survey every few years to “measure engagement and connectedness” and proudly stated that more an “80% of the respondents who completed our last survey said they were very proud to work at this university. This to me is rolled gold … Strategic Planning is about building a community. It is linked to issues of pride and a sense of ownership that brings a very special dimension to the university. This is really the key – capturing the hearts and minds of your people”.

It is interesting that the Vice-Chancellor does not refer to a leadership role for the collegial board of governance in his case study, which may suggest that Academic Board is not as involved in strategy development or strategic planning at this particular university. This study has not collected the data to confirm or deny this assertion, however, the complexity of the planning context outlined in the participant’ case studies demonstrates how difficult it is for Vice-Chancellors to capture the ‘hearts and minds’ of academic staff, as academics have many masters: to themselves, their school, department and researching colleagues internal and external to the institution, a point previously illustrated in the case studies of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Professor of Industrial Relations.
Precise information about the performance of this university cannot be revealed to protect the Vice-Chancellor’s anonymity, however, the Vice-Chancellor states in his case study that his university has a low staff turnover rate and the staff engagement results in the staff survey increase each year. During the interview, the Vice-Chancellor also provided evidence of improved performance in the various World University Rankings, and in ERA10 and ERA12, drawing my attention to the gains made in the amount of research income awarded from the Commonwealth competitive research schemes over the last five years. This indicates that this strategic, management focused Vice-Chancellor, has been able to attract, recruit and retain high output researching scholars, high profile academic research teams and high calibre students to the university.

The strategic management and leadership described by the Vice-Chancellor in this case study is consistent with the strategic management approach for successful universities identified by Shattock (2010, pp.29-49) and appears to be the dominant organisational force at this Australian university. Therefore, it could be argued that leadership plays a role in shaping organisational environments. Scholars researching diversity, isomorphism and convergence among Australian universities, therefore, should give consideration to leadership as the focus of future analyses, as it is possible that leadership may be the means to advance the diversity agenda promoted by Minister Dawkins in 1988 that has not yet been realised (Kemmis, Marginson et al., 2003; Marginson, 1999; Marginson, 2002; Marginson & Marshman, 2013; Moodie, 2013).

7.3 Case study: the Former Vice-Chancellor

I have held senior leadership positions at four institutions at different stages of development that all had different leadership needs at the time. The first strategic planning exercise I can remember well was in my capacity as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the regional university. It was a small institution with few resources so we had to decide what we were going to be good at and not assume that we could be good at everything. This is the motivation behind the whole concept of good strategic planning as it helps you make the choices you have to make to prioritise your resources. We developed a Strategic Plan that was based around a small number of areas of strength and invested in these groups of people. We were putting our energy between youth and vitality, behind people whom we thought would make a difference to their field of research and to the region. At the time, stakeholder involvement was also very important as the institution was small and we were trying to build capacity. We didn’t stop other people doing what they wanted,
but we focused our energies behind five or six sizeable areas. Then as that built confidence we could go out to the external stakeholders and show them something very good.

At large institutions, or even small institutions, you can’t write a Strategic Plan that includes every individual point of view. The first Strategic Plan we developed at this university was initially drafted by me, and maybe one other colleague, or a small number of colleagues, but we kept sending it out for discussion and debate. We took it to focus groups and did all the things that you would normally do, but I can’t say I spoke to every member of staff. I invited feedback and the Plan changed shape in response. Was it top-down, bottom up or collegial? Well, most people who were involved would probably have a different view. I don’t think senior players should stand back for fear of being labelled top-down people. You get into leadership positions to lead and that means that some of what you have to do is top-down. The real question is: how do you negotiate, discuss, debate, and evolve broad agreement? Equally, if you don’t have some idea of where you need to go, then you will get nowhere. I would say that it was a collegial process driven from the top. The decisions were not made by me alone but ultimately the responsibility was mine. I worked with people who knew a lot more about their field than I did, so I needed their input. Over the years I have accumulated enough confidence to admit when I am wrong and seek advice when I need it. During this strategic planning process we were not as engaged with the external stakeholders, as I didn’t think we needed to be. This university has very good reputation but even so it had to change so that it could fit into the contemporary world, as the world it had come from was never going to be replicated. We changed the internal structure because we needed to and it did not make front page news. I am very proud of that as I have always wanted to be judged on outcomes. It was the same at the regional university – it was the outcomes that were important.

Looking at a quote from the Hoare Committee (1995) ...“Over recent years our universities have made progress toward more contemporary management practices, largely through the development of strategic planning and a focus on improving quality. However, this progress has not been even". I would agree with this statement as I witnessed this as part of my work. I would say that the institutions that were the most advanced in terms of strategic planning were the old institutes but even there it was patchy. Strategic planning capability depends on the personality and leadership attributes of the person at the top, so you could say it is still patchy as we all take different approaches. When I was leading the development of the last Strategic Plan here a few years ago, we made a firm resolution to put a Strategic Plan in place that was essentially an umbrella statement about values and what we stood for. We then let the various units of the university develop their own plans that were aligned with these values and asked them to put metrics against the strategic objectives. My role, as I saw it, was then to challenge the assumptions that underpinned the unit plans. Were the targets stretch or aspirational enough? Were they trying hard enough? We set ourselves fairly sizeable, aspirational objectives but we tried to do it within a value set that would drive the whole university. Culture is and always was very important to the strategic planning process. As a general rule you could say that some of the plans that came out of the Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology were qualitatively quite different from the plans that were coming out of the universities where the culture was different.
That may have led to some of the patchiness that Hoare was referring to. Some of the older universities had dynamic, tough leadership. These people realised that you could not plan sensibly in the absence of a comprehensive planning model as we don’t get enough money to do everything we could do. You need to make choices all the time; we get partially funded for teaching and partially funded for research. The more successful you are at research, the more it costs because the grants are not fully funded and you have to take money from somewhere else to cover these additional costs, to fund the salaries and provide the infrastructure.

However, the real conflict with local strategic planning is that if you make it too rigid you can easily get out of step with plans that are being developed in agencies that impinge on your activities. It would only be possible to deliver 100% against the Strategic Plan if you had total control over everything and we don’t. For example, if the ARC chose today not to fund Atomic Physics and we have decided that Atomic Physics is a priority for us - who wins? Then again if you try to filter the grant applications and say no we will not let you put in a research grant to study Archimedes because that is not our priority then you will have a different fight on your hands. But if you don’t filter in the beginning, what do you do if they win the grant but in the meantime you have taken the Greek reference material out of the Library? So, there is continual conflict between the processes which has had an impact on us all and it has been significant.

There is always going to be a tricky balance between obtrusiveness and accountability. I believe in accountability with minimal obtrusiveness. I believe in accountability because I think the public has a right to know that we aren’t wasting their money. They might not understand what we do, they might not even care, but they have a right to know that we are not wasting money and this has got to be through government processes. This brings us back to the leadership question. So how do you get actual, real, quality improvement in the sector? Not by bringing the best down to the average. It is better to let the best be the best that they can be, so that they draw the rest up. Somehow you have got to work out a system that enables that to happen. And you have to have strong leadership. There can be consultation, but the strategy has got to be beyond a rhetorical commitment to quality and excellence. The strategy has to be the driver so that you can take the people along with you. AUQA didn’t achieve this and TEQSA may not either. I think AUQA in many ways was a cop out, because they measured what can be measured and drew inferences from that. What you need to ask “how good are you and how do you know?” This is not something that can be answered easily and I suspect the reality is that we don’t want to ask these difficult questions, because it will show that there are large discrepancies between the levels of achievements of graduates across the sector. For example, this university has good links with universities in other States so that people can study locally and get full credit for that when they come to this university. We offer some things those institutions can’t offer and they offer other things we don’t, so it is a good two-way flow. So if you can get organised properly you don’t have to close departments down, just recognise that you can study some things locally but if you want to do certain disciplines at a higher level, then you might need to go somewhere else, and the system should support that.
The former Vice-Chancellor has years of experience leading strategic planning as a Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at four Australian universities. At the time the interview was held, he was Vice-Chancellor of a research-intensive university. Although he holds responsibility for all the academic and operational activities of the university, it is scholarly research that provides the point of differentiation in his approach to strategic planning. Creating a university environment that increases research intensity and academic excellence is his leadership objective. Demonstrating a very clear understanding of the basics of rational or utilitarian strategic planning, the Former Vice-Chancellor clearly demonstrates the intelligence, cognitive ability and strategic intuition to appreciate that different contexts require tailored strategic planning approaches.

One of the first strategic plans he developed was at a small regional university that was building its reputation and research capability with limited resources. In response, he developed a strategic resourcing plan that directed resources towards small concentrations of research strength, and admits that conscious strategic resourcing decisions were made to invest in youth and vitality “behind people whom we thought would make a difference to their field of research and to the region”. The focus of this strategic planning process was also regional. Although the university had finite financial resources, there were several external resource rich organisations in the region that could help the university leverage its research improvement agenda, partnerships which the Former Vice-Chancellor pursued. In this planning context, the former Vice-Chancellor looked outwards to plan strategically for the university, as the university itself did not have sufficient resources to develop a comprehensive plan that assumed “we could be good at everything”.

The first strategic planning process led by the Former Vice-Chancellor at his current university also followed the rational or utilitarian format consistent with the Planning School in Mintzberg’s Ten Schools of Strategy Formation (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999). He admits that he wrote the first draft of the plan himself with one or two colleagues and that the draft plan was then discussed at focus groups and the shape of the plan modified as a result of the feedback received. He argues that he did not engage with external stakeholders during this strategic planning process as the university had a very good reputation therefore he felt he “didn’t need to”.

151 | Chapter 7 The Vice-Chancellors
The Former Vice-Chancellor’s approach to consultation differs from that of the Vice-Chancellor, as he admits that he did not feel the need to speak to every member of staff. “You get into leadership positions to lead and that means that some of what you have to do is top-down. The real question is: how do you negotiate, discuss, debate, and evolve broad agreement? Equally, if you don’t have some idea of where you need to go, then you will get nowhere”, a characteristic of effective leadership that is consistent with the literature (see for example Kotter, 1988, 1990, 1996). He also exhibits characteristics of the Entrepreneurial School of Strategy Formation, whereby strategy is formulated by the visionary capabilities of the chief executive (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p.22-23). During the last strategic planning process he led as Vice-Chancellor, the Former Vice-Chancellor, assumed a high level ‘strategic’ perspective, developing what he termed a strategic “umbrella statement”, which was a brief outline of the strategic vision and the key strategic goals or objectives. The organisational units of the university were then tasked to develop cascading sub-plans that supported the high level strategic vision.

He describes his role in the strategic planning process was then to challenge the assumptions that underpinned the Faculty and operational plans, asking his direct reports to consider if the strategic targets they set for their organisational areas were “aspirational enough?” This offers a practical example of Keller’s (1983) recommendation that strategic planning in academic institutions should be comprised of a “central strategy” (p.140) that promotes innovation, flexibility and creativity so that the institution can move forward using a multiple path framework.

The leadership style described by the Former Vice-Chancellor, like the Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, is the directing leadership style outlined in the SLII model (Blanchard et al., 1985). The Former Vice-Chancellor’s case study also provides insights into one individual’s life-long strategic planning learning experience. He learned, through experience, to change his strategic planning approach to suit different university contexts, while maintaining research and academic excellence as his strategic planning focus. He also admits that he engages strategically with colleagues when he is looking for additional input and knows he could benefit from their expertise.
As he holds the highest level of positional leadership authority in the university, the Former Vice-Chancellor understands that he is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the university and achieving excellence across all its endeavours. However, he achieves this with a scholarly, not an operational or financial, leadership focus, implying in his case study that he inspires the academic community by positioning research excellence as the key institutional performance improvement indicator. The implication being that ‘scholars’ will be motivated to achieve and maintain academic excellence, particularly in research outcomes in research intensive universities. This is consistent with Shattock’s (2010) premise that effective university leaders will create an environment which “emphasizes the prime characteristics of the good research environment … stimulates research activity, creativity and innovation within the academic community” (p.113).

The case studies of the Former Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor also illustrate qualities of ‘turnaround leadership’ developed by Fullan and Scott (2009) which is concerned with “listening, linking, and leading (in that order) and about modelling, teaching and learning” The authors argue that these leadership qualities are “corroborated in the best research on leadership on leadership, and they have been exemplified over the years by leaders who create processes that reconcile seemingly impossible divisions, thereby creating new higher grounds of unity and prosperity” (p.97). In the university profile presented in the Former Vice-Chancellor’s case study, it is the values of scholarly research that transcend day-to-day activities providing a unifying sense of purpose (see for example Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1991, p.34) throughout the university.

Mintzberg (2004) argues that effective forms of leadership inspire others to make the right decisions, thereby releasing and dispersing the positive energy that exists naturally within people (p.143) throughout the organisation. This shares similarities with Bass and Avolio’s (1990) transformational leadership which they argue is the most effective form of leadership, as it inspires individuals to perform beyond expectations. The qualities inherent in Bass and Avolio’s transformational leadership comprises: “(a) attributed idealized influence (attributed charisma), (b) behavioural idealized influence (behavioural charisma), (c) inspirational motivation, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) individualised consideration” (cited Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, p.52).
The Former Vice-Chancellor’s case study contains elements from both of these effective leadership typologies. Although it is not possible to disclose identifying performance outcomes of the university, as this would compromise the Former Vice-Chancellor’s anonymity, this university was one of the top performing universities in Australia under the leadership of the Former Vice-Chancellor.

Successful universities are successful primarily because of their teaching and research, not because of their management, but good management, including good leadership, can over time provide the conditions in which teaching and research can flourish, just as, more usually, poor management can undermine teaching and research and precipitate institutional decline (Shattock, 2010, p.1).

7.4 Case study: the Emeritus Professor

I started off as a policy advisor, then a teacher, then I became a Dean and from there through to a Vice-Chancellor eventually, so it was a fairly conventional path. But simultaneously with that, I always had roles in Advisory and Statutory Bodies at both State and Commonwealth level and have been involved in the sector for a long time in schools, VET and higher education. I can recall the first major strategic planning process I was involved in as I was the instigator. This was in the mid-1980s. We produced a formal plan, a published document that was ratified by the College Council. The College had endured many amalgamations driven out of financial necessity so we were trying to get some agreement about the strategic direction. I knew we had to rationalise because we didn’t have enough money to keep doing all the things we were doing, and the planning process helped guide our thinking through these issues. As a Dean I had always been quite agitated by arguments for maintaining the status quo in situations where it was clear that this was not sustainable with quality.

By the time we undertook the merger that provided university status we had already established a strong internal planning process. I took on the most senior planning position in the new university and basically wrote the first Strategic Plan with the Deputy Principal of the other amalgamating institution. This really was a continuation of the work we had done the previous year to produce a Research Management Plan for the new university a year before it was formed! The Research Plan had been approved by the Academic Boards of the two amalgamating institutions and helped us to establish the research strategy we needed for the new university. The Strategic Plan was performance based and made it clear that we would focus on industry-focused or applied research, and that we would work in research concentrations.
It also incorporated the key commonalities of the former institutions: both had strong relationships with the professions and industry that were reflected in the professional education offerings; and secondly, it recognised the failure of the sector to look after marginalised groups of people, so it had an equity dimension. We saw the Strategic Plan as not just saying what we will do, but also what we won’t do. It was consultative in the sense that it was a fairly standard process: the establishment of a remit to develop a Strategic Plan; the release of a discussion paper about the issues we needed to focus on, together with a vision and aims. It went out for consultation and was discussed at campus wide meetings. We also had meetings with external stakeholders, with industry partners, various professional bodies and our advisory committees, so it was a pretty conventional planning process. The Plan was then considered at Academic Board and Council and it modified over that period. At the time, it was very, very popular I think because it was a clear process when almost everything else was in chaos. The Plan was published and the new Council seized on it and used it very strongly. It was institution-wide; academic and operational; high-level and detailed.

I have since changed my views and think now that it was far too detailed. But when we started implementing the Plan it lost some of its popularity as people were not happy when we started to change things. They didn’t initially think it would have any impact on their lives — but it did. I was involved with the Wilson Quality Committee institutional audits and observed some very good planning processes underway in the sector at the time. I actually took some of the best ideas back to my university and led a major reshaping of the Strategic Plan in the late 1990s. The process wasn’t much different, except that we included some scenario planning supported by an Environmental Scan which looked not just at the higher education sector but more broadly across all the sectors. We conducted a review of the Strategic Plan and updated the Environmental Scan each year and this formed part of the annual planning process.

We knew that the Strategic Plan couldn’t be a static document and that it needed to be constantly recalibrated and reshaped as things changed. We introduced an annual planning retreat with the senior researchers, the Deans, the Heads of School, the senior management group, the Directors, we always had senior general staff there too so there was about 70 people. We would produce a series of issue papers - this is quite a common model now – which informed our thinking about the decisions we had to make in terms of long term planning. We also did performance reviews and an annual review of the university. The senior management group had to review every large academic and administrative unit they were responsible for, assess performance against their operational plan from the previous year and then we would quite often produce something which came out in the end, although not initially, with the budget. It was comprehensive and each September we had a new Plan with a 3 year outlook and larger 10 to 15 year vision. We found that we needed to move to a 10 to 15 year vision with a 3-5 year planning horizon for capital and sometimes that was connected to new academic developments. There was also a detailed one year plan connected to the budget.
Most people agreed with it as they knew that we were not rich so we had to be guided by evidenced-based and performance-based planning. I think it was successful largely because of a combination of determination, which you need to have, and also because I knew we were never going to get everyone to agree on everything so we needed a legitimate planning process so that we could make informed decisions. Some people may not have liked what I said but they had to accept the power of the argument in the documents. Many of the more intelligent people saw that this would actually provide people who wanted to go with a way to leave. We remained in a very difficult financial situation for years but the planning process allowed us to stop doing some things that we shouldn’t have been doing anyway. Towards the end of my appointment we were planning quite differently. We had a high level statement, because I think that is important. It was a statement of a shared purpose and we spent a lot of time trying to think of adjectives that described us like ‘applied’ because we felt that the language mattered. We would then form an underlying broad vision for the university and move fairly rapidly to implementation depending on the organisational structure in place. Structures are important but I don’t think there is any right structure for a particular organisation; it depends on how you are positioned at a particular time and what you want to do.

Flat structures suited me because I could make an individual responsible for every cost centre and also make all the major decisions with my direct reports. We had very strong data which informed the planning process. We also reviewed the planning process itself each year and made changes to ensure it remained effective. The worry from year to year was that there might have been a gap between the formal Plan and the actual operations of the university as sometimes these two things would drift. I also changed the heads of the administrative units and employed young qualified people who had experience in performance-based management who could work collaboratively with others. This was very successful and I think one of our greatest strengths in the latter period. These were the leadership skills I needed in my senior management group and as a result they were able to successfully lead change in their units and work together to consolidate change throughout the institution.

Yes, organisational culture plays an important role in the process. For example most of the ATN universities are quite strongly planned institutions, I think because they have always been run as a sort of business, which is not necessarily the case with the Go8. It is easier to plan in an institution that sees itself as businesslike, particularly if the most senior people are themselves bound to the various activities through a proper planning and decision making process. This is central to my understanding of leadership: developing strategy and exercising judgement, and the judgement must always be connected to your overall understanding of the strategy. Most problems I have seen during my long career have come about because someone has avoided making a decision when they needed to and just let the institution or area drift aimlessly along. I honestly think you are better to make few wrong decisions than not to make any at all.
Centralised strategic planning has had a significant impact on the organisational dynamics of Australian universities. This is what it is designed to do. It was hard for universities initially because they had never really had to work as a whole institution and agree on a shared vision. When it worked it was good; but if it didn’t work, it had a negative effect on innovation. It also required a different decision making pathway in universities as Academic Boards were not always helpful in this regard. So universities designed processes to go around Academic Board because they really had to. I don’t think there is one right way to plan strategically. The approach you take needs to be crafted to fit the culture of the organisation, and be designed to ensure the right decisions are made so that you can meet the challenges faced at that particular time. This is the great challenge of strategic planning and also of leadership.

The Emeritus Professor is another participant with years of experience leading strategic planning in Australian universities. She focuses her strategic planning recollections on senior roles at two former employer institutions: a College of Advanced Education in the pre-Dawkins period and a new post-Dawkins amalgamated university.

The Emeritus Professor approaches strategic planning within the Positioning School of Strategy Formation which develops strategy from analytical processes (1999, p.22). She assumes a directive leadership style outlined in the SLII model (Blanchard et al., 1985), like the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and the Former Vice-Chancellor. She also exhibits elements from both the Entrepreneurial School of Strategy Formation as she envisions a more competitive and resourceful future for the university, and the Configuration School which is an integrative approach to strategy development that seeks to reconfigure the characteristics and behaviours of the organisation through the practice of transformation (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p.25).

In her case study, the Emeritus Professor demonstrates clearly that she has the leadership skills required to adapt her strategic planning approach to address specific university challenges, while remaining focused on dealing with the challenges posed by the institutional strategic planning context. Her key strategic planning challenge was to improve the financial circumstances of her post-Dawkins amalgamated university, and developing it strategically so that it is competitive and well positioned within the Australian university sector.
The Emeritus Professor admits that she led the first strategic planning process she was involved in as its primary instigator. This was in the mid-1980s when she held a senior leadership position at a College of Advanced Education. She explains that the College “had endured many amalgamations driven out of financial necessity so we were trying to get some agreement about the direction. I knew we had to rationalise because we didn’t have enough money to keep doing all the things we were doing and the planning process helped guide our thinking through these issues”. The resulting Strategic Plan was published and approved by the College Council, therefore it had all the characteristics of a formal, traditional, contemporary Strategic Plan.

This sets the Emeritus Professor’s case study apart from other participants in this study, as it demonstrates that she was leading strategic planning using the rational strategic planning approach in the mid-1980s before the Dawkins Reforms were introduced. She admitted during the interview that she sourced literature on strategic planning, probably from the North American Business Schools, found it extremely interesting and decided to incorporate these ideas in her leadership practice. It also places the Emeritus Professor within a small cohort of early strategic planning practitioners in the Australian higher education sector, and positions her as a contemporary of the strategic planning team that launched the earliest Australian university Strategic Plan so far located, *Looking to the Future: The Strategic Plan for the University of Melbourne* (1988) discussed in Chapter 2 (pp.30-31).

In order to prepare for the amalgamation of the College and the Institute, the Emeritus Professor initiated the development of a dual-institution Research Plan, to lay the foundations for a university-wide research strategy when the College and Institute achieved amalgamated university status within the new Unified National System. At the time of the Dawkins Reforms, non-university tertiary educational institutions conducted very little research. The small amount of research produced was primarily applied or industrial, which was in some respects considered to be inferior to the pure, basic and scientific research generated by universities. This is confirmed by the Professor of Industrial Relations who refers to this as “the Dawkins ‘strategic shift’” (p.110) and the Professor of Education who recalled that the “research culture was also uneven as not everyone was actively engaged in
research in those days” (p.105). However, the Dawkins White Paper provided a very clear directive to all Australian universities on the new research agenda, stating as follows:

A substantial part of the institutional research provision will continue to be funded through operating grants […] which will be allocated on the basis of an educational profile agreed between the Commonwealth and the institution. In the longer term, research performance, along with other aspects of educational performance, will be taken into consideration in funding higher education institutions. The Government expects institutions to allocate research funding provided through operating grants on the basis of a research management plan, in which excellence and concentration of resources to best effect must be a high priority. The Government will seek details of research management plans through educational profiles” (p.93).

The Emeritus Professor adopted the rational strategic planning approach, consistent with Mintzberg and Lampel’s Planning School (1999, p.22; 2000, pp.1-4) of Strategy Formation like most of the participants in this study. The strategic planning process she describes in her case study is extensively evidence-based, as both amalgamating institutions had good data that the Emeritus Professor was able to use to develop academic performance metrics to inform the strategic investment strategy. Therefore, she also shares characteristics with the Positioning School of Strategy Formation which relies on analytical processes. As she explains “The Strategic Plan was performance based and made it clear that we would focus on industry-focused or applied research, and that we would work in research concentrations”.

Other elements that set this late 1980s university-wide strategic planning process apart from other contemporary planning processes in the sector, was that it incorporated the key organisational strengths of the two former amalgamating institutions and included an equity dimension. The financial resources were limited, therefore a strategic resourcing decision was made to fund research concentrations in areas of applied and industry-relevant research, a decision that the Former Vice-Chancellor also made when he was developing a Strategic Plan at the regional university. The Emeritus Professor recalls that the dual-institution Research Plan was well received by the Academic Boards of the two amalgamating institutions, and, as a result she was appointed to the most senior planning position in the new university where she led the development of the first Strategic Plan in the new post-Dawkins university. The university-wide planning process the Emeritus Professor describes
in her case study is comprehensive, consultative and managerial. The consultation phase commenced with the release of a discussion paper that outlined the key challenges and the proposed strategic shift in direction. The discussion paper provided a discussion framework for the consultation sessions, and feedback was incorporated into the first draft of the Plan. The draft plan was then considered by Academic Board and Council and modified over that period. She admits that the final Strategic Plan was very detailed and although it was initially well received, people became concerned when it started to have an impact on their activities. “They didn’t initially think it would have any impact on their lives – but it did”.

The Emeritus Professor was a member of the Wilson Committee during the 1980s which provided her with an opportunity to witness strategic leaders in action in a range of institutions and planning contexts. She admits that she took these ideas back to her institution and refreshed the Strategic Plan in the 1990s outlining the most comprehensive strategic planning process presented in this study that includes: the distribution of issue papers, annual planning retreats, an environmental scan of competitors, and an annual review of progress of the current Strategic Plan which resulted in the Strategic Plan being recalibrated on an annual basis. This approach remains consistent with the Positioning Model of Strategy Formation as it is informed by data and assumes an analytical view of the process (1999, p.22; 2000, p.3).

The Strategic Plan was also developed in an environment of financial constraint, a consistent theme at the Emeritus Professor’s employer universities. She knew that difficult resourcing decisions would have to be made that would not be popular with some of the constituent parts of the university. Her approach to mitigating potential organisational tensions was to establish a very comprehensive, consultative planning process, supported by performance data, to both legitimate the process and persuade people with the power of the argument put forward in the documents. She assumed a directive leadership style that delivered the three leadership outcomes recently proposed by Drath et al. (2008): to set the direction through collective agreement on the strategic goals, aims and mission; internal alignment which coordinates activities into a cohesive collective; and generate commitment so that individual interests are subsumed into collective.
The Emeritus Professor concedes that towards the end of her appointment as Vice-Chancellor she was planning differently. Like the Former Vice-Chancellor presented in the previous section, she led the development of a high level strategic statement that set the strategic direction for the cascading operational plans that would be developed by her direct and indirect reports. As she had also restructured the lines of authority to install a flat organisational structure, and replaced the administrative heads with young professionals who were experienced in performance based management environments, she was able to expedite the strategic planning, decision making and implementation process. She conceded that the lines of authority had to be changed to by-pass Academic Board arguing that “Academic Boards were not always helpful in this regard. So universities designed processes to go around Academic Board because they really had to”.

All three Vice-Chancellors presented in this cluster exhibit the characteristics of a *directing* leadership style outlined in the SLII model (Blanchard et al., 1985) while addressing a range of institutional challenges in very different university environments. As Keller (1983) argues, the strategic planning starting point should be “self-consciousness for the organization. It is knowing the place for the first time, understanding what business you are in, or want to be in, and deciding what is central for the health, growth and quality of the organisation” (pp.75-76).

The three Vice-Chancellors are aware that their leadership responsibility is to ensure organisational sustainability through the reduction of costs, leading improvements in the quality of products and services, identifying new opportunities for growth, and delivering an increase in productivity (Kotter, 1996, p.3). However, although there are patterns of consistency in the some of the strategic planning outcomes of the universities, the three Vice-Chancellors led strategic planning using three different approaches that had been tailored to address organisational weaknesses, or take advantage of the organisational strengths, to position their universities on a competitive basis within the Australian higher education sector. These three strategic planning approaches, the political, the scholarly and the managerial approach to leading strategic planning, inform the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning that will be presented in Chapter 8, the Findings (p.169).
The ways in which the role of the Australian Vice-Chancellor has changed since the implementation of the Dawkins Reforms is clearly illustrated in the case studies presented in the Vice-Chancellors cluster. As the Vice-Chancellors themselves indicate, the role became less collegial and more of a central strategic leadership role than it was for the pre-Dawkins ‘traditional’ Vice-Chancellor described by the Professor of Education in Chapter 5 (pp.105-108). This change in the role of Australian Vice-Chancellors has had a significant impact on the way leadership practice was exercised, on the internal authority structures, and the level of collaboration achieved between the executive and academics during the strategic planning cycle as Chapter 8, the Findings, will demonstrate. As the data presented in this study was collected using the historical paradigm, the case studies offer unique insights into the introduction and implementation of strategic planning in Australia universities over the last twenty-six years, leading to an organisational transformation, to a greater or lesser extent, of all Australian universities into ‘neoliberal’ or ‘enterprise universities’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000). An analysis of the data presented in the case studies also confirms that leadership played a key role in this transformation process.

The themes emerging from the case studies presented in this cluster suggests a connection between the individual approach to leading strategic planning adopted by the Vice-Chancellors, their leadership points of reference and their understanding of the challenges faced by the university that, in their view, required strategic transformation. The Vice-Chancellor and the Emeritus Professor exhibit a New Public Management (NPM) approach, however, the Vice-Chancellor’s NPM emphasis is political, whereas the Emeritus Professor’s NPM emphasis is more managerial. The impact the NPM agenda had on the management and governance of Australian universities has been discussed previously in this thesis and covered in the literature (see for example de Boer et al., 2007; de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Meek, 2003) so further discussion is not warranted. The Former Vice-Chancellor’s case study, however, illustrates an approach quite different from that of the Vice-Chancellor and the Emeritus Professor. The Former Vice-Chancellor describes an academic-scholar approach to leading strategic planning, although he too is a strong, central, strategic leader.
The study provides data to address a challenge posed by Sharrock (2012) who calls for researchers to provide examples of what strategic planning ‘looks like’ and what individuals leading strategic planning ‘actually do’ (pp.324-325). However, the range of approaches and emphases described by the Vice-Chancellors and the other participants in this study, indicates that there is no single strategic planning approach that is applicable to all situations and contexts in Australian universities.

The study has now come full circle. The strategic planning environment dominated by modern management processes described in the Emeritus Professor’s case study in the years immediately preceding her retirement, bears little resemblance to the collegial planning environment that was characteristic of the more traditional academic university portrayed in the Professor of Education’s case study presented in the Participant Observer’s cluster.

The data also provide evidence to support the four management agendas proposed by Sharrock (2012) that presupposes that managerial leaders in Australian universities attend to four key management agendas individually and collectively: programmes, people, systems and strategy (p.325). Further, the study supports the view put forward by Sharrock (2012) in which he states that the complexity and the communication challenges faced by Vice-Chancellors “makes questions of strategy in a mixed economy academic enterprise at once so important, so complex and so difficult to devise and communicate” (p.325)

The next chapter, Chapter 8, the Findings, will present a conceptual framework of strategic planning developed from an analysis of the data collected in this study (p.169). This framework is referenced against the four competing management agendas proposed by Sharrock (2012) as well as the competing values model of leadership proposed by Quinn (1990). The next chapter will also provide a more detailed discussion of the clusters that will also be referenced to the Sharrock (2012) and Quinn (1990) frameworks, and conclude with a discussion of the research questions.
CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS

8.1 A conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities

The aim of this study was to document the experiences of a small cohort of senior executive and academic staff in Australian universities, so as to improve our understanding of why and how strategic planning was introduced to the Australian university sector, examine the organisational impact this had and provide an opportunity for the study participants to suggest changes for future practice.

In order to analyse the case studies, the data provided by the study participants was referenced against the managerial leadership frameworks developed by Quinn (1990) and Sharrock (2012), and in so doing, a conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities emerged from the data. These managerial leadership frameworks will be briefly outlined below so that the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities, introduced in Figure 7 (p.169) can be understood in context. In effect, this thesis is focused on one part of the overall management framework presented by Sharrock (2012) and Quinn (1990), which is the strategic planning dimension. However, it is impossible to examine this without taking into account the other elements on leadership in their models and in other models of leadership.

Sharrock’s (2012) analysis of the mission statements published by Australian universities identified four distinct managerial leadership domains that encompass: programmes, people, systems and strategy (2012, p.325). He used this data to develop a framework for identifying the competing management agendas in modern, complex, mixed economy universities, suggesting that effective managers in Australian academic institutions must continually reconcile tensions arising from these competing and contrasting managerial domains.

Sharrock’s framework proposes four priority strategic management zones: the Professional Community (PC), the Creative Engagement (CE), the Sustainable Enterprise (SE) and the System Integrity (SI) zone that he terms ‘typical’ agendas for effective university management (2012, pp.326-327).
The rapid evolution of Australian universities from publically funded, domestically focused, small-scale universities to mixed-economy, large-scale, globally orientated institutions, Sharrock argues, complicated the management responsibilities borne by institutional leaders. In order to bring clarity to the process, he developed the four archetypes of ‘good management’ for academic enterprises that delineates and contrasts the often contradictory dimensions of strategic management that must be constantly navigated by senior managers (p.331). For example, in order to be responsive to the demands of the ‘Professional Community’ zone, leaders in Australian academic enterprises must be ‘collegial’, which means that their management practice must be consistent with the shared aims, values and expertise of the academic community. The ‘Creative Engagement’ zone requires leaders to be ‘engaged’ to enable innovation, external collaboration and stimulate institutional initiative.

Figure 5 Four archetypes of ‘good management’ for academic enterprises (reproduced from Sharrock, 2012, p.331)

Managing functions within the ‘Sustainable Enterprise’ zone requires leaders to be ‘strategic’, to develop a sustainable outlook, strategic priorities, and pursue opportunities while identifying and avoiding risks. In the ‘System Integrity’ zone, managers must be ‘systematic’ in their implementation of robust systems, policies, monitoring of programs and budgets (2012, pp.326-332). He also proposes that these management priority zones are complicated by two competing axes that layer the zones with additional complexity: an
outward looking perspective that relies on management flexibility and an inward looking perspective that ensures organisational stability.

Sharrock’s four archetypes of ‘good management’ for academic enterprises acknowledges that there are significant structural tensions between the four priority management zones, which are further complicated by the push and pull factors generated by the competing pressures to seek external opportunities and manage complex, operational activities. Each zone therefore demands a different management focus and outlook, thereby requiring leaders to lead and manage in different ways depending on the task and community expectations.

Quinn et al. (1990) decades earlier also sought to make the “complex nature of managerial work very clear” (p.vi). The authors synthesised several theoretical perspectives to suggest four management models: Rational Goal, Internal Process, Human Relations and Open Systems (p.11) which bear strong similarities to Sharrock’s priority zones (2012). The authors also identified eight leadership roles categorised as the Director, the Producer, the Co-ordinator, the Monitor, the Mentor, the Facilitator, the Innovator and the Broker (Quinn et al., 1990, pp.15-19), arguing that these roles should not be considered independent constructs, but competing domains in a larger, complex, dynamic model of management. Terming their framework the ‘competing values framework’ (p.11) the authors propose that effective managerial leadership requires individuals to have the skills and competencies to assume the different roles in the competing values framework, as required, to meet the needs of their subordinates and the organisation.

As organisations are dynamic and complex, managerial leadership exercised at the ‘master’ level requires individuals to deal effectively with ambiguity, change and multiple contradictions, to be able to resolve tensions, negotiate trade-offs within an environment where there are no ‘right’ answers and multiple possible actions (1990, p.320). Therefore, ‘master’ managerial leaders must have the skills to assume all eight roles, at least at a level of competency, and be able to balance and blend the competing tensions within the roles so that they can be applied in an appropriate and effective way (Quinn et al., 1990, p.316) to meet the challenges of a constantly changing, dynamic operating environment.
In order to test the results of his later study, Sharrock (2012) compared his four archetypes of ‘good management’ for academic enterprises against the master management framework developed by Quinn et al. (1990) to test the idea that the “multi-polar disorder” inherent in the pluralist make-up of universities, set managers the impossible task of being all things to all people” (2012, p.331). Sharrock commenced this process by condensing and pairing Quinn’s eight managerial leadership roles to provide four dual management roles: the Director & Producer, the Innovator & Broker, the Mentor & Facilitator, and the Monitor & Coordinator. He then superimposed these paired roles over his four archetypes of ‘good management’ for academic enterprises, finding that Quinn et al.’s Director & Producer bore similarities to his Sustainable Enterprise management zone; Quinn et al.’s Innovator & Broker to his Creative Engagement zone; Quinn at al.’s Mentor & Facilitator role to his Professional Community zone; and Quinn’s Monitor & Co-ordinator to his System Integrity zone. In so doing, Sharrock (2012) presents a dual managerial leadership framework that demonstrates a strong congruence of results, as Figure 6 demonstrates:

Figure 6 Quinn’s eight management roles, adapted for a mixed economy university to illustrate the congruence of Quinn's eight management roles and Sharrock's four management agendas for Australian universities (reproduced Sharrock, 2012, p.333).
Both these managerial leadership frameworks presuppose that although each management agenda and leadership role are individually important, none are sufficient in isolation. Sharrock argues therefore that managers in Australian academic enterprises must constantly traverse these four management zones and reconcile the competing managing agendas to be effective. “Since they inhabit an inherently, contradictory space, university managers will thus always be open to criticism and at risk of stalemate whenever the differing aims, values and interests of different constituencies intersect” (Sharrock, 2012, p.332).

Arguing that it is difficult for one individual to develop these multiple competencies, so as to guarantee effective managerial leadership in all situations, he references an earlier study that proposed good institutional leadership consists of a “portfolio” of roles and tasks performed by groups (Sharrock & Davis, 2009). Quinn et al. (1990) on the other hand, contend that it is possible for an individual to learn how to be a master managerial leader, outlining a competency framework and learning program for aspiring managerial leaders in their instructive text.

The approaches to leading strategic planning described by the participants in this study, evidence that the approach adopted was influenced by the individual’s view of the model of strategic planning proposed in the Dawkins Reforms and those published in the strategic planning literature, by their disciplinary background, by their philosophical view of modern management principles and their commitment to the collegial values of the organisation. The study participants provide an array of examples of attempts to blend and balance the competing management domains and organisational tensions in their own leadership practice, or in the leadership practice of others, which will be discussed later in this Chapter.

The Vice-Chancellors and the Academic Leaders demonstrate how they led strategic planning in ways that attempted to reconcile the competing tensions inherent in the Professional Community zone in which ‘collegial’ values are critical, the ‘Mentor & Facilitator role’ that requires managerial leaders to be inclusive, caring, keeping groups informed, involved and in tune, with those in the Sustainable Enterprise archetype of good management in which the role of the ‘Producer & Director’ is to be task-focused, decisive, cost-effective and able to define goals, priorities, roles and resources (Sharrock, 2012; Quinn, 1990). Although some of the participants did not lead strategic planning from a
position of executive authority, the data from their case studies also supports the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities, which proposes three primary leading strategic planning approaches: the academic-political, the academic-scholar, the academic-management, plus a blended approach. The blended approach, is an individualised approach used by the study participants to address specific organisational concerns and reconcile tensions inherent in the strategic planning environment.

The framework is situationally contingent. The three dimensions of leading strategic planning presented in this framework are all prefaced with the term ‘academic’, to emphasise the specificity of the framework to academic environments in Australian universities.

**Figure 7: A framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities**

1. The *academic-political* approach to leading strategic planning

The strategic leadership approach described by the Vice-Chancellor utilises power, persuasion and influence and is therefore indicative of an *academic-political* approach to strategic planning. Although he was also an experienced administrator and manager, and utilised several elements of the *academic-management* approach in his leadership style, the Vice-Chancellor led strategic planning by extensive negotiation with the university community and by exposing and resolving issues of discontent, which is consistent with the Power School, a process of negotiation, from the Ten Schools of Strategy Formation (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p.25). It was therefore, primarily a political approach.

All the participants illustrate aspects of the *academic-political* approach in their case studies, as an essential component of effective leadership is knowing how to drive strategic change.
in a range of organisational environments. This comes through strongly in the Emeritus Professor’s case study which will be discussed in the academic-management approach, and to a lesser extent in the case study presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s approach is primarily scholarly. However he also demonstrates a keen appreciation for the political tensions inherent in the strategic planning environment and changes his approach to identify these tensions early in the process so that they can be addressed. “You must be able to connect with your colleagues because dissenters can undermine you easily in universities as they have enormous personal autonomy” (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, p.137). Because the Former Vice-Chancellor was a high-profile scholar and leader within the Australian university sector, he held the view that he had sufficient personal and institutional power to transcend the political dimensions of strategic planning at his university, which allowed him to lead primarily from an academic-scholar approach.

The consequences that can arise from leading strategic planning with a single planning approach, particularly an academic-political approach, are illustrated in the Professor of Education’s and the Professor of Higher Education’s case studies. Both these case studies describe how traditional academics and the Academic Board were excluded from active involvement in strategic and financial planning, by politically-motivated changes to the strategic planning development process, and review and approval pathways at their employer universities. The politics of discrimination is also revealed in the Professor of Industrial Relations’ case study which marginalised her, and thousands of senior female colleagues, from executive leadership positions.

2. The academic-scholar approach to leading strategic planning

The Former Vice-Chancellor’s case study indicates a primarily academic-scholar approach to leading strategic planning. He led as an authoritative scholar with a focus on the pursuit of scholastic excellence. This kept him closely aligned with the professoriate, thus satisfying aspects of the collegial values implied in the Professional Community zone (Sharrock, 2012) and Mentor & Facilitator (Quinn et al., 1990) roles, although he admits he was not broadly collaborative in his approach to leading strategic planning.
The “driver” of the Former Vice-Chancellor’s strategy was to resource his top performing research staff so that they could deliver the results that will benefit the entire academic community. This, the Former Vice-Chancellor argued should be the only measure of achievement for a successful Vice-Chancellor:

So how do you get actual, real, quality improvement in the sector? Not by bringing the best down to the average. It is better to let the best be the best that they can be, so that they draw the rest up. Somehow you have got to work out a system that enables that to happen. And you have to have strong leadership. There can be consultation but the strategy has got to be beyond a rhetorical commitment to quality and excellence. The strategy has to be the driver so that you can take the people along with you” (p.150).

The Former Vice-Chancellor’s approach to leading strategic planning also evidences an appreciation of the complexities inherent in the Vice-Chancellor’s leadership role, particularly the challenges faced by Vice-Chancellors of research-intensive universities. This shares commonalities with the approach adopted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, another researching scientist, which suggests that the disciplinary background of the individual may influence the approach to leading strategic planning assumed.

The Former Vice-Chancellor demonstrates competencies in leadership and management which enable him to traverse the political dynamics of the institution while managing the resources of the university. This indicates a somewhat blended approach, in which the three approaches to leading strategic planning: political, scholarly and management, are combined. The Professor of Education, the Professor of Industrial Relations and the Professor of Higher Education’s case studies demonstrate the organisational consequences of strategic planning that ignores large sections of the academic community, including female members of the professoriate, producing a Strategic Plan that only embodies a narrow cross-section of scholastic opinion and values.

3. Academic-management approach to leading strategic planning.

The Emeritus Professor evidences an academic-managerial approach to strategic planning that was developed amidst an environment of large-scale amalgamation and financial hardship at her employer institutions. Her strategic leadership challenge was to bring
organisational stability, reduce costs, increase revenue and direct institutional resources towards areas of strategic importance, all key management tasks.

The Emeritus Professor had the skills and experience to make the difficult resourcing decisions required to establish the newly amalgamated university on sound financial foundations so as to sustain an uncertain future. These are essential management tasks for leaders of universities suffering financial stress and organisational instability. She is also politically astute and managed the dynamics of the university in a decisive, yet inclusive, way. As she needed to develop a strategic plan that would announce resource cuts to targeted parts of the university, she implemented a comprehensive strategic planning process and gained the consensus of the Executive to legitimise the strategic resourcing decisions that would be unpopular with some sections of the university.

Although the Emeritus Professor’s approach is primarily managerial, it is also political. This demonstrates that she too had the leadership skills to blend her approach to strategic planning to reconcile the complexities inherent in the strategic planning context. This shares commonalities with the approach outlined by the Dean, which was also primarily managerial, as it was also informed by data analysis and included the development of reporting frameworks.

The Emeritus Professor and the Dean led strategic planning processes that were broadly collegial. However, unlike any of the other participants in this study, the Dean initially delegated her leadership of the strategic planning and the consultation processes, before reclaiming the leadership to ensure strategic differentiation outcomes were achieved. It is not clear from the data how important the academic-scholar approach was in the Emeritus Professor’s and the Deans’ case studies. This is another theme that should be explored in future research studies. The strategic planning reflections offered by both the Professor of Education and the Professor of Higher Education outline the divisive organisational consequences of strategic planning approaches that minimised opportunities for academics to provide input into the process, which were strongly managerial.

The Emeritus Vice-Chancellor, the Former Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Dean demonstrate a blend of two or more elements from
Sharrock’s managerial leadership frameworks, including attention to the ‘collegial’ archetype of ‘good management’ (2012) and Quinn’s Mentor & Facilitator (1990), as they were all consultative although they differed in their consultation approach and scope. The research Professor recommends a flexible, blended, approach, as does the Professor of Industrial Relations and the Professor of Higher Education. The findings of this study, therefore concur with several elements of the managerial leadership frameworks proposed by Sharrock (2012) and Quinn at al. (1990). Individuals leading strategic planning using the blended approach represented in Figure 7 (p.169) need the range of leadership skills and competencies to tailor strategic planning in a way that attempts to reconcile the organisational tensions inherent in the competing archetypes of ‘good management’ for academic enterprises proposed by Sharrock (2012).

A case has therefore been made for a large-scale follow up study to test the validity of the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning proposed in the study.

8.2 The clusters

The data were organised into three clusters so as to contrast the three main academic roles assumed by academic staff in response to the introduction of strategic planning in Australian universities: The Participant Observers, the Academic Leaders, and the Vice-Chancellors.

The Participant Observers represent the majority of academic staff who participated in some aspects of strategic planning but were not actively involved at the executive level. These participants were either excluded from executive strategic planning due to discrimination or disinterest, and/or subscribed to the view that university leadership should be inclusive, collaborative and collegial and did not see these values being expressed by the individuals leading strategic planning in their employer universities.

The Academic Leaders represent members of the Executive who led strategic planning at the second-tier executive level, which in this study, includes a Faculty, and core university-wide activities, Teaching and Learning, and Research. Two of these participants, the Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, developed strategies to increase performance in their areas of responsibility through essentially collegial strategic planning processes. The Professor of
Higher Education outlines the failings of a top-down academic-management approach to strategic planning, led by his Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive at his former employer university, which he argued neglected to adequately engage the academic community.

The three Vice-Chancellor participants in this study describe how they led strategic planning in their employer universities, what challenges they had to address, and what sections of their constituency they engaged in the process. Each assumed a unique strategic planning approach and presented significant variations in the level, type and scope of consultation they applied to the process, although they are all strong, authoritative leaders within the directing leadership style proposed in the SLII (Blanchard et al., 1985), introduced in Chapter 5 (p.120).

8.2.1 The Participant Observers

The Participant Observers’ case studies were presented in Chapter 5. This cluster includes a Professor of Education, a Professor of Industrial Relations and a research Professor. These participants could be considered representative of a large number of academic staff who were somewhat ambivalent in their response to the implementation of strategic planning at their employer universities, and those who were not actively involved for a range of reasons. It is possible that the Participant Observers may have been more willing to engage with strategic planning if the approach had been more collegial and responsive to the values held by the academic community as illustrated in the Professional Community zone identified by Sharrock (2012) and Mentor & Facilitator role outlined by Quinn (1990), an insight that should be examined in a follow up study.

The Professor of Education, for example, was a traditional academic who expected the university to be collegial in its dealings with academic staff. He also held the view that he did not have the skills to contribute to the new leadership roles established at his university and therefore could not participate in the implementation of strategic planning. His executive roles may have allowed him to influence the leadership change process as it was unfolding. However, he does not describe any internal motivating factors that might have inspired him to act as a change agent and shape the organisational change himself (DuBrin & Dalglis,
2004, pp.312-313; see also Pareek 1981; Reichard 1975) or to influence the attitudes, values, or behaviours of senior colleagues involved in the process (Northouse, 2010, p.7).

As academic staff were not appointed to these new leadership positions at the Professor of Education’s university, professional staff were recruited to establish units in planning, finance, legal and marketing etc. This was a common trend across the sector that resulted in the current ‘disproportion’ of professional staff (56%) to academic staff (44%) in Australian universities10 and remains a key issue of contention within the sector (Connell, 2013a).

The Professor of Education’s case study illustrates a leadership transition at his employer university from an academic-centred collegial system of governance, to a centralised governance system in which the power was held by the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive. This new form of leadership, enacted within the Sustainable Enterprise and System Integrity management archetypes (Sharrock, 2012), did not encourage the involvement of traditional academics like the Professor of Education. “Academics couldn’t do anything about it because we did not have that type of expertise” (p.107).

The second participant in this cluster, the Professor of Industrial Relations, contends that she was marginalised from executive strategic planning because of systemic gender-based discrimination at her employer university. This is the central theme resonating throughout her case study. She is also critical of the strategic planning consultation sessions she observed throughout her career which, in her view, were information forums not genuine attempts to engage, consult, listen to and incorporate the views of the academic community.

DuBrin and Dalglish argue that consultation is an essential part of effective strategic planning, and should therefore be incorporated into effective expressions of leadership. Consultation is also an important influence technique, providing opportunities for stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions about issues that will impact on them, improve their understanding of the situation and provide them with the opportunity to offer alternate views or suggest improvements to the proposed plan. There are many organisational benefits that flow from effective consultation during strategic planning.

including providing an opportunity for stakeholders to change the shape of the plan to ensure maximum fit with organisational objectives, as well as increase stakeholder morale and commitment. “The influence target becomes more motivated to follow the agent’s request because the target is involved in the decision-making process” (Dubrin & Dalglish, 2003, p.220).

Denying stakeholders the opportunity to participate in effective consultation exchanges excludes them from the decision-making process, which is not likely to be tolerated in a modern Australian university. It also negates the opportunity for a productive information flow to occur between the planners and the stakeholders who have an interest in the outcome. As Hill, Jones et al. (2007) argue, serious mistakes can be made by companies if they view strategic planning as an exclusive top-down management function. “This ivory tower approach can result in strategic plans that are formulated in a vacuum by planning executives who have little understanding or appreciation of operating realities” (p.19).

Detriments that may result from a lack of meaningful and effective consultation include criticism of the Vice-Chancellor and individual members of the executive, which may lead to personal and institutional reputational damage, lack of harmony in the workplace and a build-up of resistance leading to instances of sabotage. In the Australian university sector this often translates into industrial action, such as the strikes held at several Australian universities referenced earlier in this thesis.

The Professor of Industrial Relations has a strong research profile and is a sought after supervisor. Yet, she did not achieve professorial status until she was in her 50s, unlike the male participants in this study who were appointed Associate Professor or Professor within the first ten to fifteen years of their career. The data collected in this study indicates that the ‘typical’ career described by the male participants, was typical primarily for male academics. The Professor of Industrial Relations’ case study describes a career characterised by gender-based leadership discrimination which is consistent with the literature on this topic (see for example Blackmore, 2014, 2010, 1999, 1997; Lafferty & Fleming, 2000; Blewett, 1973). Her case study demonstrates that gendered leadership constructs can discriminate against women academics in multiple and complex ways that make it difficult for individual women to challenge or overcome.
The gender-based discrimination described by the Professor of Industrial Relations is an important consideration for this study and relates particularly to the last two research questions: ‘what forms of leadership were most effective [in the implementation of strategic planning in the Australian university sector]: and ‘what organisational impact did this have?’

In this particular case, the gender discrimination that marginalised the highly qualified Professor of Industrial Relations, with specialisations in economics, management and industrial relations and long-standing connections with the NTEU, from both the faculty and university executive strategic planning teams would have had an impact on the way the strategic planning process was led. The evidence provided in her case study indicates that she would have been interested in ensuring that meaningful two-way consultation sessions were conducted, and that the key issues arising from the feedback provided by the university community were reflected in the Strategic Plan. She argues that “… universities have not gone about their management practices the right way. I say this from a union point of view but this is also an area of my own expertise” (p.112). If she had been included in the University Executive Strategic Planning team her long-standing involvement in the NTEU may have assisted this university to develop strategic plans and implement the new strategies in consultation with the NTEU, which could have avoided the extensive industrial action that was subsequently taken at her university. She argues that individuals who benefit from the dominant leadership paradigm will work in overt or covert ways to maintain the status quo claiming that “… This institution has had a very self-centred, self-satisfied culture for a long time, built around an old boy’s network. And in fact they seem to feed it all the time so it very hard now to break it up” (p.112).

In 2013 there were 51,479 academic staff (full-time and fractional full-time) employed in Australian universities, of which 56% were male and 44% were female academics. The highest proportion of women academics congregate on the second lowest academic level, Lecturer (Level B), and are predominately in the 30-54 age bracket. Of the 13,680 total number of academic staff employed at levels above Senior Lecturer, which includes Associate Professors and the Professoriate, male academics hold 71% of these senior positions where as women only hold 29%. Men also are more than 4½ times more likely to still be employed at a senior academic level at age 64 or older (82%) whereas only 261
women aged 64 or older were employed as senior academics (18%), 0.52% of the total number of academic staff employed.

The 2013 academic staff data suggests that both age and gender discrimination against women is endemic throughout the Australian university sector.\footnote{http://highereducationstatistics.education.gov.au/uCube - Higher Education Statistics Staff Count by Current Duties Classification}

If leadership promotions are based on decisions made within “an ‘old boy’s network”, as the Professor of Industrial Relations suggests (p.112), then active discrimination will ensure women are not promoted to leadership positions. She herself suggests that there “needs to be a gender dimension to this discussion as this really is a male dominated university - there aren’t many formal leadership positions for women” (p.110). Denied access to formal leadership roles in the Faculty, the Professor of Industrial Relations assumed informal leadership positions in areas that held little leadership esteem to satisfy her internal leadership motivation drive. Her case study suggests an area of further study as it appears that the under-representation of women in senior academic ranks could be a result of the leadership construct itself.

Sinclair (1998) declares that “leadership, as a concept, has failed us” (p.1), arguing that leadership is not gender-neutral but a social construction and “a process and a state already defined by the men who have gone before them” (p.105). There are multiple and complex ways in which discriminatory judgements about leadership potential, or the lack of it, become deeply buried in selection processes, for example judgements about ‘merit’ (Burton, 1991) and career opportunities that are supported by senior informal networks (Ibarra, 1995). These structural barriers are difficult for individual women managers to name and identify, let alone challenge (Sinclair, 1998, p.26). The impact that gender-based leadership discrimination has had on leading strategic planning in Australian universities therefore should also be explored in future research studies.
The third participant in this cluster, the research Professor, did not look for managerial or leadership roles at his employer universities, therefore strategic planning was never a positional responsibility. Nevertheless, he is an astute observer and offers several suggestions for consideration by individuals leading strategic planning. He argues that one of the critical elements is timing, as windows of opportunity are often short-term. Effective strategic planning, therefore, should be flexible and forward-thinking so that it can respond to opportunities as they arise, and feedback received from the stakeholders should be reflected in changes to the draft plan before it is finalised.

Like the Professor of Education, the research Professor suggests that you can’t divorce strategic planning from the “rise of the strategic Vice-Chancellor, the executive group around the Vice-Chancellor, the DVCs and PVCs and the move towards Executive Deans who manage down primarily rather than managing up” (p.118). The research Professor reveals a comprehensive understanding of the complexity inherent in leading strategic planning in Australian universities. He understands that universities are complex organisations with many stakeholders who need to be considered, including the government, arguing “that the important thing is that you have to get all the different parts of the puzzle right” (p.118).

The research Professor’s insights led him to conclude that no single model of strategic planning will be effective in all situations, as there are many variables that need to be considered: the context; the timing; the mood of the constituents; and the type of leadership that will be most effective in driving the change. He also states that effective leadership in universities must find ways to manage the dual loyalties academic staff have to their employer university and their discipline which is external to the university, one of the unique organisational characteristics of Australian universities that is very difficult for leaders to mitigate. The Professor of Industrial Relations agrees, stating that there “is a funny paradox in academia where we tell each other that we are colleagues, but we are actually incredibly competitive and individualistic at the same time” (p.112).

In a university environment, executives expressing the type of leadership recommended by the research Professor would need excellent problem solving skills and the intuition to guide a large group of highly intelligent, independent colleagues with diverse disciplinary
backgrounds, and a wide range of opinions, through a strategic planning process. It would require a very skilful leader to put these skills and attributes into practice, particularly within a complex organisational environment such as an Australian university. This is consistent with the ‘turn around leadership’ proposed by Fullan and Scott (2009), the mastery elements in the complex, multi-dimensional managerial leadership frameworks developed by Sharrock (2012), Quinn et al. (1990) and with blended approach to leading strategic planning proposed in this study (Figure 7, p.169).

Maxwell (2011) also suggests that few leaders have the combination of skills and attributes to reach the highest level of leadership, which he terms Level 5 or Pinnacle Leadership:

Pinnacle leaders stand out from everyone else. They are a cut above, and they seem to bring success with them wherever they go. Leadership at this high level lifts the entire organization and creates an environment that benefits everyone in it, contributing to their success. Level 5 leaders often possess an influence that transcends the organization and the industry the leader works in (Maxwell, 2011, p.231).

It would be very difficult for one individual to bring all these skills to the practice of leadership, particularly during a strategic planning process when difficult financial or staffing decisions need to be made. This is where Kotter’s concept of building a ‘guiding coalition’ is useful, as a carefully constructed team with the right combination of skills and leadership attributes will help to ensure a positive process and a more successful outcome:

No one individual, even a monarch-like CEO, is ever able to develop the right vision, communicate it to large numbers of people, eliminate all the key obstacles, generate short-term wins, lead and manage dozens of change projects, and anchor new approaches deep in the organization’s culture. Weak committees are even worse. A strong guiding coalition is always needed – one with the right composition, level of trust, and shared objective. Building such a team is always an essential part of the early stages of any effort to restructure, reengineer, or retool a set of strategies (Kotter, 1996, pp.51-52).

The insights provided by the participants in this study support the proposition made by Sharrock (2012) that the Sustainable Enterprise and Systems Integrity management agendas, within which most post-Dawkins strategic planning approaches were framed, conflicted with the values in the Professional Community management agenda, which requires leaders to be collegial, to express shared values, aims and build trust and consensus, resulting in sustained organisational tensions.
In the Professional Community zone leaders and managers focus on the needs, concerns and interests (personal and professional) of their academic and administrative colleagues; whereas in the System Integrity zone managerial leaders are factual, apply standards and measures and keep players, budgets and programs on track; and in the Sustainable Enterprise zone they are focused on defining the goals, priorities, roles and resources of the enterprise itself. From the latter point of view, people are seen collectively as ‘human resources’ – a corporate asset, and also a corporate cost (Sharrock, 2012, p.332).

8.2.2 The Academic Leaders

The Academic Leaders cluster, presented in Chapter 6, includes a Dean, a Professor of Higher Education and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. All three participants in this cluster held executive roles at their employer universities and exercised strategic planning responsibility.

A leader’s role in strategic planning includes deciding what planning model will be used to develop the new Strategic Plan. The approach outlined by the first participant in this cluster, the Dean, conformed in many respects with the format adopted by the Head of Division years earlier that shaped her positive attitude towards strategic planning, which is the utilitarian or rational approach to strategic planning consistent with the Planning model in the ‘Design School’ outlined by Mintzberg (1990, 1999, 2000) summarised as follows:

Strategy formation should be controlled and conscious as well as a formalized and elaborated process, decomposed into distinct steps, each delineated by checklists and supported by techniques. Responsibility for the overall process rests with the chief executive in principle; responsibility for its execution rests with the staff planners in practice. Strategies come out of this process fully developed, typically as generic positions, to be explicated so that they can then be implemented through detailed attention to objectives, budgets, programs, and operating plans of various kinds (Mintzberg, 2000, p.42).

This model shares commonalities with the strategic planning model published in the Dawkins Reforms, the rational approach outlined in the Literature Review (Figure 1, p.47) and the models referenced in the management and strategic planning literature (see for example, Hill, Jones et al., 2007, pp.5-9; Gratez, Rimmer et al., 2006, pp.308-310; Simerly, 1987, pp.34-50). This study therefore provides two examples in which the individuals who led or participated in a rational strategic planning process, could argue that the model can be effective if the ‘right’ leadership approach is adopted.
The Dean’s decision to delegate leadership authority for the development of the faculty Strategic Plan, and then use her positional authority to resume control of the process to lead the development of a differentiation strategy, reflects her ability to lead flexibly and think strategically, to ensure the final Strategic Plan reflected the strategic outcomes staff agreed at the beginning of the process.

“The development of a generic differentiation strategy is to achieve a competitive advantage by creating a product (good or service) that customers perceive to be unique in some important way” (Hill, Jones et al., 2007, p.167). The Dean’s leadership intervention therefore represents an ‘effective strategic action’ designed to achieve a specific strategic purpose (Schendel, 1994, cited Hanson, Dowling et al., 2007, p.7).

The Dean was confident that she made the right decision to resume leadership of the strategic planning process and schedule an additional consultation session, stating that the planning group then “came up with something quite radical and exciting and I think we have now got a really good new Strategic Plan with some unique differentiation markers which should address some of the students concerns” (p.124). This demonstrates the Dean’s commitment to blend and balance her leadership style and her approach to strategic planning to address the competing management responsibilities. This provides further evidence to support Sharrock’s archetypes of good management for academic enterprises illustrated in Figure 6 (p.167) and the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning in Australian universities presented in Figure 7 (p.169).

Additionally, the Dean was aware that if the strategic planning did not commence with a consultation phase, and did not engage the academic community in the planning process, then the ideas and insights that might have percolated up from the academic community would be lost. She describes a situation like this in her case study: “… what I remember most of all is that although I was only a Head of School, I felt involved, I was listened to, and also the feedback that I brought from our School was taken into account” (p.123).

The second participant in this cluster, the Professor of Higher Education, like the Professor of Education, was a former Deputy Chair of Academic Board. He refers to the organisational
change arising from two leadership interventions which generated a rift between academic staff and the executive at his employer university.

The first is the change in the financial delegations of authority implemented in the late 1990s or early 2000s when the University Budget by-passed Academic Board, proceeding directly from the Finance Office to Council (Senate) thereby denying Academic Board its procedural right of review. This resulted in a loss of leadership authority for Academic Board and effectively marginalised the academic community from considering, and perhaps challenging, strategic budgetary decisions and new strategic priorities before they were implemented.

The second leadership intervention referred to by the Professor of Higher Education, is the appointment of Executive Deans by the Vice-Chancellor rather than being elected by their academic peers. He argues that, in his view, this “meant they [Executive Deans] were much more a part of the Executive than representatives of rank and file academic staff” (p.130). As universities strengthened their internal management processes and adopted a corporate model of strategic planning that was led from the centre by the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive, that primarily conformed to the values represented in the Sustainable Enterprise and System Integrity management agendas (Sharrock, 2012), the philosophical planning divide between the Senior Executive and the academic community was exacerbated each planning cycle.

The Professor of Higher Education explains what these leadership changes meant to him as a senior academic and Deputy Chair of Academic Board. “I felt caught in the middle at times, as we had the Executive on one hand and the academic community on the other hand pulling in different directions … and also felt manipulated by some of the people on the Executive” (p.130). This testimony further confirms the tensions inherent in the competing management agendas in Australian academic enterprises outlined in Sharrock (2012).

Leadership authority and institutional power held by Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives, including the Executive Deans, increased when the executive assumed financial control of the university. And, as a direct result, the collegial power held by the academic community started to decline. The Professor of Higher Education explains, “The Executive
was responsible for finance and the University Budget; academics for teaching and research and never the twain shall meet! But of course what you do in teaching and research has budget and planning implications” (p.130). The Professor of Higher Education therefore demonstrates that he was able to empathise with both sides of the staff divide, holding “… all sides of the conflict … in [his] mind and heart” (Gerzon, 2006, p.61).

He remarks that “one of the things that you realise as you become more sophisticated at strategic planning is that you actually have to bring the troops with you, and that having a ‘disconnect’ between management and the academic community is counter-productive for the institution” (p.131). This ‘disconnect’ was exacerbated, according to the Professor of Higher Education, when “the Vice-Chancellor hired consultants to gather the data and write the plan [which] further divorced academics from the planning process” (p.130).

The evidence of the league tables seems to point to the fact that the managerialist style where a significant academic voice is excluded from strategic decision making and where academic opinion is distances from day-to-day institutional management significantly disadvantages an institution (Shattock, 2010, p.98).

Academics are individualistic in their approach to their work as the Professor of Industrial Relations reveals (p.112). Therefore, they are not likely to readily agree to leadership interventions that result in academic marginalisation from the university leadership cohort. Interventions that deny them, as individuals and also as representatives of the academic community, a voice in the strategic decision making and resource distribution processes.

The literature offers many examples of the consequences of change interventions, forcefully implemented, that are not in harmony with shared organisational values, and counterproductive to the principles of organisational development that guide effective humanistic approaches to change (see for example Grieves, 2010, pp.22-28). Therefore, Senior Executives who persist with change interventions that are not compatible with the shared values of the university and are unpopular with the vast majority of the academic community, will generate an organisational atmosphere of tension and distrust.

Senge (1990) identifies two fundamental sources of energy that motivate organisations: aspiration which is a positive force, and fear, a negative force (p.225). Generating a negative vision, or a vision based on fear rather than aspiration, will deplete the energy of the
organisation and replace it with a sense of powerlessness. Chin and Benne (1976) argue that planned change interventions fall into three broad areas, one is power-coercive interventions that reflect a conscious “application of knowledge as an instrument or tool for modifying patterns and institutions of practice”, (p.22, cited Grieves, 2010, p.25). Interventions such as the University Budget by-passing Academic Board and the appointment of Executive Deans, raised by both the Professor of Education and the Professor of Higher Education, would be considered power-coercive interventions within this definition.

The Professor of Higher Education’s case study reveals a thread of negativity and powerlessness, as he reflects on his experience at his former university where he was not able to mitigate the ‘Sustainable Enterprise’ management agenda (Sharrock, 2012, p.327) that was implemented strongly, with the academic community’s need for the leadership to be collegial, inclusive and respectful of Academic Board. The case studies therefore demonstrate that although Dawkins designed and enacted the Reform agenda, the recommendations were implemented in very different ways by individual Vice-Chancellors throughout the sector, resulting in many different organisational outcomes.

The third member of this cluster, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, was the first participant in this study to demonstrate the directing leadership style in terms of the SLII model (Chapter 5, p.120) categorised by high directive-low supporting behaviours (Blanchard, et al., 1985). He also demonstrates an academic-scholar approach to leading strategic planning and attempts to blend and balance his leadership and strategic planning approach to gain support from his colleagues and minimise resistance from academic staff throughout the university (Sharrock, 2012; Quinn et al., 1990).

There are several aspects of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s leadership that share commonalities with the Visionary leadership paradigm outlined by Avery (2005) as follows:

Scholars and practitioners often regard Visionary leadership, where the leader’s vision inspires followers to greater achievements, as the ideal paradigm, particularly when organizations need to be transformed. Research suggests that performance is enhanced under Visionary leadership, possibly, because the successful Visionary leader employs a vision that appeals to followers’ needs and motivations. Followers are then expected to play a substantial role in executing the vision to create a desired future, thereby enhancing their power above that typical of followers under Classical and Transactional paradigms … Although the Visionary leader listens to and considers
followers’ views, this leader’s role is to meld the group into one entity, united behind one of the visions and views raised. Providing the leader can shift the followers away from the current vision to some new vision, adaptiveness can be more substantial than under the Classical and Transactional paradigms (p.63).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor explains “When I was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor I saw this as an opportunity to engage in a major strategic planning exercise. There was an existing strategy document but there had been no engagement in the development of the strategy so I thought it was important to refresh it using a broad engagement methodology” (p.134). He also admits that although he engaged in an extensive competitor analysis to develop a broad research strategy “at that particular time it was more about getting all the internal stakeholders lined up” (p.135) as he was aware that the internal structures, including the composition of the research committees, were barriers to success.

The strategic planning approach described by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor is consistent with the Planning School, a formal process, within the Ten Schools of Strategy Formation outlined by Mintzberg and Lampel (1999, p.22). His strategic vision is also consistent with ideas reaffirmed by Henry Mintzberg, citing Michael Porter, two of the most influential theorists on strategic planning from the 1980s to 2000s:

The emphasis being placed on strategic planning today in firms in the United States and abroad reflects the proposition that there are significant benefits to gain through an *explicit* process of formulating strategy, to insure that at least the policies (if not the actions) of the functional departments are coordinated and directed at some common set of goals (Mintzberg, citing Porter, 1980, p.16, italics in original).

Although Mintzberg’s emphasis is on emergent strategy whereas Porter suggests taking a more deliberate approach, they both agree that formal strategic planning actions, that are supported by coordinated internal organisational efforts aligned with the strategic goals, will achieve more productive outcomes (see for example Mintzberg, 2000, pp.15-16).

Senge (1990) reminds leaders that their visions are personal visions, and do not become shared visions until they connect with the personal aspirations of individuals throughout the organization. Therefore leaders striving to build a shared vision must first question themselves and ask if the vision they propose is compelling enough for others to follow. This is often a difficult thing for decisive leaders to do, particularly independent minded
leaders, as it can create instances of vulnerability (pp.214-.215). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor explains how he addressed this leadership challenge. “By the time I suggest a particular change, I have usually thought about it very carefully and bounced ideas off quite a few different people. This helps to develop an understanding of where the opposition is likely to come from and why, so that I can work out how to accommodate this before I suggest the change in the first place” (p.136). He is therefore thinking strategically and conceptually about the different leadership and management functions he must satisfy to lead strategic planning effectively in an Australian university. This case study provides further evidence of the competing management agendas that must be reconciled by leaders in Australian academic institutions outlined by Sharrock (2012) and the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning proposed in this study (Figure 7, p.169).

In conclusion, although the three participants in the Academic Leader’s cluster were members of the Senior Executive and were responsible for leading strategic planning within their area of responsibility, each was also constrained, to a greater or lesser extent, by the shape and scope of the strategic planning process led by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Dean, for example, held positional responsibility for developing the Faculty Strategic Plan. However, the Faculty Strategic Plan was a cascading plan that was, by necessity, aligned with the university’s Strategic Plan. Therefore the strategic objectives outlined in the university Strategic Plan were also the strategic objectives for the faculty. Although the Dean and her Faculty Executive had the authority to develop the specific faculty initiatives that would contribute to the university’s Strategic Plan, it was, in many respects, a conditional planning environment. As the Professor of Education, a former Dean, also comments “it was difficult for a Faculty to suddenly redirect itself and launch into a new direction” (p.107).

The Professor of Higher Education participated in numerous strategic planning activities as Deputy Chair of Academic Board and as a senior member of staff in the Learning and Teaching portfolio at his former employer university. As he was not a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, he did not have responsibility for finalising the Learning and Teaching theme for inclusion in the Strategic Plan. He argued that the quality of the themed components of the Strategic Plan, in areas such as Research, Academic and International, depended on the
leadership of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors leading this process, and suggests, that in his view, the leadership capabilities of the individuals he worked with over the years was, for the most part, “variable” (p.129). He also describes what he terms “…a diminishing in the power of the Academic Board” (p.130) from the late 1990s when Academic Board lost oversight of the university budget, thus further constraining his influence over strategic planning and the distribution of resources within the university.

The third member of this cluster, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, held executive responsibility for designing and implementing the university-wide research strategy and led the development of several university-wide Research Strategic Plans. Serving under two Vice-Chancellors, he was provided with the resources to meet the university’s key strategic research objective, which was to improve research performance in areas that informed the evaluative framework in Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) ERA10 (2010) and ERA12 (2012). ERA followed the Dawkins emphasis on ‘applied science, technologies, computer science’, as these disciplines were perceived to be facilitate economic growth (Harman 1989, pp.4-5).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s task, therefore, was to build research excellence at his employer university, particularly in the sciences. He achieved this by aligning the internal support systems and governance structures, improving internal data collection and analysis, resourcing areas of research strength and addressing areas of poor research performance. As he is a researching scientist, his strategic research priorities were aligned with those of his Vice-Chancellor, another researching scientist. He was well positioned therefore, to lead the development of a university-wide research strategy from the position of a leading scholar, assuming the academic-scholar approach to leading strategic planning.
8.2.3 The Vice-Chancellors

The third cluster, the Vice-Chancellors, contains one current and two former Vice-Chancellors. Their case studies generate profiles of strong, decisive individuals who led the implementation of strategic planning at several different Australian universities from a range of executive leadership positions. Individually and collectively, they offer detailed, personal insights into how and why strategic planning was introduced to their employer universities.

The Vice-Chancellor and Emeritus Professor applied a directing leadership style within the SLII model (Blanchard et al., 1985) combining the roles of the Producer & Director in the Sustainable Enterprise management agenda, the Monitor & Coordinator in the System Integrity management agenda, with the Mentor & Facilitator role in the Professional Community management zone (see Figure 6, Sharrock 2012, p.167). However, a point of difference that distinguishes them from each other, and from the other executive participants in this study, is that the Vice-Chancellor’s strategic planning emphasis was primarily political, whereas the Emeritus Professor’s emphasis was primarily managerial, although both were blended in ways discussed earlier in this chapter.

The Former Vice-Chancellor’s emphasis on research and scholarship kept him purposively aligned with the collegial values of his academic community in his approach to strategic planning, a characteristic he shares with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. He demonstrates elements from the Producer & Director’s roles within the Sustainable Enterprise management agenda that are moderated by the Innovator & Broker role within the Creative Engagement management zone (Sharrock, 2012). He also incorporates elements from the Mentor & Facilitator roles in the Professional Community zone, therefore demonstrates an appreciation of the different management agendas that need to be reconciled to be an effective strategic leader in an Australian academic enterprise. The importance of getting this balance right, is clearly illustrated in the Professor of Higher Education’s case study, through a reflective discussion of the negative organisational consequences that can result if these management agendas are in conflict.

When the Vice-Chancellor, the first participant in this cluster, commenced strategic planning at his university nine years ago he justified adopting a top-down approach as “people were
not as familiar with the process as they are today” (p.141). Over the years, he progressively increased the amount of strategic consultation with the university community, and as a result, the community increased its engagement with the planning process so they are now able to use non-formal channels to discuss ideas.

As Senge’s research suggests, effective leaders satisfy the human needs of self-respect and self-actualisation to harness the potential of its people (1990, p.140). The university is also a ‘learning organisation’ as it exhibits the characteristics in which “people are continually learning how to learn together” (Senge, 1990, p.3). Welcoming suggestions “percolating through from the community” (p.142) the Vice-Chancellor uses this information to develop draft strategic objectives which, he argues, change shape as the consultation continues. He is proud of the level of staff engagement in the strategic planning process, although he admits that “staff seem to understand that if they don’t participate in the planning process, then they can’t complain afterwards about the outcomes … my experience suggests that people will engage if they think they can influence the process” (p.142).

The Vice-Chancellor views staff concerns as important institutional problems that need to be addressed, and looks for ways to proactively identify these issues during the annual planning cycle. Information is shared in public forums so that the Vice-Chancellor can be seen to be consultative, to generate inter-connectivity within the institution, and increase the level of trust and staff satisfaction throughout the organisation. He says he is happy for staff to use his initial ideas “as target practice” (p.142) and is relaxed about the criticism that results from open dialogue, arguing that this provides an opportunity to work through the initial ideas to start a meaningful strategic discussion.

The important thing, he stresses, is how leaders respond to criticism and what steps they take to address issues of organisational concern, a view consistent with the literature (see for example, Gerzon, 2006). Hegel, a philosopher who was influenced by the views of Heraclitus, proposed that change is always intelligible, never arbitrary and that every complex situation contains the seeds of conflict which can destabilize organisational systems. He proposes the resolution of conflict as a dialectical process made up of three stages: the description or thesis; the antithesis; and the synthesis, which provides a new situation based on resolutions of previous conflicts (cited Grieves, 2010, p.28).
The Vice-Chancellor sought to improve academic excellence through a strategic recruitment strategy to build researcher capability in areas of strength. He also developed collaborative relationships with partner institutions as, in his words, “collaboration helps to position the university, the city, the state and Australia in terms of international reputation and I think the sector needs to understand that forming strategic collaborations is a very important part of strategic planning” (p.143) thus increasing the university’s bargaining power with the government, philanthropists and industry. He financed this strategy by establishing a staff payroll deduction student scholarship scheme to provide financial support for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and pursued connections with key philanthropic investors. In this way, he was able to enrol the best and brightest students, irrespective of their ability to pay their tuition fees, and recruit high profile academics to build on existing areas of academic strength and increase the university’s performance in the external ranking schemes. He cautions, however, that in order to “invest wisely … you need to know your community” (p.143).

Senge (1990) suggests that leaders who bring organisational tension to the surface through open dialogue, can transform the tension into new forms of shared understanding, if the transformation process is managed carefully. Leaders pursuing this path to reconciliation, Senge argues, should be respectful and treat adversaries as colleagues as this is critical to establish a positive tone and offset the vulnerability that can arise in open dialogue (p.245). “Colleagueship does not mean that you need to agree or share the same views. On the contrary, the real power of seeing each other as colleagues comes into play when there are differences of view … Choosing to view “adversaries” as “colleagues with different views” has the greatest benefits”, (Senge, 1990, p.45).

Gerzon (2006) argues that conflict can be a creative source for ideas, thereby providing an opportunity for leaders to transform the conflict into an asset rather than a liability (p.4). However, individuals pursuing this strategy must ensure they have the leadership skills to turn organisational challenges into strategic actions. The three faces of leadership he describes are the Demagogue, the Manager and the Mediator. The Mediator “strives to act on behalf of the whole, not just a part; thinks systemically and is committed to ongoing learning; builds trust by building bridges across the dividing lines; seeks innovation and opportunity in order to transform conflict” (p.50). The primary leadership ‘face’ the Vice-
Chancellor assumes, using the Gerz on matrix, is the Mediator. However, he also shares characteristics with the Demagogue and the Manager which suggests that effective individual leaders move through different leadership ‘faces’ according to the task and situation at hand. The leadership practice described in the Vice-Chancellor’s case study contains several elements from the leadership approaches outlined by these theorists. It also shares commonalities with the situational leadership model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1988) although the establishment of work teams was not critical for the Vice-Chancellor, as he had the positional power to enact the change or resolve the conflict without support from superiors or colleagues.

The Vice-Chancellor explains that he considers the development of strategic plans that direct and coordinate university activities one of his core responsibilities. This data relates directly to the first research question ‘when and for what purpose was strategic planning introduced to the Australian university sector’. The leadership practice the Vice-Chancellor describes in his case study is decisive and authoritarian, which he argues is necessary to effectively lead strategic change, thereby providing insights that contribute to the findings of the second and third research questions ‘what forms of leadership were most effective in driving this change’, and ‘what organisational impact did this have on Australian universities’. The organisational impact this had on the Vice-Chancellor’s university was organisational conformity and political cohesion, producing an “overbounded system” one in which “power is highly concentrated, and everything is tightly regulated” (Alderfer, 1979, Brown, 1983, cited Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.171).

The Vice-Chancellor’s approach to strategic planning is consistent with Mintzberg’s Power School of strategy formation (1999) which develops strategy through a process of negotiation. Mintzberg and Lampel suggest “micro power [that] sees the development of strategies within the organization as essentially political – a process involving bargaining, persuasion and confrontation among actors who divide the power” (authors emphasis, p.25). As the new academic members of staff join the university and more competitive grants were won the Vice-Chancellor was able to transact this power at a macro or institutional level, to establish collaborations, alliances, other joint ventures (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p.25). The Vice-Chancellor therefore also exhibits characteristics of the ‘political entrepreneur’ described by Kotter (1985) as individuals who develop relationships with people in the
organisation, so that they know where conflict is likely to come from, and take the necessary steps to deal with the resistance as it arises. This echoes similar observations made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in the previous chapter.

The second participant in this cluster, the Former Vice-Chancellor, demonstrates that Vice-Chancellors of research intensive universities need to balance their leadership and management skills to ensure the university’s high-impact researchers have the support required to win competitive grants and generate a large portion of the income that sustains the university. This is not an easy leadership task, as research intensive universities must attract millions of dollars of income from external funding schemes that have low success rates. In addition, the prestigious Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR) awards hundreds of millions of dollars of research income to Australian universities each year, mostly to research intensive universities and research institutes, does not fund the full cost of research outlined in the successful proposal. Therefore significant fluctuations in research income must be mitigated each year by the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Executive.

Another significant leadership problem associated with leadership in research intensive universities arise from the ideas that research can be managed, research performance measured in a reliable way, and research activity directed towards strategic objectives. This concept has been rigorously contested (see Marginson & Considine, 2000; Green et al., 2009; Croucher, Marginson et al., 2013) particularly in the current climate dominated by national research quality initiatives particularly ERA10, ERA12 and ERA15. The Former Vice-Chancellor alludes to this dilemma stressing that the “real problem with strategic planning” is that it can be too rigid (p.150). Universities, particularly research intensive universities, must maintain flexibility to ensure that the university’s strategic direction remains aligned with the strategic direction of external research funding organisations.

He uses two examples, Atomic Physics and Archimedes, to illustrate this dilemma from a leadership perspective:

For example, if the ARC chose today not to fund Atomic Physics and we have decided that Atomic Physics is a priority for us - who wins? Then again if you try to filter the grant applications and say no we will not let you put in a research grant to study Archimedes because that is not our priority then you will have a different fight on your hands. But if you don’t filter in the beginning, what do you do if they win the grant
but in the meantime you have taken the Greek reference material out of the Library? So, there is continual conflict between the processes which has had an impact on us all and it has been significant (Former Vice-Chancellor, p.150).

The leadership provided by Vice-Chancellors in research intensive universities therefore must be scholarly, adaptive, resourceful and intuitive, so that the right decisions are made, at the right time, to mitigate these significant financial and operational risks. The question of who should lead research universities has been examined in a number of studies by Goodall (2006, 2009a, 2009b). The first study correlated a leader’s level of scholarship (based on citations) with university rankings in global league tables. The findings, argued to be statistically significant, demonstrate that universities that were ranked higher on the league tables were more likely to be led by research scholars than those ranked lower on the table (Goodall, 2006). The second study also led by Goodall, using longitudinal data and regression equations, found that scholarly leaders improved university performance over the study time frame (2009a, 2009b) a finding also supported by the data presented in this study.

The leadership approach of the third member of this cluster, the Emeritus Professor, bears several commonalities with Heifetz’s six capabilities for adaptive leadership that include: moderating ‘systematic distress’ and assuming a holistic perspective to identify the patterns of problems faced at the time (see also Kim Turnbull James, 2011). She is an adaptive change capable leader (Scott, Bell, et al., 2010) and a turnaround leader for higher education (Fullan & Scott, 2009), with the skills required to guide the university through its financial difficulties and lead a comprehensive transformation of its activities and practices.

The Emeritus Professor is another decisive, capable and self-confident leader. She is able to conceptualise what changes were required and has the practical leadership skills to implement strategic change. There are commonalities in her leadership approach, with the approaches described by the Former Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and the Dean. They all share elements of charismatic leadership outlined by Hunt (1991) and House (1971) which states that charismatic leaders demonstrate dominance, self-confidence, need to influence, and a conviction in their beliefs (p.187).

The Emeritus Professor ensured the first Strategic Plan she developed for her employer university was aligned with, and referenced to, the institutional values of both amalgamating institutions, to bring organisational cohesion to the new university, and align the staff from
both institutions to the strategic direction of the new university. Familiar with the strategic planning literature emerging from the North American Business Schools she had the knowledge, skills and experience to lead the development of several consultative ambitious strategic planning projects throughout her career that were supported by performance data. Aware that organisational structures were important in strategic planning and strategic implementation, the Emeritus Professor replaced her direct reports with professionals who had “experience in performance-based management who could work collaboratively with others” (p.156) thus ensuring that there was a consistent application of the university strategy through her lines of command.

The Emeritus Professor, like the Vice-Chancellor, is also persuasive. Conger’s (1998) work into effective persuasion indicates that it is a straightforward process. The three step model he proposes commences firstly with a strong statement of the position. Secondly, an outline of the arguments, supported by an assertive, data-based exposition. Finally, negotiation until the deal is closed. “In other words, you use logic, persistence, and personal enthusiasm to get others to buy a good idea” (Conger, 1998, p.86). One of Conger’s study participants is cited as saying “The most valuable lesson I’ve learned about persuasion over the years is that there’s just as much strategy in how you present your position as in the position itself. In fact, I’d say the strategy of presentation is the more critical” (Conger, 1998, p.88).

The Emeritus Professor demonstrates that she is strategic in her approach to leading strategic planning. Firstly, she prepared thoroughly and outlined the challenges in a series of documents supported by data to evince the case for change; secondly, she established a formal, linear strategic planning process to build credibility and legitimise the outcomes; thirdly, she established a broadly consultative process and the feedback was incorporated into the final draft of the plan; and finally, she ensured the Strategic Plan was approved using the formal channels of authority. As there were no procedural flaws in the planning process itself, it would have been very difficult for dissenters to initiate disruption tactics and protest against the strategic priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Emeritus Professor’s focus was on the process as well as the outcomes, as her case study demonstrates, financial considerations were critically important.
The Literature Review in this study established that leadership is both situation contingent (Stogdill, 1974) and relationship dependent (Bowers & Seashore, 1966). The case studies presented in the Vice-Chancellor’s cluster demonstrate how each Vice-Chancellor adapted their leadership practice to suit the strategic planning situation, the organisational circumstances of the university and leverage relationships with stakeholders. As the Vice-Chancellors led strategic planning in different university environments that were facing a diverse range of challenges, they realised that they needed to tailor their approach to maximise success. This finding is also consistent with the managerial leadership models proposed by Sharrock (2012), Quinn et al. (1990), and the Fielder’s Contingency Model of Leadership which suggests that leader effectiveness depends on the ‘match’ between personality characteristics and the degree of situational control held by the leader (1978, p.60).

Avery (2005) argues that Visionary leadership paradigms are suited to dynamic, complex and chaotic environments (pp. 61, 144-145) and that “scholars and practitioners often regard Visionary leadership, where the leader’s vision inspires followers to greater achievements, as the ideal paradigm, particularly when organizations need to be transformed” (p.64). This is evident in the Vice-Chancellors case studies, which are also indicative of transformational leadership characteristics within the definition offered by Bryman (1992) which emphasises the charismatic and effective elements of leadership (see also Northouse, 2010 p.171).

Transformational leadership emerged from the work of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) and informed the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Kouzes and Posner (1987). Transformational leaders are described by DuBrin and Dalglish (2003) as charismatic leaders who facilitate change effectively because they are able to draw support from key change participants (pp.65-74; 86-87). House (1988) argues they are able to foster loyalty and commitment from others (pp.336-337).

Transformational leadership is commonly assessed by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Northouse, 2010) distributed to peers and subordinates, which was not possible in this study. Observations however have been drawn from the case studies to suggest Transformational leadership characteristics and individual traits of determination, courage, confidence and self-belief, which are elements from the heroic or Classic leadership
school (Avery, 2005, p.140-145). This suggests that multi-faceted, multi-dimensional approaches to leading strategic planning were applied in practice by the Vice-Chancellor participants in this study, as well as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Dean.

The observations drawn from this study also support several of the findings from the large scale Australian university research study conducted in the late 1990s by Marginson and Considine (2000). In particular, the findings of this study support the authors’ contention that Australian universities by then had a “distinctively corporate character”. Explaining that this is a result of the enforcement of neoliberal policies with great rigour on all public institutions, including universities, therefore all public institutions “have been under extreme pressure to corporatise their operations” (2000, p.54).

This is clearly demonstrated in the Vice-Chancellors cluster and the Academic Leaders cluster, although their strategic planning outcomes had to conform to the strategic vision of the Vice-Chancellor which means that they were somewhat constrained in what they were able to achieve within their portfolios. Professional staff also participated in the implementation process, however, as there are no professional staff participants in this study it is not possible to draw conclusions about their specific contributions. We can surmise that they were willing participants, as the employment data confirms professional staff were recruited to the sector in large numbers, often to very senior positions commanding high salaries to lead the non-academic organisational units established and satisfy the compliance and corporate functions required of all Australian universities in the post-Dawkins era.

It is now more than 25 years since the Dawkins Reforms were implemented. Most if not all of the academic staff who led, participated in or witnessed the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities are now retired or close to retirement. Therefore, we need to look beyond the impact of the Dawkins Reforms to develop an understanding of what factors are influencing strategic planning in Australian universities today.

8.3 The research questions

This study was designed to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 4, Methodology (p.82), and present recommendations for improved practice for the next generation of Vice-
Chancellors and Senior Executives who will be tasked to lead strategic planning in Australian universities in the future.

The research questions will now be discussed as follows:
1. When and for what purpose was strategic planning introduced to the Australian university sector?
2. What organisational impact did this have on Australian universities? and
3. What forms of leadership were most effective in driving this change?

**8.3.1 When and for what purpose was strategic planning introduced to the Australian university sector?**

Observations drawn from the study data indicate that strategic planning was introduced to the Australian university sector by two parallel change forces. Firstly, by the enactment of the Dawkins Reforms. Secondly, the emergence of the strategic planning literature from the North American Business Schools and the introduction of elements of this literature into the leadership practices of a number of individuals in Australian universities.

As the case studies demonstrate, the search for new managerial leadership approaches was largely a response to significant shifts in the operating environment resulting from the impact of neoliberalism, competition, globalisation, and other powerful external change forces such as a steady decline in government funding combined with increasing student enrolments. University leaders responded to these external pressures by developing more comprehensive and sophisticated planning processes, bespoke internal funding models and financial systems that were designed to produce financial projections and report operating revenue from a range of new income sources. This enabled Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives to identify areas of high performance to justify decisions for strategic investment in “areas of strength” as the Vice-Chancellor explains (p.144). The former Vice-Chancellor agrees further suggesting that “you could not plan sensibly in the absence of a comprehensive planning model as we don’t get enough money to do everything we could do” (p.149). This is a consistent theme through the Vice-Chancellors’ case studies. The Emeritus Professor argues that the Strategic Plan in her university “was performance based and made it clear that we would focus on industry-focused or applied research, and that we would work in research concentrations (p.154).
However, the principal change driver in relation to the first research question, however, was the enactment of the Dawkins Reforms. This is clearly demonstrated in the case studies presented in the preceding chapters (see for example, the Professor of Education, p.105; the Professor of Higher Education, p.130).

The central tenet of the Dawkins Reforms was to outline a comprehensive case for change to be implemented in a way that retained “the essential character and role of the higher education system while encouraging and helping it to adapt to change” (Green Paper, 1987, p.1). Dawkins stated in the Green and White Papers that the binary higher education system was expensive, inefficient, inflexible, and characterised by systemic barriers that limited the participation of disadvantaged groups. The reforms were therefore designed to enable growth in a manner that was consistent with Australia’s economic, social and cultural needs. Arguing that this could only be achieved by comprehensive structural reform, Dawkins dismantled the binary system of higher education, and established the UNS, to accommodate student growth and reduce the financial burden for the government through economies of scale and improved institutional efficiencies.

It would have been difficult for any member of staff working in the sector to understand how Dawkins expected this large-scale, comprehensive, transformational, structural change to be implemented without compromising the “essential character” of Australian universities. While there was some sector support for the ‘growth’ and ‘equity’ initiatives, concerns were expressed by the AVCC, other advocacy groups and individual academics, particularly relating to the preservation of academic values and institutional autonomy (see for example, AVCC Press Release 9 December 1987).

Strategic planning, together with performance management and review, were emphasised by Dawkins as appropriate management mechanisms to deliver efficiencies and increase institutional performance in areas of national importance (White Paper, 1988, p.104). However, he also argued in the Green and White Papers that it was up to individual universities to find ways to “decide and implement” specific institutional strategies (White Paper, p.104) providing a comprehensive list of the elements that a strategic plan was expected to include to ensure consistency throughout the sector (Green Paper, pp.51-52; White Paper, p.104).
It was clear to many that leadership of Australian universities would no longer be vested in
the professoriate; university leadership in the post-Dawkins period would come from Vice-
Chancellors and academic-managers with the skills required to lead the implementation of
the Dawkins Reforms. Strategic planning, therefore, became a core responsibility of
Australian Vice-Chancellors and, as the case studies demonstrate, the approach was framed
primarily within the Sustainable Enterprise and Systems Integrity management agendas
(Sharrock, 2012), with differing levels of consultation and collegial engagement. This
gradually facilitated the transformation of Australian universities from collegial to
academic-managerial universities. The Professor of Higher Education concedes that the
emphasis Dawkins placed on entrepreneurialism and the push for universities to assume a
market driven approach to planning, had a significant impact on Australian universities
(p.129).

University Executives tasked with these responsibilities, such as the Emeritus Professor,
either looked to the literature published by the North American Business Schools or hired
consultants to lead the process for them, a circumstance the Professor of Higher Education
argued further divorced academics from the process (p.130) at his university. Consideration
does not appear to have been given to the fact that the strategic planning models had been
developed for use in North American commercial organisations, not North American
universities or any other educational institution, and certainly not Australian universities.

Dawkins was aware that his Reforms were not popular with academic staff, as he received
a large number of critical collective and individual responses from Australian universities
and academic staff, particularly academics employed in the Group of Eight universities.
Sector spokespersons also made it clear that the introduction of managerialist principles was
not a welcome innovation, and that the dissemination of knowledge and the productivity
agenda outlined in the Dawkins Reforms itself could be compromised if universities lost
their independence and autonomy. Dawkins therefore acknowledged in the White Paper that
the success of the Reforms depended on the goodwill and co-operation of higher education
institutions to implement the change:

The success of the reforms which the Government has proposed will depend on the
coop-eration and goodwill of higher education institutions through their governing
bodies and their academic and general staff. They will need to involve themselves in
long-term and strategic planning, to co-operate with other institutions, their wider community and governments, and to seek ways of enhancing their flexibility and responsiveness to community needs in both teaching and research (White Paper, 1988, p.11).

However, while many academic staff were critical of the Dawkins Reforms, the findings of an immediate post-Dawkins national study of key position holders in higher education institutions throughout Australian, indicate that many institutional leaders were supportive of the managerialist focus of the Dawkins Reforms (Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989). Study participants include a Chair of Council, Executive Officer, Registrars/Secretary of universities and CAEs, Chairs and Executive Directors of higher education agencies. An overwhelming eighty-four per cent of respondents replied in the affirmative to the survey question ‘in the next ten years should institutional management be strengthened? Forty-eight per cent replied that it was ‘highly desirable’ while another forty-six per cent indicated that it was ‘desirable’ (p.67). The same participants agreed unanimously with the statement that ‘in the next ten years strategic planning will be an integral part of management’ (99%), sixty per cent of the participants ‘strongly agreed’ with this statement and thirty per cent ‘agreed’. Only one participant had ‘no opinion’ (p.69).

The findings of the Meek and Goedegebuure (1989) study therefore suggest that the majority of institutional leaders in the post-Dawkins Unified National System (UNS) who responded to this survey (149 participants from 203 targeted potential participants, providing a response rate of 73%), were philosophically in agreement with the managerialist intent in the Dawkins Reforms. And, as Academic Board’s institutional leadership role was steadily diminished, the Reforms were progressively enacted, without a strong counter academic leadership challenge, in Australian universities.

The case studies indicate that the implementation timeline varied from institution to institution, Vice-Chancellor to Vice-Chancellor. During the interviews conducted for this study, each participant was asked to confirm or refute a finding from the Hoare Committee Report (1995), that had established to undertake a management review of the sector and report on the progress universities had made towards introducing smaller governing bodies that included corporate expertise and the implementation of strategic planning. Question 6 in the Interview schedule (p.96) asked participants the following question:
The 1995 Hoare Committee Report states that “over recent years our universities have made progress toward more contemporary management practices, largely through the development of strategic planning and a focus on improving quality. However this progress has not been even. Do you agree with this statement?”

Every study participant [n=9] agreed with the statement which confirms that the Dawkins reforms were not implemented uniformly. For example, some study participants were able to describe strategic planning projects at their employer universities in the 1980s (Emeritus Professor and the Former Vice-Chancellor). Other participants describe the release of the first university Strategic Plan in the mid-1990s (Dean), the late 1990s (Professor of Education) and the 2000s (Professor of Industrial Relations and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor). The Professor of Higher Education moved to a metropolitan university in the 2000s and was therefore able to compare the strategic planning capabilities at two contrasting universities at this particular moment in time. He suggests that his new employer university was “light years ahead” of the regional university, which still did not have an overall united approach to developing a Strategic Plan in the 2000s (p.130).

The White Paper stated categorically “It is from an institution’s strategic plan that its educational profile should be developed” (White Paper, 1988, p.104) and “triennial funding based on agreed priorities for institutional activities and performance against those priorities” (p.27). Therefore, all Australian universities were under pressure to develop strategic plans to comply with these arrangements and maintain a good working relationship with the government. The sector was also made aware that a formal audit agency would be established and tasked to evaluate institutional performance against the objectives published in the university’s Strategic Plan. Compliance with the Reforms was mandatory, it was not an option. Yet, the findings of the West Committee (1998) suggested that traditional academic governance arrangements were still in place in many Australian universities in the late 1990s and that this was hampering the introduction of modern management practices (pp.89-90; see also Marginson & Considine, 2000, pp.60-61). Nevertheless, Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives persisted with the implementation of strategic planning, and by the mid-2000s all Australian universities had a formal, university-wide Strategic Plan for marketing, public relations and performance management purposes.

Strategic Plans were used to develop institutional funding ‘profiles’ or ‘compacts’ with the government, and provide the framework for the institutional audits conducted by the
Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) established in 2001, and its replacement, the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor admitted that his university did not perform well in its first AUQA audit because it did not have an effective strategic framework (p.136). The Dean declared that the Australian university sector is “still in a socio-historical period of risk management and regulation and that is not necessarily where you will get great breakthroughs in quality” (p.125).

In 2014, all Australian universities have a published Strategic Plan on their websites as well as Strategy, Planning or Business Intelligence Units led by a Director, supported by teams of analysts and statisticians who provide the data that informs the annual planning and performance review cycles linked to the budget process. References to these forms of strategic institutional initiatives are peppered through the 1st and 2nd cycle of AUQA Reports with increasing intensity.

Therefore, it could be argued that twenty-six years after the Dawkins Reforms were enacted, the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities is now complete.

The second supporting factor that led to the introduction of strategic planning in the Australian university sector was the emergence of the strategic planning literature from the North American Business Schools in the decades immediately preceding the Dawkins Reforms. This has been outlined extensively in Chapter 3, Literature Review. The Emeritus Professor admitted during the interview that she found this literature very interesting and incorporated the principles into her leadership practice in the years immediately preceding the Dawkins Reforms. She also recalls witnessing instances of “very good planning” throughout the sector as a member of the 1988 Wilson Quality Committee, took these ideas back to her institution and implemented them in her leadership practice (p.155).

The Emeritus Professor’s case study confirms that there were small cohorts of executives who were proactively implementing modern management principles, including strategic planning, in their employer universities in the pre-Dawkins period, such as the planning environment at the University of Melbourne that produced one of the earliest Strategic Plans in the Australian university sector in 1988.
The Professor of Education recalls that after the Dawkins amalgamations “we took thousands of new students” (p.105) thereby necessitating more sophisticated planning processes and systems. The Professor of Higher Education summarises this intent succinctly “There was pressure throughout the 1990s to engage in strategic planning: the government was promoting it and there was much emphasis on strengthening management within universities which of course was one of the primary objectives of the Dawkins Reforms of 1988” (p.129).

The observations drawn from this study indicate that strategic planning was introduced in the Australian university sector, primarily through the Dawkins Reforms, supported by the publication of strategic planning literature by North American Business Schools as early as the 1960s, increasing in intensity in the 1990s. However, a distinction needs to be made at this point between the introduction and the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities. For although the above named change forces were responsible for introducing strategic planning to Australian universities, the implementation process was led by Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executives, supported by senior professional staff who were recruited to the sector in the post-Dawkins era.

Therefore, the various forms of leadership identified in the case studies presented in this thesis, were key change drivers in the implementation of strategic planning in the Australian university sector, producing very different organisational outcomes.

8.3.2 What organisational impact did this have on Australian universities?

The findings of this study suggest that there were three primary organisational impacts that worked in tandem to effectively transform Australian universities in the post-Dawkins era into academic-managerial institutions that can be attributed in part to the introduction of strategic planning. The first impact revealed in the case studies was a decline in the power of academic staff who were not part of the executive; secondly the organisational consequences of the ‘managerialisation’ of the sector and the introduction of strategic planning by the Dawkins Reforms in 1988; and thirdly, the introduction of a post-Dawkins audit process, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in 2001, that evaluated the performance of Australian universities against the objectives outlined in the institutional
Strategic Plan or strategic framework, thereby effectively forcing universities to transform their modes of operation from more collegial and inclusive academic modes of planning, to centralised strategic planning informed by financial and performance data.

The study participants describe several leadership changes which resulted in a decline in academic power. One of the leadership initiatives raised by the participants, discussed previously in this Chapter, was the introduction of the role of Executive Dean. These appointments were made by the Vice-Chancellor, whereas Deans had been traditionally elected by their peers. As the Executive Deans were part of the Senior Executive they were expected to support the decisions made by the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive even if these decisions were not necessarily beneficial for the Faculty. This created another instance of the ‘us and them’ divide between the Executive and the academic community described by the Professor of Higher Education in his role as Deputy Chair of Academic Board, (pp.129-131). The Professor of Education also argued that in the early post-Dawkins years, the strength of the Faculties at his employer university helped to diffuse some of the changes arising from the Dawkins Reforms. However, over the years this strength was steadily diminished.

Another key strategic change in the Dawkins Reforms that has direct relevance to this study, was the introduction of a more ‘streamlined decision-making processes’ outlined in the White Paper, Chapter 10, Institutional Management and Staffing (1988). In order to achieve this objective, the Government expected universities to develop “strong managerial modes of operation, which remove barriers to delegation of policy implementation from governing bodies to Chief Executive Officers …” (p.103).

This represents the most significant organisational impact arising from the Dawkins Reforms, discussed extensively in this thesis, which is the loss of governance authority of Academic Board. However, the Emeritus Professor explained why, in her view, she felt it was necessary to by-pass Academic Board to make the difficult internal resourcing decisions that would have been contested in a collegial academic forum “we really had to” (Emeritus Professor, p.157). Marginson and Considine also found that the participants in their large-scale study, without exception, saw the collegial making pathway “as an obstacle to managerial rationalities”, (2000, p.11).
In the pre-Dawkins period, all Australian universities had a bi-cameral governance structure comprised of a governing Council (or Senate), and an Academic Board (or Academic Senate). However, by the 2000s many Academic Boards no longer had strategic oversight of the university’s planning or budget processes (Professor of Education, pp.107; the Professor of Higher Education, pp.130; and the Emeritus Professor, p.157). This shift in leadership power is also supported in the literature. Rowlands, for example, confirms that contemporary Academic Boards in Australian universities were effectively ‘disempowered’ and their role increasingly focused on curriculum developments and quality assurance (Rowlands, 2011, p.2; see also Bradshaw, 2002).

The role of the Vice-Chancellor has always been a very powerful position in Australian universities. However, a supporting collegial decision making pathway contains checks and balances to ensure major initiatives are subject to debate and scrutiny by representatives of the academic community before decisions are made. When the collaborative academic decision pathway was no longer effective, and the Vice-Chancellor assumed control for setting the strategic direction of the university, she/he then had the positional authority to affect change they thought was important in the way they thought would be most effective, with or without input from their peers and academic colleagues.

This can represent a significant leadership risk for the university if the Vice-Chancellor has been poorly briefed, or develops a mindset that may or may not be in the best interests of the university. For example, some of the private colleges and overseas campuses established by various Vice-Chancellors have not uniformly successful. If the collegial decision making pathway was reinstated, the risk that one individual, or a small group of individuals, could make a poor decision for and on behalf of the university community would be mitigated.
However, it could also be argued that the bi-cameral governance structure was not as strong and as well established in Australia as it was in the United Kingdom (Shattock, 2010).

When the first Australian universities were established, most had a unicameral governance structure with one governing body. At the time of the Dawkins Reforms, all Australian universities had an Academic Board or Academic Senate, as its principal board of academic governance. Academic Boards however were sub-committees of the governing body, Council (Senate), with responsibilities to review programs of study for compliance with the Degree Rules, assess quality, recommend new programs of study and provide advice to Council (Senate) on academic matters. The relationship between the two governing bodies was perceived by many academics employed in the Australian university sector in the pre-Dawkins period to be an equal partnership in a bicameral system of governance. However, as Academic Board was a sub-committee of Council, it was in reality a conditional governance partnership that depended on the benevolence of Council to bestow leadership authority and determine the matters brought to it for consideration by its members. In the post-Dawkins period, as the data in this study demonstrates, Councils (Senates) increasingly assumed a corporate focus and therefore responsibility for all matters relating to strategy and finance. These responsibilities were then codified in updated Acts and by-laws.

12 In 1909 the University of Queensland was established with one governing body, Senate, with extensive powers (s.16); The University of Western Australia 1911 establishment act made provisions for one governing body, also termed Senate (s.13); The Act of Incorporation that Endowed and Incorporated the University of Sydney in 1850 provided for one governing body, Senate (Council) that had responsibility for the “entire management and Superintendance” of the University [s.VIII]. In 1909 The University of Sydney still had one “body politic and corporate”, Senate (Council), however, a sub-committee of Senate, Academic Board, had been established. Academic Board was Chaired by a Senate (Council) Fellow [The University and University Colleges Act, 1900, s.7 (1) and (1) (h)], and provided advice to Senate on all academic matters.

13 The University of Tasmania Act of 1992 states that Council may “act in all matters concerning the University in the way it considers will best advance the interests of the University (s.9, 2); has the power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its function as the University’s governing authority, and in particular has power – (a) to appoint persons to positions of responsibility within the University; and (b) to allocate funds and otherwise determine the best use of the resources of the University. The Function of Academic Senate is to advise the Council on all academic matters relating to the University (Division 4, s.13, 2). The Macquarie University Act 1989 as amended states (1) There is to be an Academic Senate of the University, consisting of (a) The Vice-Chancellor, and (b) other such persons as the Council may, in accordance with the by-laws, determine. (2) Subject to subsection (1) the constitution and the functions of Academic Senate are to be prescribed by the by-laws (s. 15).
Secondly, the implementation of strategic planning in universities as part of the Dawkins Reforms relied upon the recruitment of staff who had the skills to implement modern management practices, including strategic planning, in Australian universities. This included the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors with management, financial and/or tertiary administration experience, such as the Emeritus Professor and the Vice Chancellor, and the recruitment of professional staff to lead and manage the establishment of the corporate areas of the university, described by the Professor of Education and the research Professor. Herein lies the source of the ‘managerialism’ of the Australian university sector discussed in the Introduction to this thesis. The Professor of Industrial Relations stated, that “in the late 1990s and early 2000s there was conflict in the sector between the increasing ‘managerialisation’ of the university which was at odds with the traditional academic ways of doing things. Although I think this tension is less obvious now, it has not been resolved” (p.112).

Dawkins’ Green and White Papers were released to evince a case for transformational structural and organisational change on an unprecedented scale and persuade the Australian higher education sector and the general public through the power and logic of the argument. The documents were strongly managerial in both tone and intent and there was a remarkable absence of academic terminology. No reference was made to the role of the professoriate in the change leadership process, and the only time the title Vice-Chancellor was used in the White Paper was in the definition of the term Chief Executive Officer: “‘Chief Executive Officer’ means Vice-Chancellor, Director or Principal or the person acting in his or her position, or his or her nominee” (p. 133).

On this point, however, the Australian university sector held firm and continued to use the customary title of Vice-Chancellor, or Vice-Chancellor and Principal, to describe their institutional leader. The only participant in this study to use the term “CEO” was the Professor of Education, who remarked that while the Vice-Chancellor was focused on research, he also managed to attract some very good students, therefore he was “producing like a CEO [which] satisfied both the governing body and the academics”, (p.106).

The Dawkins Reforms were framed entirely within the language and principles of managerialism. The thrust of the Reforms was to wrest leadership of Australian universities
from the professoriate, diffuse the power held in collegial leadership structures, such as 
Academic Board and the faculties, and centralise power and authority in Vice-Chancellors 
as Chief Executive Officers of the university. These objectives were to be achieved through 
the introduction of modern management principles, specifically the implementation of 
strategic planning, performance monitoring and review (White Paper, 1988, p.104) argued 
to be essential in the government’s campaign to reduce the funding obligations borne by the 
government and improve institutional efficiencies throughout the sector.

Several participants agreed that universities need Strategic Plans to outline the strategic 
direction of the university, consolidate institutional mergers and amalgamations, direct 
resources to areas of strategic priority, and accommodate growth in student numbers. Two 
Vice-Chancellor participants in this study were supportive of the managerial agenda outlined 
in the Dawkins Reforms, arguing that strategic planning provided the opportunity for them 
to rationalise university activities as they did not have sufficient funding to “keep doing all 
the things we were doing and the planning process helped guide our thinking through these 
issues”, such as the Emeritus Professor (p.154) and the Vice-Chancellor who viewed this 
period as a positive period of transformation of the Australian university sector (p.143).

The Emeritus Professor argued that some of the new post-Dawkins universities were more 
widely willing and able to adopt the Dawkins Reforms, as they had more businesslike organisational 
characteristics than the older universities. “Most of the ATN universities are quite strongly 
planned institutions, I think because they have always been run as a sort of business, which 
is not necessarily the case with the Go8… we had very strong data which informed the 
planning process ...” (Emeritus Professor p.156).

No doubt Dawkins was aware of this, and knew that a large number of new universities 
would be receptive to the Reforms as they were eager to achieve university status. They also 
understood that the management processes outlined in the Dawkins Reforms would help 
them consolidate their amalgamated organisational restructures and maximise the use of 
their resources. It could be argued that this represented a strong compliance incentive for the 
former CAEs and Institutes, which helped to drive the change through the pre-Dawkins 
universities in the sector.
The Emeritus Professor’s case study demonstrates that the new post-Dawkins universities were the first to use metrics to guide their strategic planning and performance management processes. Some of the more traditional universities did not readily embrace these tasks, as the Professor of Education and Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s case studies illustrate. For example, it was common knowledge through the sector in the late 1990s – 2000s that one Go8 university did not meet its prospective enrolment targets and had to pay back millions of dollars to the government the following calendar year. This data forecasting error caused an emergency adjustment to the University Budget, curtailed its activities for a number of years and served as a warning to other universities in the sector to improve their data collection, projections and reporting capability.

To many Australian academics the managerial language in the Green and White Papers was an affront, as, at the time Australian universities were academic not corporate institutions (see for example Anne Susskind, ‘Academics Left out of Reform’, SMH, 17 December 1987). Australian universities had been established on founding ideologies akin to the European and American university systems, and although they had developed national characteristics that were unique (Marginson, 2000, 1999b), their governance structures and planning functions were fashioned by a commitment to academic values and traditions that were a thousand years old. And, at the time the Dawkins Reforms were enacted, universities were characterised by a collegial governance framework. “Universities are, like animals and plants, products of their heredity and environment, (Ashby, 1967, cited Patterson, 1997, p.1).

Thirdly, the study participants recall the development of institution-wide Strategic Plans by the mid to late 1990s in readiness for the academic audits to be conducted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) established in 2001. The first cycle of AUQA audits commenced with the University of New South Wales (October, 2001), Charles Darwin University (November, 2001), the University of Ballarat and the University of Southern Queensland (July, 2002), Curtin University of Technology (August, 2002), The Australian Catholic University, Newcastle University and Swinburne University of Technology (September 2002), Macquarie University and the University of Adelaide (October, 2002), and concluded with the Australian National University (July, 2007) after which the second cycle of AUQA audits were commenced.
AUQA concedes that the timing of the audits caused concern for some universities as there had been “a substantial organisational restructure in the previous two years and numerous senior level personnel changes (for example, the Report of an Audit of The University of Adelaide, March 2003, p.5). The focus of each AUQA audit was to assess institutional performance against the objectives outlined in the university’s Strategic Plan or strategy document, if the institution did not have a published Strategic Plan (for example, Report of an Audit of Macquarie University, October 2002).

Dawkins insisted recently that his Reforms had been framed to allow “institutions to respond in their own way, and to determine their own missions, in response to the increased resources and the increased flexibility that came with the growth of the sector” (cited Croucher, Marginson et al, p.xii). While this might be true in some respects, as there are a few brief references to the maintenance of institutional autonomy in the White Paper, as the following excerpts demonstrate, it was conditional institutional autonomy which is not autonomy in a real sense:

The Government will also ensure that institutions are free to manage their own resources without unnecessary intervention, (while at the same time remaining clearly accountable for their decisions and actions) (p.10) …

The Government’s aim is to enhance the autonomy and capacity of institutions to direct their resources flexibly and effectively to meet their designated goals. It is not, as some respondents have suggested, to reduce that autonomy not to limit the opportunities for staff to influence institutions decisions. As autonomy increases, however, so the need for accountability grows (p.101).

Critics of the Dawkins Reforms argued that they were organisationally incompatible with the ‘traditional’ collegial university. Many commentators still subscribe to this view. Nevertheless, the Reforms were implemented strongly by the Australian Government at a national level and by Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executives at the institutional level. An examination of the second cycle AUQA Reports demonstrates that by 2008 all Australian universities, to a greater or lesser extent, were no longer traditional, collegial universities but hybrid academic-management educational institutions, with strong corporate missions, governed primarily by modern management practices.
These changes were implemented by Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executive within the Sustainable Enterprise and the System Integrity management agendas (Sharrock, 2012) without sufficient consideration to the other management archetypes: the Creative Engagement, and in particular, the Professional Community management archetype, which expected managerial leadership in Australian universities to be transacted in accordance with collegial values (2012, p.333).

8.3.3 What forms of leadership were most effective in driving this change?

The insights provided by the study participants suggest there were two related, complementary leadership forces that drove the implementation of strategic planning strongly and effectively in Australian universities.

Firstly, strong authoritative macro level leadership from the Australian Commonwealth Government in enacting the Dawkins Reforms. Secondly, the rise of the ‘strategic Vice-Chancellor’ supported by the Senior Executive and senior professional staff, which established a micro power cohort at the ‘centre’ of each Australian university outside the traditional collegial governance structure. The centralisation of power in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor was further strengthened by the appointment of Executive Deans. These internal leadership forces combined to provide receptive organisational conditions for the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive to progressively and effectively implement strategic planning, in the form outlined in the Dawkins Reforms in all Australian universities.

The first form of leadership, and the most effective in driving this change, was the macro level leadership position adopted by the Australian Commonwealth Government in 1988 when it commissioned, designed and enacted the Dawkins Reforms. The changes arising from the Dawkins Reforms were raised by several of the participants during the interview discussion [n=6]. Direct references to the consequences and implications of the Dawkins Reforms are included in four of the nine case studies presented in this study, and have already been discussed extensively in the previous section of this Chapter.

The second form of leadership the findings suggest was instrumental in the implementation of strategic planning in the sector, was the institutional, micro form of leadership exercised by the Vice-Chancellor. Several participants describe the rise of the ‘strategic’ Vice-
Chancellors supported by small cohorts of Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and professional members of staff with planning skills and expertise. “Strategic planning is central and instrumental but you can’t divorce it from the rise of the strategic Vice-Chancellor, and the executive group around the Vice-Chancellor (research Professor, p.118).

The Professor of Education describes a form of ad hoc institutional planning at his employer university in the 1980s that persisted through the 1990s. His view of the post-Dawkins period was that it heralded the establishment of a formal audit process that, he argues, “caused a great deal of concern as we did not want to be subject to these types of scrutinies” (p.106). He suggests that at his employer university, it was the emergence of the accountability initiatives in the late 1980s and 1990s that resulted in academics having to assume a planning role. Arguing that this was not so much strategic planning but “policy making at the central level” (p.106). The Professor of Education’s employer university did not produce its first Strategic Plan until the late 1990s and, although he argues that it was starting to plan centrally in the 2000s, he is of the view that it was “more about responding to government initiatives rather than an attempt to engage in strategic planning” (p.107).

This is an interesting observation as most Australian universities had developed some strategic planning capability by the mid-2000s, as the first cycle of AUQA Reports attest. This situation is then explained by the Professor of Education’s next observation “I don’t think our Vice-Chancellor believed in planning”, (p.107). As the Vice-Chancellor at the Professor of Education’s university did not believe in planning, strategic planning was not implemented as swiftly at this university as it was in other Australian universities.

This lends weight to the contention of this study that the Vice-Chancellor’s leadership was a crucial component of the implementation process. The Professor of Education’s employer university offers a stark contrast to the planning environment at the Emeritus Professor’s employer university, and the University of Melbourne which published a Strategic Plan in 1988. The comparison offered by these three universities conveys in practical terms the uneven progress Australian universities made implementing strategic planning, that was reported by the Hoare Committee.
As this study has demonstrated, the Dawkins Reforms outlined a comprehensive managerial reform agenda for the Australian university sector. Therefore, it stands to reason that the highest governing body, Council (Senate), would appoint Vice-Chancellors with management or tertiary administration expertise to implement the Dawkins Reforms, as this was not an area of expertise held by most members of the professoriate in the late-1980s. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor argues that, in his view, it was a mistake for governing bodies to appoint ‘management style’ Vice-Chancellors, arguing instead that ‘successful’ academics, i.e. research scholars, who had been promoted through the ranks of academia and therefore have a well-developed understanding of the internal organisational dynamics of universities should be promoted to the positions of Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (p.136).

The Professor of Education also mentions this trend while reflecting on the impact of the Dawkins Reforms at his employer university, “then a new Vice-Chancellor was appointed who was not an academic but had a lot of experience in tertiary administration” (p.105). He further suggests that the “new breed of people who were becoming Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors” (p.106) in the post-Dawkins period drove the corporate mission. He concedes, on reflection, that the transformation of the role of the Vice-Chancellor was a major leadership shift that resulted in significant change for the sector.

The Vice-Chancellor and the Emeritus Professor had backgrounds and expertise in policy development, management, teaching and tertiary administration, and were appointed Vice-Chancellor in post-Dawkins universities that had formerly been either a College of Advanced Education or an Institute of Technology. Both participants led strategic planning primarily from the Sustainable Enterprise and the System Integrity management agendas albeit with different emphases (Sharrock, 2012). At the end of their careers, both presided over universities that could be described as managerial-academic, post-Dawkins universities. This is in contrast with the Former Vice-Chancellor who progressed through the ranks of academia following a more traditional academic pathway. As a result, his approach to strategic planning was shaped by traditional, academic values. He implies this by suggesting that there are qualitative differences between the Strategic Plans developed by universities and those produced by Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology because of “the values and what we [the universities] stood for” (p.149).
The appointment of Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and other senior members of the Executive with management, finance or tertiary education expertise, described by the Professor of Education and the research Professor, provided Vice-Chancellors with a professional leadership group that was not part of the collegial governance framework. The accumulation of professional knowledge and expertise in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, within the administrative ‘Centre’ of the university, exacerbated the growing divide between the Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board and the academic community. Not only did the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive hold positional power over the university community, they were also responsible for accumulating the new type of knowledge required to manage the non-academic activities of the university.

This knowledge quickly became the intellectual capital of the planning process and was used by the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive to assess academic performance and distribute funds within the university. “The planners produced data relating to performance and the status of the ‘God Professor’ started to erode because they did not have the knowledge needed to make the corporation work” (Professor of Education, p.106). This was accompanied by a parallel loss of leadership authority of Academic Board, therefore the development of this new institutional knowledge helped to accelerate Academic Board’s marginalisation from strategy development and the strategic decision making process. Marginson and Considine argue “In most Australian universities the new style of executive management had its first impact right at the top and centre, and then spread downwards and outwards to the academic units” (2000, p.64). This confirms admissions made by the Professor of Education that the inclusion of non-academic staff in the planning sessions was a significant leadership change which had an impact on the institutional culture (p.106).

New executive structures were established to provide advice and support to the Vice-Chancellor. This was another institutional power shift that both supported the Vice-Chancellor and legitimised the authority of the new members of the Executive by providing them with membership status on senior university committees. The new executive structures, termed for example, the Vice-Chancellor’s Advisory Committee, the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive, the Senior Management Group, or the Senior Executive, assumed responsibility for making decisions, often in informal meeting arrangements, which further
marginalised Academic Board (Marginson & Considine, 2000, pp.87-95). This led to protests from academic staff concerning a lack of leadership transparency, collegiality and consultation, together with accusations that decisions that impacted on the entire university community were being made by the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive ‘behind closed doors’ (see for example Connell, 2013a).

Planning was also constrained to an extent for Faculty Deans, as the Professor of Education and the Dean’s case studies illustrate. The Professor of Education admits that “…We kept planning but it was all a bit constrained as the main planning was taking place at the centre and academics had to work within those parameters”, (p.107). This situation is confirmed by the Dean who further explains, “We didn’t start our period of consultation until after the university released its discussion paper outlining the new strategic directions for the institution, as there was no point starting our planning cycle until we knew what we needed to achieve”, (p.124).

The complexity of this situation is summarised succinctly by the research Professor as follows:

Strategic planning is central and instrumental but you can’t divorce it from the rise of the strategic Vice-Chancellor, the executive group around the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Pro-Vice-Chancellors and the move towards Executive Deans who manage down primarily rather than managing up as they are aligned more with the centre than with the troops, and the transfer of discipline leadership down to the department of school level … all this complexity is part of the mix”, (p.118).

The participants in this study have provided deep, personal insights into the consequences of the introduction of strategic planning in the Australian university sector and other post-Dawkins changes that are now a feature of Australian universities. These changes include a change in the decision making pathways in Australian universities, which in many respects disenfranchised large sections of the academic community from the strategic planning process; and the emergence of new leadership opportunities that were attractive to strategic-managerial capable Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives. This enabled them to assume leadership control that facilitated the transformation from academic-collegial to academic-managerial organisational structures.
The observations drawn from this study indicate that the form of leadership that was most effective in driving the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities was the leadership of an authoritative ‘strategic’ Vice-Chancellor. However, as the case studies reveal, this authority was strengthened by accompanying shifts in institutional power that increased the authority of the Senior Executive and senior professional members of staff and decreased the power of the professoriate and Academic Board thereby leading to dispersed cohorts of ‘disenfranchised’ academics at many Australian universities (see pp.28-30).

8.4 Concluding discussion

The case studies presented in this thesis bring unique insights into why strategic planning was introduced to the Australian university sector and progressively and consistently implemented in Australian universities. They also illustrate the ways in which the universities have been organisationally transformed since the study participants joined the sector as junior members of academic staff in the 1960s and 1970s thereby offering a unique historical window into changes impacting on Australian universities over the last three decades. There have been many external and internal countervailing forces driving this organisational change, including: massification; funding pressures; competition; internationalisation; globalisation; the diversification of the student body; the establishment of accountability regimes; managerialism and the New Public Management agenda; changes to academic employment contracts, declining work conditions and casualisation of the workforce; an increase in the number of non-academic staff employed by Australian universities; the emergence of the Information Age and supporting technologies; the growth of the global knowledge economy and emphasis on quality; the introduction of strategic planning to the sector as part of the Dawkins Reforms; and the implementation of strategic planning as a modern management practice in Australian universities by Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executives.

All of these countervailing forces had an impact on Australian universities, a point readily conceded by the Professor of Education “… all universities were affected by many countervailing forces that pushed us towards a corporate model, and away from the old notion of what a university used to be and what many people thought it should still be …” (p.107).
Some academic staff anecdotally refer to this period as the ‘great neoliberalist coup’. However, the Macquarie Dictionary defines a coup as “an unexpected and successfully executed stratagem; a masterstroke”. The data presented in this study, suggests the change should not have been unexpected, as the Professor of Education reflects:

… the Hawke-Keating government had restructured the economy so why would they leave aside a big publicly funded sector like education which was so important to economic growth? So you could see that change was coming but we initially thought we could handle this in our traditional way through the Academic Board. But by then the Academic Board did not have any control over the resources as money was now distributed from the centre based on student enrolments (p.106).

However, as the findings of this study indicate, academic staff were not able to ‘handle this change in their traditional way’, as Academic Board itself was eventually disempowered, thereby denying the academic collective an active role in the process. The Professor of Education and the Professor of Higher Education, both former Deputy Chairs of Academic Board, describe the consequences of Academic Board’s marginalisation from the strategic planning and strategic resourcing governance processes, observations that are also reflected in the literature (see for example, Rowlands, 2011; Bradshaw, 2002).

The role of the Vice-Chancellor in the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities was critical. Strategic planning may have been introduced to the sector by Dawkins and the literature arising from the North American Business Schools, however it was implemented by Vice-Chancellors and their Senior Executives in universities throughout Australia during the post-Dawkins era. As universities started to plan from a centralised management perspective, the leadership power previously held by the academic collective was diminished, and the leadership power of the ‘strategic’ Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive was strengthened. Both the Professor of Education (p.106) and the research Professor (p.118) argue that this shift in leadership power brought significant change to Australian universities.

Similar findings on a global scale were recently proposed by Professor Philip Altbach at an international gathering of higher education researchers, when he stated categorically that “…we are in the midst of a higher education revolution … universities have been transformed since the end of the last century, there is no doubt about this …. there has also been a decline
in Faculty power, there is no doubt about this …” (Keynote Address, Society for Research into Higher Education, Annual Conference, Newport, Wales, UK, 11 December 2013).

Individuals who were philosophically aligned with the strategic planning model outlined in the Dawkins Reforms, were enthusiastic about the opportunity to implement strategic planning in their employer universities and facilitate the transformation from a collegial academy to the modern complex mixed economy universities, such as the Vice-Chancellor, and the Emeritus Professor.

Staff who were opposed to the implementation of Dawkins’ strategic planning model, and held the view that university leadership should be primarily collegial, were then forced to make a choice to either become involved and try to shape the process so that it was more aligned with the traditional mode of collegial planning that had served universities for hundreds of years, such as the Professor of Higher Education, the Dean, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor; or stand aside from the process and let it unfold without their involvement or input such as the Professor of Education. Academics who were marginalised from the process could elect to work with the NTEU to moderate some aspects of the process, such as the Professor of Industrial Relations. Other staff, if they were diametrically opposed, protested and assumed disruption tactics, such as the protesting academic staff introduced in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

The participants in this study have described how and why they led strategic planning using the approach they thought was most appropriate to the context. As these decisions were made at an individual or small group level, strategic planning in Australian universities took different individualised forms that are reflected in the conceptual framework of leading strategic planning presented in this thesis (p.169). The study participants provide a wide range of opinions on this topic. Therefore, we can conclude that it would never have been possible for a single modern management process, strategic planning, to be all things to all people – particularly when the philosophical perspectives of the individuals involved and the multiple and often contrasting shared meanings embodied in the construct are taken into account.

The reflections on practice and recommendations to the next generation of university leaders will be discussed in the Chapter 9, Conclusion, to follow.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Recommendations for the future

The concluding question on the interview schedule asked the participants to provide advice to the next generation of individuals who will be tasked to lead strategic planning in Australian universities in the future. There was a high level of agreement among the participants concerning the actions leaders should exercise to frame the strategic planning process positively. Therefore, the following three key recommendations have been developed from the study findings:

1. Leaders must have the skills to engage others in the strategic planning process;
2. Leaders must have a comprehensive understanding of the organisation to be able to plan effectively;
3. Different situations require different strategic planning approaches, therefore there is no ‘right’ way to lead strategic planning in Australian universities.

These three recommendations require leaders to demonstrate multiple traits and characteristics from the effective, transformational, and exemplary leadership paradigms identified by the leadership theorists and outlined in the Literature Review.

1. Leaders must have the skills to engage others in the strategic planning process.

Individuals leading strategic planning in Australian universities must be able to inspire their staff to join them on the strategic planning journey. The strategic planning process itself must also be cohesive and participative. Strategic planning is designed to be led from the top, therefore it can be difficult to inspire others to become involved and stay committed for the duration of the process. The leadership task, therefore, is to find ways to motivate and build enthusiasm among the people leaders have been tasked to lead. This is particularly difficult in universities as academic staff do not like to be managed, or told what to do. The participants acknowledged that universities will always have pockets of dissent. This is where leadership is critical, argues the Former Vice-Chancellor, as effective leaders should be able to “negotiate, discuss, debate, and evolve broad agreement” (p.149).
Engagement and consent are not freely given. They are organisational gains effective leaders need to bring to the strategic planning processes.

The participants offer the following suggestions to achieve this recommendation:

- Effective consultation will help to generate commitment, however, it must be meaningful, genuine, two-way consultation. Informing people does not meet the genuine consultation test. In order to engage others in the process, participants should see the draft plan change shape as input from the consultation sessions and surveys is incorporated. Academic staff understand that every point of view cannot be reflected in the Strategic Plan, however, it should be possible to shape the new strategic goals for the university so that they satisfy a majority of the stakeholders. And, a mutually respectful negotiation process, led by a highly skilled leader, should be able to reconcile major points of disagreement.

- Leaders need to have the skills to persuade staff to share the new strategic vision. Academics are autonomous, intelligent and highly qualified individuals. They will not be persuaded using a command and control leadership approach. It may be possible to persuade them to engage in the process if they are confident that the strategic goals they are working towards will reflect the outcomes of a genuine consultation process. If so, then the final plan will represent issues the majority of staff are concerned about, which means that the Strategic Plan will be owned by the community as well as the leader. This will build trust, confidence and staff engagement that will streamline the strategic implementation process and lay positive foundations for the next strategic planning exercise.

- The strategic planning process must be open, transparent and legitimate. Information must be shared honestly among the participants and decisions made in accordance with the university’s decision making protocols. These decisions should be communicated to the university community as planning reference points, so that the next step of the process is based on these common areas of understanding. During periods of severe financial difficulties, and organisational
instability due to amalgamations or mergers, decisions will need to be made that may not be popular with all the members of the university community. In these instances the case for change should be evinced clearly and honestly, supported by relevant documentation, so that decisions can be made that will serve the best interests of the community.


Leaders also need to establish an advocacy culture (Fullan & Scott, 2009, pp.30-31; Northouse, 2010, p.251); that envisions and shares a new future with all the stakeholders (Fullan & Scott, 2009, pp.86-90; Kouzes & Posner, 2003, pp.109-139); through the art of persuasion (Northouse, 2010, pp.46-47), negotiation (Buchanan & Badham, 2004, p.176); at the same time managing dissent so that the strategic planning process is not derailed (Fullan & Scott, 2009, p.77; Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p.83).
Acquiring [leadership] competence is all about being genuine … your value as a leader is determined not only by your guiding beliefs but also by your ability to act on them. To strengthen credibility you must continuously assess your existing abilities and learn new ones. And that takes time and attention” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p.83).

2. Leaders must have a comprehensive understanding of the organisation to plan effectively.

Leaders require a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the university, including detailed knowledge of the staff, staff dynamics, cultures and sub-cultures, internal and external challenges, areas of strength and weakness and have the knowledge to predict and direct shifts in response to changes in the external operating environment. Individuals leading effective strategic planning in universities should also ensure the strategic planning approach and the strategic goals outlined in the new Strategic Plan are enculturated with the shared organisational values. If the strategy and the values are aligned, it may be possible to minimise dissent. If not, having a comprehensive understanding of the internal dynamics of the university and positive relationships with staff will assist leaders negotiate with disaffected individuals and/or organisational units and negotiate a compromise. The research Professor advises that this is crucial as universities “have an inner logic of their own that can make things happen or not happen despite the wishes of all the participants for good or bad” (p.116).

The participants offer the following suggestions to achieve this:

- Maintaining connections with the stakeholders provides opportunities for individuals or groups to raise issues of concern or provide an early alert system for problems developing on the horizon. For example, the Former Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research are research active and are therefore connected to colleagues internal and external to the university. The Professor of Industrial Relations recommends that the university leader keep some teaching commitments to maintain connections with their teaching colleagues and the students (p.111).
• Strategy is time critical, therefore, leaders must be able to appreciate what is possible at a particular time and how best to achieve this outcome. Having a comprehensive understanding of the organisation and the internal and external planning environments is critical to effective strategy development and strategic planning.

• Managing dissent is a key leadership responsibility for university Executives. Having deep connections with staff and an appreciation of the internal dynamics of the university will help leaders manage or mitigate dissent and any intended or unintended organisational consequences as or before they arise.

• Maintaining meaningful connections with colleagues, students and other stakeholders provides the opportunity for leaders to inspire the university community and build positive and meaningful engagement in the strategy development process. This demands a comprehensive organisational and environmental understanding of the dynamics inherent each new planning context, so that the leader can change their leadership and strategic planning approach to ensure it is institutionally, situationally and contextually contingent. In the words of the Professor of Higher Education university leaders must understand “the beast” they are tasked to lead, (p.131).

3. Different situations require different strategic planning approaches, therefore there is no ‘right’ way to lead strategic planning in Australian universities.

As the above discussion illustrates, leaders must have the skills to engage the community in the planning process and ensure that the strategic planning approach is shaped to suit the planning context. Each Australian university has a unique history and different institutional values that are reflected in the institutional norms, vision statements and Strategic Plans. It stands to reason, therefore, that there can be no single, simple, formulaic, rational approach to strategic planning in Australian universities. “Strategic Planning has become very stylised operationally as if it is a means in itself, but of course it is not” (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, p.136).
The Emeritus Professor describes this succinctly. “I don’t think there is one right way to plan strategically. The approach you take needs to be crafted to fit the culture of the organisation, and be designed to ensure the right decisions are made so that you can meet the challenges faced at that particular time. This is the great challenge of strategic planning and also of leadership” [my emphasis] (p.157). Additionally, unless the leader is able to share a compelling strategic vision, has a comprehensive understanding of the current challenges and opportunities together with an appreciation of the external environment they will not be able to lead the community and set the new strategic direction for the university, … “if you don’t have some idea of where you need to go, then you will get nowhere”, (Former Vice-Chancellor, p.149).

It is not possible for one individual, or a small group of individuals, to know everything about the university and the external environment at any given point in time. That is why meaningful, effective consultation and situational analysis is critical. Universities are complex socio-political-educational institutions, therefore the process of engaging the community and consulting with the stakeholders will need to be tailored to meet the needs of the organisational environment at that particular moment in time. Australian universities have different organisational histories, mission statements, strengths and weaknesses, lending themselves to an array of challenges and opportunities at any given time.

The role of the individual leading strategic planning, therefore, is to bring all this complexity together to develop a Strategic Plan that unites, not divides the community.

There have been a wide range of approaches taken in Australian universities with different levels of density in terms of detail, and different rhythms of consultation. Variables lie in the amount in which the plan changes as it goes, and the level of consultation involved. Some planning starts with a period of consultation; others continue the consultation as the plan is being implemented. Some planning is entirely consultation driven; others do not consult at all – there has been a great deal of variation … there is not a hard and fast rule about it” (research Professor, p.116).
Some participants offered suggestions on how they would lead strategic planning in the future. For example, the Professor of Industrial Relations outlined the way she would lead a strategic planning process that involved an extensive consultation process commencing with colleagues at world-class competitor universities, supported by a comprehensive internal review and a consultation process that involves all the stakeholders, including the government, the business community, the not-for-profit sector, the students and the unions. She would apply the research paradigm in her approach to leading strategic planning and admits that she would ask lots of questions, even question herself (p.111).

The research Professor recommends leaders find innovative ways to make connections between staff and the institutional mission and values, as “universities are grounded in a much larger set of human values” and if the planning process can tap into that it will be “most effective at an affective level” (p.117), while the Professor of Higher Education states he would put mechanisms in place to generate preliminary ideas from staff in the lower levels of seniority at the university (p.131). Both the Vice-Chancellor and the Emeritus Professor argue that managing performance is an important part of the strategic planning process, as is constant review to ensure there is no organisational drift between the high level objectives in the Strategic Plan and the operational activities throughout the university. However, this is less likely to occur if the new strategic vision is shared and the strategic planning process was strongly consultative and engaged all the stakeholders.

The participants describe a poor strategic planning process as: one that is ground too closely with the budget as this does not allow flexibility and limits the possibility of developing a Strategic Plan that is as visionary and inspirational as it could be; is not in harmony with the culture and dynamics of the university; is too rigid which can result in the university being out of step with the external agencies; is not informed by genuine consultation; or is led too assertively which will not inspire or engage individual academics.

The Professor of Higher Education argues that there are two criteria for determining if a Strategic Plan is successful: one is “acceptance, grudging or otherwise from the academic community” together with a willingness on behalf of the leadership team to make modifications over time; and the other is acceptence from the wider community and stakeholders, particularly the students as they are the primary stakeholder (p.131).
A summation of the data provided by the participants in the case studies presented in this thesis suggests a number of elements that should be reflected in an ‘effective’ Strategic Plan:

- It is a living, breathing document;
- Is short, concise and directional providing clear strategic signals for the community, while relegating the detail to the cascading plans;
- It is courageous and imagines new things;
- Is informed by forward thinking and is not merely a stylised representation of business as usual;
- Strengthened by collaboration, both internal and external;
- Integrates related functions throughout the university;
- Is constantly recalibrated so that it remains relevant and situationally contingent;
- Outlines sizeable aspirational objectives that will drive the entire university;
- Represents key community aspirations and shared organisational values so that it is owned by the university community not just the Vice-Chancellor or Chancellor.

A poorly constructed Strategic Plan that is forced upon an unwilling community, is not congruent with the culture and dynamics of the university, is rigid and inflexible, and “becomes a type of ideology that managers force everyone to adhere to regardless of whether it was well thought out or not” (research Professor, p.117) will not be successful. The Emeritus Professor warns that when strategic planning does not work “it has a negative effect on innovation” (p.157) therefore it is important for leaders to do this effectively.

Most of the participants recognise that different types of leadership produces different results. As leaders need to develop plans for different purposes they must understand the importance leadership plays in the strategic planning process. Leaders should not be persuaded by arguments about maintaining the status quo and be courageous enough to ensure the strategic planning process they lead develops strategies that offer hope to the stakeholders and new opportunities for the university.
The case studies presented in this study demonstrate that when strategic planning was first implemented in the Australian university sector, although attempts were made by some individuals to be consultative and collaborative, the end result was more authoritarian (Professor of Higher Education, p.129). The reason for this is that the model of strategic planning implemented in the Australian university sector was organisationally incompatible with the collegial planning model preferred by most universities at the time. Therefore, the implementation of strategic planning in the Australian university sector needed to be driven strongly by Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executive to achieve the Government’s transformation objective. And although academics are now more familiar with this model of strategic planning, the case studies evidence that it is still difficult to motivate academic staff so that they are engaged and committed to the planning process.

The findings of this study supports the argument put forward by Rowley et al. (1997) that the shape of the strategic planning process adopted by the leadership team is more important than the strategic plan published at the end of the process. “If there is an imperative in strategic planning, it is that the process be carefully thought out, that it be flexible, and that it result in expanding participation to broaden the base for acceptance, [my emphasis] (Rowley et al., 1997, p.280).

9.2 The future of strategic planning in Australian universities

This qualitative study is the first to position strategic planning, one of the key initiatives in the Dawkins Reforms, at the centre of a research study situationally focused on the Australian university sector. The findings suggest that the introduction and implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities continues to generate organisational conflict between Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executive and their academic staff, which is a common feature of organisational life in many Australian universities today.
The study participants offer different perspectives on this development in the post-Dawkins period in Australia. They constitute a representative sample of the first generation of academic and executive leaders who led, participated in, or witnessed the implementation of strategic planning in Australian universities. An important finding that has been drawn from this study that has implications for other researchers interested in this area of study, is that Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives have a very different view of how strategic planning should be led in Australian universities from the view held by members of the professoriate.

The case studies presented by the Vice-Chancellors and some of the Academic Leaders offer positive recollections of the implementation of strategic planning in their employer universities, although they admit that they learned a great deal about leading strategic planning over their careers and would lead it differently today. While looking retrospectively over their careers, the Vice-Chancellors demonstrate how, in their view, they were instrumental in transforming their employer universities into modern Australian universities through experienced stewardship and good strategic planning. Whereas, recollections of tension, marginalisation, a process of alienation from the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive which led to different forms of disengagement from strategic planning, form a common thread in the case studies of the Professor of Education, the Professor of Industrial Relations and the Professor of Higher Education, all senior members of the professoriate.

This is a significant point of disagreement between the participants in this study that has implications for the next generation of Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives that needs to be explored. If, for example, Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executives had led strategic planning less assertively from a central position of authority, and used the tactics of persuasion to engage more members of the professoriate in the planning process, arguably the university’s most valuable asset, this would have increased organisational harmony and productivity. The Professor of Higher Education understands that while this is a more difficult leadership task, it will produce a more enduring outcome (p.131).
There are many generational differences between the retiring cohort of Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executive and the next generations of leaders who are currently progressing through the ranks of academia. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor surmises that the new generation of Vice-Chancellors are mainstream academics who are “better prepared on the management side” (p.136). Likewise current generations of professional staff hold academic qualifications including research qualifications, which means they have strong philosophical connections to academe. It is possible that the next generation of leaders may be able to traverse the ‘us’ and ‘them’ divide articulated in the case studies presented in this thesis, and develop mutually beneficial strategic partnerships that will engage the academic community, improve organisational cohesion and enable creativity and innovation to flourish.

Future research studies should identify ways to develop leaders so that they have the skills to plan strategically without dividing the community they are tasked to lead. The next generation of Vice-Chancellors and Senior Executive can themselves take elements from the findings of this study and combine this knowledge with the literature published by Vice-Chancellors themselves that explains why decisive action had to be taken (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2013, 1998), and take seriously the complaints offered by academic staff (such as Coady, 2000, Connell, 2013a, Hil, 2012; Meyers, 2012), so they can outline a new way to lead strategic planning in the future.

A future large scale study that recruits members of the university executive as well as academic and professional staff will produce a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of strategic planning in the Australian university sector. Certainly, this study has demonstrated that the sector needs a more holistic strategic planning approach that engages all the stakeholders, particularly the professoriate, and takes advantage of the opportunities offered by new communication technologies, global connections and the strategic benefits that can arise from strengthening relationships with other universities, the private sector, philanthropists and alumni.
For example, some strategic connections universities have made with alumni and philanthropists resulted in bequeaths such as the large gift from Greg Poche AO and Reg Richardson AM that led to the establishment of the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at the University of Sydney (University of Sydney honours Poche Centre donors, Media Release, 7 March 2013). American born Chuck Fenney donated $120 million to three medical research projects in Queensland associated with the Queensland University of Technology (Chuck Feeney gives Qld $102m donation, ABC News, 28 July 2009) and has continued to make substantial donations to QUT over the years. In 2013, Andrew “Twiggy” Forrest donated $65 million to establish a Forrest scholars and fellows program at the University of Western Australia (Billionaire Andrew Forrest donates biggest ever grant to UWA, SMH, 15 October, 2013).

These examples demonstrate that Australia is starting to follow the example of world-leading universities, such as Harvard University, which announced its Endowment Income for the 2013 fiscal year of USD32.7 billion. In 2014, Kenneth Griffin, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Citadel, made the largest gift so far in Harvard’s history of USD150 million which will be used to support Harvard’s financial aid program offering financial assistance to 60% of Harvard undergraduates (Harvard Gazette, 19 February 2014).

The participants in this study represent the generation of academic and executive staff who laid the foundations of strategic planning in Australian universities. However, as the data presented in this study demonstrates, the time has come to review, revise and develop new ways of leading strategic planning that rely less on a centrally driven, directional, rational-technical approach, and more on novel ways of planning that will excite and inspire academic communities throughout Australia.

This must be essentially collegial. Australian universities needs leaders who are confident enough to reinvigorate strategic planning by leading the engagement of the professoriate, re-establishing connections with Academic Board, and increase the involvement of all the stakeholders in the strategic planning and strategy development processes, particularly academic staff, students and alumni.
The Australian university sector needs leaders who can encourage academics to look with optimism to 2050 and inspire them to work together to lay the foundations of a more harmonious organisational and strategic future. University Executives cannot force academic staff to engage in strategic planning. Coercion is not a substitute for cooperation. Academic work, teaching and research, are creative, intellectual pursuits that will not prosper under harsh authoritarian regimes.

Effective leaders must be more consultative and engage meaningfully with all the university stakeholders, particularly the professoriate and the academic and professional communities. They should not need to drive the strategic planning process through relentless cycles of implementation, governed by unforgiving strategic management regimes and performance metrics poorly applied across the institution. If the strategic goals are aligned with the university values and have been developed in consultation with the academic community the implementation process will be seamless and natural.

*So, let us not be blind to our differences - but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved (J F Kennedy, 35th president of US 1961-1963).*

The challenge for the next generation of Australian Vice-Chancellors, therefore, is to make the future strategic vision look so compelling that staff, students and all the stakeholders of the university willingly subscribe to it. As a field of sunflowers, each magnificent in their own way, turn together to catch the first rays of the rising sun.
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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. I would like you to briefly describe your career in the Australian higher education sector, focusing on the various leadership roles you have held?

2. Can you recall the first time you were involved in a strategic planning process in an Australian university? When you first worked with a group that put together a formal strategy that could be defined and published as a Strategic Plan? Do you know if this was the first or one of the first strategic planning projects at your university?

3. Describe the nature of this planning process? Was it authoritarian, collaborative, and/or consultative? Large or small-scale? Who led it? Who was involved?

4. Was a Strategic Plan published at the conclusion of the process? If so, what type of plan was it? [Institution-wide? Academic? Operational? High level? Very detailed? Detail would include specific performance measures, responsibilities and timelines].

5. How was the Strategic Plan received by the stakeholders, including staff, students, the professions, alumni, industry, and government? Why do you think this was the case?

6. The 1995 Hoare Committee Report stated that “over recent years our universities have made progress toward more contemporary management practices, largely through the development of strategic planning and a focus on improving quality. However, this progress has not been even” (Hoare Report, Summary of Report and Recommendations). Were you working in the Australian HE sector in 1995? Do you agree with this statement?

7. Have you led or participated in a strategic planning process recently? If so, did you approach it the same way? Would you do it at all, if you had the choice?

8. What did you think when AUQA was established? What was the general sector reaction?

9. Were you involved in any of the AUQA Reviews? If so, what role did you play?

10. Would you like to comment on AUQA’s methodology and/or on the findings published?

11. Do you think organisational culture plays a role in the strategic planning process?

12. Reflecting on your career, do you think that your experience leading, developing or avoiding strategic planning processes had an impact on your understanding of leadership?

13. Do you think the introduction of centralised strategic planning had any impact on the internal organisational dynamics of your university and/or the sector in general?

14. What advice would you give to the next generation of individuals who will be tasked to lead the development of new Strategic Plans in Australian universities?

15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you.
Ref: IM/OO

8th December 2010

Professor Andrew Gonczi
Faculty of Health Sciences
Cumberland Campus - C42
The University of Sydney
Email: andrew.gonczi@sydney.edu.au

Dear Andrew

I am pleased to inform you that the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approved your protocol entitled “A study of strategic leadership and planning in Australian universities 2001-2010” at its meeting held on 7 December 2010.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Protocol No.: 13354
Approval Period: December 2010 to December 2011
Authorised Personnel: Professor Andrew Gonczi
Associate Professor Debra Hayes
Ms Therese Howes

Documents approved:
Participant Information Statement
Participant Consent Form
Interview Questions
Invitation Letter to Participate

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007 under Section 5.1.29.

The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. N.B. A report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval, or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in the withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed. Your report will be due on 31 December 2011, please put this in your diary.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor’s responsibilities to ensure that:

1. All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours for clinical trials/interventional research.

2. All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical conduct of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
3. Any changes to the protocol must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.

4. All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement: Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Research Integrity (Human Ethics), University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); + 61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

5. Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.

6. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

7. The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.

8. A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Associate Professor Ian Maxwell
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee