Chapter Seven: Marist Teachers and the New Education: 1900-1945

The Marist Brothers were founded in France just as the Restoration Monarchy was beginning to develop a comprehensive national system of elementary education. They arrived in Australia less than a decade after the same process began in New South Wales. As we have seen, the Marist Founder, Fr Champagnat had started his first schools without a very definite or distinctive approach to education, relying mainly on the well known model of the earlier established De La Salle Brothers and the wider French Catholic tradition. When the French governments of the July Monarchy and the Second Empire raised the qualifications for teachers in 1833 and 1854, however, the Marist Founder and his immediate successors, as Superiors General, moved, as quickly as they could, to comply with government expectations, instituting initial training and in-service programs to meet these requirements. These Marist courses, from a purely educational point of view, though usually shorter in length, were neither better nor worse than those of the government’s écoles normales and they did put more emphasis, of course, on Catechetics and Christian Education.\footnote{S. A. Curtis, Educating the Faithful (Dekalb, 2000). pp. 55-57. Ms Curtis points out that the early male state teacher-trainees \textit{(normaliens)} attended summer schools run by the De La Salle Brothers to learn their methods; that the Department of the Loire considered committing a proposed \textit{ecole normale} to the Marist brothers in 1829; and, as late as 1880, all of the \textit{écoles normales} for women around Lyon were actually run by female teaching congregations.} As competition between the Government and Catholic schools, and also between De La Salle and Marist Brothers’ schools increased, the standard of teacher training and of classroom practice began to improve, across the board, in France.\footnote{ibid. p. 138.}

It was this developing French concept of elementary education that Br Ludovic and, \textit{a fortiori}, Br John Dullea, brought with them to Australia in 1872-76. With the encouragement of Archbishop Vaughan, they sought, in those first few years, to acquire government recognition and registration, as Fr Champagnat had done in France, forty years earlier. This was denied them, as being against government policy. Consequently, following the directions, by then, of the whole Australian Catholic hierarchy, they sought to win acceptance and recognition from the Catholic laity and clergy by providing a curriculum that was, at least, equal to that of the public schools, and also by starting Select Schools and Colleges which could compete with the Corporate Schools and the public Superior Schools in preparing students for the Civil Service and University entrance examinations. The pupil-teacher training scheme which the Australian Marists developed at this time, while grounded in the customary and written traditions of the order was, pedagogically, little different in classroom practice, from that employed by the state, as the examples of Br Basil Kelly and Br Mark Lenehan show.\footnote{Chapter 6. p.116.} But although William Wilkins’ 1860s reforms of teacher training and the primary school curriculum
were revised and revamped in the aftermath of the 1880 legislation, and provided an acceptable standard against which the Marists could measure themselves, waning public interest in education and the economic Depression of the early 1890s brought about a decline in standards in both the State and Catholic systems.

As we have seen, in the previous chapter, when the economy began to revive, some Australian teaching orders such as the Irish Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Charity sent representatives to Britain and Europe for educational inspiration. Among the Marists, Br John Dullea returned to Australia in 1897 after four years as Provincial in Britain, where, given his administrative record in Sydney, the growing educational ferment in England, and the expanding state of the Marist Schools there, he would hardly have been eating his educational bread in idleness. Similarly, the state education authorities in New South Wales and Victoria sent their representatives to Britain, Europe and America, where they imbibed the spirit of the ‘New Education’. The reports of the Fink Commission in Victoria and the Knibbs-Turner Commission in New South Wales in the early years of the twentieth century planted the seeds of this ‘New Education’ in their respective states of the newly established Commonwealth of Australia and it is the purpose of this chapter to establish what sort of impact this new wave had on Australian Catholic and Marist education. Since the ‘New Education’ rhetoric continued to cause ripples for the first half of the twentieth century, it will be discussed here in two sections: 1900 to 1930 and 1930 to 1950.

The First Wave 1900-1930

I: The Low Road

The ‘New Education’ was the label applied to a complex of partly complimentary, partly contradictory theories and practices of elementary education, which began to displace the old ‘instrumentary’ education with its narrow curriculum, payment-by-results funding, and a heavy reliance on examinations, in Britain, from about 1890 onwards. The pedagogical and curriculum innovations of the Practical Educationists, Social Reformers and Moral Educationists, and the theoretical approaches of the English disciples of Pestalozzi and Froebel or the Neo-Herbartians had a profound impact on the syllabuses of the British Training Colleges and on British elementary education, as a whole, in the two decades prior to World War I. These changes also made a considerable impression on the visiting antipodean Education Commissioners and, even while still an inspector of schools in the remote Western Districts of Victoria, the future Director of Education, Frank Tate was reading all that he could lay hands on, about the New Education. Although the British reformers focussed mainly on kindergartens and elementary education, the New Education did have some implications for secondary education, for teacher training and for educational administration, especially at the

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5 ibid. pp. 24-77. The whole of this paragraph is much indebted to Professor Selleck’s summary of the New Education movement in England.
6 ibid p. 244.
systemic level. It was in these latter areas that the movement had most impact on the Marist ‘system’ in Australia.

The passing reference to Frank Tate in the previous paragraph perhaps requires some explanation because, although he was one of the most important Australian apostles of the New Education, he would do his work from the Director of Education’s position in Victoria, and the majority of Marist Brothers’ schools were still located in New South Wales. Nevertheless, the Marists did, by that time, have two schools in Victoria, at Kilmore and at Bendigo, and Tate’s reforms, in that state, went further than in any other Australian state, in that they included the government registration of both independent schools and their teachers. Marist Brothers sent from New South Wales to staff the Victorian schools would, therefore, be expected to meet the requirements for Victorian registration. This would obviously be of concern to the Sydney-based Provincial, both in verifying his teachers’ qualifications and in working out his staffing transfers each year. The Victorian reforms, however, did not start until 1905 nor ‘bite’ until 1910, so the Knibbs-Turner Reports of 1903 which began to be implemented by the NSW Director of Education, Peter Board, in 1904 were the first to which the Marist Provincial had to respond.

Beginning, then, in New South Wales, it will be remembered, from the previous chapter, that the Marist teacher training regime instituted by Br John and maintained by Br Felix, during his interim term as Provincial, was one of pupil-teacher experience for the Juniors, a minimal amount of theoretical study during the novitiate, and completion of the pupil-teacher period, under the supervision of the Brother Director, in the first school to which the newly-professed brother was sent, after his novitiate. It may have struck the reader as a theoretically under-nourished preparation for life as a vigorous, stimulating and creative teacher; but, as several writers have pointed out, the pupil-teacher system operating in the NSW Public School system at that time was only marginally more theoretical. And the daily timetable, whether for ordinary pupil-teachers in schools, or for the minority of students in the training colleges, was only marginally less monastic than that followed by the Marist Brothers. Consequently, one of the first major reforms, recommended by the Knibbs-Turner report, was the phasing out of the pupil-teacher system and the wider provision of a more theoretically oriented pre-service training for teachers.

The Marist Brothers’ Provincial was not one of the ‘prominent educationists’ officially invited to the big Education Conference of April 1904, at which the Knibbs-Turner recommendations were publicly discussed; but Cardinal Moran, his Coadjutor, Archbishop Kelly, the Diocesan Inspector of Catholic Schools, Fr Brophy, and the Rector of St Ignatius’ College Riverview, Fr Gartlan SJ, were invited and between them gave quite a positive Catholic response to the major educational thrust of the proposals.⁸

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Moreover, the Knibbs-Turner recommendation regarding the discontinuation of pupil-teachers had been published in December 1903 and the Marist Provincial Council meeting of that same month had already acted upon it. The Juniors were withdrawn from their pupil-teacher role in the city schools for 1904 and a secondary course of studies was set up for them at St Mary’s High School. The first two Marist Juniors in this new ‘system’, passed the Junior Public in December 1906.\(^\text{10}\) Br Andrew Power, who had graduated from the novitiate in January 1904 and was, therefore, one of the last of the old pupil-teacher trainees, was sent to teach first at St Mary’s parish school, then at the Novitiate, then St Benedict’s in Broadway, until the end of 1905. In 1906-07, when he was teaching at St Mary’s High School, he and five of his peers travelled to Hunter’s Hill every Friday evening to spend all day Saturday and up to 4 pm. on Sunday studying for the Junior Public Exam, under some of the St Joseph’s senior teachers. Four of these young brothers passed the Junior at the end of 1907, the other two at the end of 1908.\(^\text{11}\)

This insistence on the young brothers’ gaining of the Junior Public seems to have been the main teacher-training consequence of the Knibbs-Turner Report for the Marist Brothers in New South Wales. However, the state itself was slow to implement the recommendations of the commission. Sydney Teachers’ College, certainly, was opened to male students in 1905 and to women from 1906; but admission to the college was by a competitive examination, open only to previously selected probationary students, whose last two years of secondary education had been subsidized by the Education Department. The less successful probationary students, who failed to gain admission to the college, were appointed straight to schools as junior assistants, little better equipped than the pupil-teachers who had preceded them.\(^\text{12}\) Since the Teachers’ College could not accommodate all of the Education Department’s own applicants, it could hardly accept any Marist Brothers’ applicants and, since there was still no move to register teachers or schools in New South Wales, it was left to the Victorian Education Department to give the Marist Brothers this added incentive to improve their teacher-training and the facilities of their schools.

The new Victorian requirements were set out in the Registration of Teachers and Schools Act (No. 2013) of 1905, then revised and extended by the Education Act (No. 2301) of 1910.\(^\text{13}\) Br Victor Ludeke, the new Australian Provincial, who succeeded Br Stanislaus Healey in July 1906, forwarded the outline of a pre-service course of studies to be followed by trainee Marist Brothers in Sydney to the Victorian Teachers and Schools Registration Board and received a reply at the end of August assuring him that all brothers who had passed this course and who were practicing as secondary teachers prior to the passing of the Act could be registered as such in Victoria. The letter from the registrar, Mr M.H. Bottoms, goes on to say that brothers who complete the outlined course, subsequent to 1906, would be eligible for registration as primary teachers only, and that those who applied for secondary registration between 1906 and 1910

\(^{10}\) Br Alban Doyle, *The Story of the Marist Brothers in Australia* (Sydney, 1972), p. 439.

\(^{11}\) Br Frederick McMahon, *Not Shaken by the Wind* (Sydney, 1998), pp. 8-9.


would also be required to provide evidence that they were competent to teach their secondary subjects to the appropriate level. After January 1910, the letter foreshadowed, applicants for secondary registration would need to have passed the described course and also the relevant subjects at the Junior Public Examination level.\footnote{Teachers’ College Correspondence File, MBAS, St Joseph’s College, Hunter’s Hill.}

In June 1906, the Director of Assumption College, Kilmore, Br Bernardine, also wrote to the Victorian Registration Board, requesting secondary registration for the school and for himself.\footnote{Assumption College, Kilmore, File. Registered Schools Board, Melbourne.} Registration No.111 was duly awarded in December of that year and Assumption has retained that registration ever since; but, as Mr M.P. Hansen, the first inspector of Registered Schools pointed out, the Board’s original inspection protocol involved commenting, only, on the sanitation, health and safety condition of the school premises. It was not until the 1910 Education Act, that the Board’s Inspectors were empowered to inquire about the school’s curriculum offering and the qualifications of its staff. The truth was, that the 1905 Act had vastly over-estimated the Department’s capacity to administer the registration process for either schools or teachers. Even after the 1910 revision, the Victorian Government was compelled to leave the requirements for secondary registration of teachers at the Junior Public level and to let the expectation of the university’s Diploma of Education lapse, because of its own inability to provide adequate secondary teaching practice for Departmental teachers, much less those in Independent or Catholic schools.\footnote{Badcock, \textit{op.cit.} pp. 174-181.} The Secondary Registration of the Marist Brothers’ College at Bendigo, (No. 530), granted at the same time as Kilmore’s, has also been maintained without interruption, despite the fact that, as late as 1935, the Staff Return to the Registered Schools Board shows that all of the eight brothers listed for that year held only B (Primary) registration.\footnote{Catholic College, Bendigo, File. Registered Schools Board. Melbourne.}

In short, despite all their brave promises to the Victorian authorities, the Marist Brothers also failed to live up to their commitment as regards pre-service training. After the 1906-07 weekend study experiment, mentioned earlier, by which Br Andrew and his peers had passed the Junior Public, the next attempt at providing pre-service teacher training was in 1910, i.e. to meet the Victorian deadline. The novitiate had been moved from Hunter’s Hill to a newly purchased country property near Mittagong, in the NSW Southern Highlands, in 1906, and when the four novices of the annual profession group made their first vows in July 1911, they were sent to St Joseph’s to study teaching for six months before being sent to their first school at the start of 1912. In preparation for this development, Br Victor had applied to the Victorian Registered Schools Board, in January 1910, to have St Joseph’s recognized as a training institution, with St Benedict’s, Broadway as the practice school. St Benedict’s failed to meet the required standards, however, on the same grounds as St Patrick’s, and the now defunct St Francis’, had been condemned – cramped facilities, surrounded by noisy, traffic-choked streets - and the application failed. This was the arrangement under which the 1911 profession group would have done their pre-service training, had it succeeded.
In August 1911, the application was renewed, with some of the primary classrooms at St Joseph’s (or possibly the Villa Maria parish school, across the road) being nominated as the practice school. Victorian approval would still require an inspection of the new premises and although this was apparently done quite promptly, the second Inspector’s report called for some alterations to the proposed practice-school premises and approval was not granted – if, in fact, it was granted – until, at least, July 1912.18 The ‘scholasticate’ program, as it was called, was then offered to the July profession group of 1912; but according to Br Arcadius, a member of this group and later a Vice-Provincial, little systematic study was done and no training in teaching techniques was given.19 A second attempt at a scholasticate course, at Hunter’s Hill in 1916, with Br Bede Wade as Master of Method was also soon abandoned. Ironically, Br Bede, although a respected and successful teacher in Sydney schools was no more a repository of Marist ‘lore’ than Br Basil Kelly had been. Born into a Methodist family at Mudgee, New South Wales, he was received into the Catholic Church at the age of sixteen, presumably, shortly before he entered the Juniorate or Novitiate at Mittagong.20

This failure to maintain the improved teacher training standards set by NSW and Victoria was, therefore, not a matter of covert defiance of state regulation, nor an attempt to preserve some pristine ideal of Marist pedagogy from ideological corruption. It was simply a problem of manpower. Recruitment from Australia between 1900 and 1914 was 10 percent lower than it had been between 1885 and 1899 and from New Zealand, after Australia’s Federation, the drop-off was dramatically worse: 75 percent. New Zealand was hived off as a separate province in 1914, taking with it a third of the professed brothers and responsibility for the schools in Fiji and Samoa as well as those in New Zealand itself; but Australia’s own recruitment stagnated during World War I and, as late as 1928, or 1929, the then Provincial, Br Brendan, was pulling postulants and even Juniors out of training, to plug gaps in some classrooms.21 During the same era, new Marist openings had been made in Adelaide, in 1897, and at New Norcia, in Western Australia in 1913. In New South Wales, the brothers assumed responsibility for St Vincent’s Orphanage at Westmead in 1896, and for the former Patrician Brothers’ College in Maitland and a parish primary school in Newcastle in 1898. In Sydney, itself, staffing of the new school at Kogarah, in 1909, was only possible because the City Council had resumed the land of the old St Francis’s school to widen George Street in 1908. And the brothers, evicted from the parish schools at St Mary’s Cathedral and Sacred Heart, Darlinghurst, were absorbed by a new foundation at Lismore in 1912. Manpower was, thus, stretched to the limits.22

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18 This account of the negotiations to register St Joseph’s as a training establishment is based on a folder of correspondence in MBAS. There are fifteen items in the file, the first dated August 1906 and the remainder between January 1910 and May 1912. All are in-coming items from the Registered Schools Board or the Council of Public Education. There are no copies of Br Victor’s requests or replies, hence the uncertainty as to whether the practice school was at St Joseph’s or at Villa Maria, and whether registration was, in fact, granted. The writer inclines to the view that it was not; but the two and a half year extent of the correspondence indicates, at least, that a serious attempt was made to meet Victorian requirements.
19 McMahon, op.cit. p. 31.
21 Doyle, op.cit. p. 518.
22 ibid. pp. 403-477.
The contention that the failure to upgrade teacher training was not due to ill-will or passive resistance is supported by the Sydney Marist Brothers’ response to other aspects of the Knibbs-Turner reforms. When Peter Board introduced his 1905 revision of the NSW Primary School Syllabus, for instance, the Sydney diocesan authorities were determined to keep pace and invited the teaching orders to offer suggestions as regards a new Catholic Primary Schools syllabus. After consulting with the assembled Directors of St Patrick’s, St Benedict’s, the North Sydney and the Parramatta schools, Br Victor forwarded a twelve-point submission on behalf of the Marist Provincial Council.  

At the request of the Right Reverend Monsignor O’Haran, the Marist Brothers respectfully submit the following suggestions for the remodelling of the Catholic School Syllabus.

1. That in the present Syllabus there is an excessive amount of Memory Work; and consequently, subjects of the greatest utility are comparatively neglected, and cramming becomes almost a necessity to meet existing requirements.

2. That some of the subjects such as Religion, English, History, Geography etc. require readjustment.

3. That in order to keep pace with educational progress, and to profit by the labours of the New South Wales Commissioners on Education, we strongly recommend that a new Syllabus, based on the Syllabus of Instruction for Public Primary Schools, be drawn up, and be adopted in all Catholic schools.

We recommend our Syllabus to be based on the Public School Syllabus for the following reasons amongst others:

(a) That there may be no change in the grade of children coming from Public Schools. At present the classification (according to our Syllabus) of children from Public Schools is the cause of much dissatisfaction to parents and children owing to the irregular gradation of our Standards.

(b) The children attending our schools would then be able to make use of the many excellent cheap Text Books written by Practical Teachers for the Public School Syllabus.

(c) Many children are prevented from coming to Catholic schools by the expense consequent on obtaining a new set of Text Books.

(d) The Catholic Schools of Victoria and New Zealand have adopted the Government Syllabus of their respective States, with the result that, where they are examined by the Public School Inspectors, (as in New Zealand) they not only hold their own against the Government schools, but in many cases secure a much higher percentage.

(e) We hope that the day is not far distant when Catholic Schools will be placed under Government Inspection, and receive their due share of the money spent for Education. They would then be examined by the Government Inspectors, and would be placed at a very great disadvantage through not following the State programme. As a matter of fact, this was the case in New Zealand for the first year or so.

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23 Provincial Council Minutes. 26.8.05. MBAS.
4. We recommend that a Committee chosen from the Teaching Orders, and assisted by educational experts, be appointed to draw up a new Syllabus.

5. We recommend that a Programme of Instruction in Religion be drawn up on the Concentric System, to consist of three Courses of Catechism and Sacred History. The subjects to be more fully developed, in each succeeding Course.

( … The submission then goes on to outline the three stages of the R.I. Course and to make seven further points regarding textbooks and the adaptation or adoption of individual subjects such the 'New Geometry', Nature Studies and Manual Training.)

General Recommendations

1. That the Examination of the schools be replaced by Inspection. For this purpose, a trained Inspector, one thoroughly conversant with modern methods should be appointed …

2. We are in favour of the 5th Standards Examination being retained. We think, however, the 4th and 3rd Standard Examinations should be discontinued …

The tenor and content of this submission not only re-iterate the Marists willingness to accept government inspection and their aspiration to compete with Public Schools ‘on a level playing field’; it also reveals that they, or the Sydney Directors, at least, had some acquaintance with the issues involved in the ‘New Education’ debate and accepted, in principle, Peter Board’s critique that the old Standards of Proficiency were overloaded and too reliant on rote learning and examinations.

Government inspection and text books, much less Government funding, were not forthcoming, however, and Marist primary teaching in Sydney continued to be heavily exam-oriented, for at least the next decade. A Marist Primary Examinations Committee was set up, with two members of each Sydney community expected to attend the monthly meetings, which were chaired by the Brother Provincial or his delegate. This committee set monthly exam papers in the ‘three Rs’ plus Religion, History and Geography, for all the Marist schools in Sydney. The test papers were printed at the Marist-run St Vincent’s Orphanage printery, at Westmead, and the answer papers were corrected, externally to the school of origin, according to a standardized marking scheme. The exam papers were set throughout this period for Standards 4 and 5 and, in 1911, the 3rd Standard

24 The whole of this submission is printed as Appendix 13 in Br Alban’s Story of the Marist Brothers and sourced to the ‘Education Box Files’ in St Mary’s Archives, Sydney. Unfortunately, the writer has been unable to retrieve the original document, despite the full co-operation of the recently appointed archivist, Ms Pauline Garland. The extract quoted here was scanned from Br Alban’s book and re-formatted to suit the present text.


26 Doyle, op. cit. p. 441. The description of the Examination Committee’s work in both Doyle and Keating was based on a Minute Book of the committee which was kept from December 1907 till January 1912. The Minute Book was then in the Marist Archives at Drummoyne, but it, too, now seems to be lost.
teachers also asked to re-join the scheme. With the Province having failed to institute a proper pre-service course for the newly professed novices after 1906, it would seem that the Directors of the Sydney schools and the Provincial used these monthly exams as a way of keeping the young brothers under close supervision. Even the educationally ambitious Br John Dullea, by this time raised to the role of Assistant General, and based in Britain, approved the system from afar.

I am particularly pleased at the good position taken up by our schools at the Cardinal’s Exams. The Monthly Competitions must have largely helped this. Do what you can to keep all in line with this excellent scheme.27

Mention of the Cardinal’s Exams, in Br John’s letter, identifies the capstone of the examination system in the Marist primary schools of the period. At the end of Standard Six, there was a Diocesan Primary Examination, in which all the Catholic senior primary students competed for prizes and medals in the various subjects and, in the case of those hoping to proceed to high school, for the Cardinal’s Scholarships.28 Despite the name, and the fact that the examination was supervised by the diocese, these scholarships were funded not by the Cardinal, nor the diocese, but by the teaching orders, themselves, who accepted the winners into their own secondary schools, either at reduced fees, or without fees. In the case of the Marist Brothers, for instance, in 1910, when the Diocesan Exam was not held, they conducted their own Bursary Examinations and awarded six scholarships: three to St Joseph’s, and three to the High School, which had now moved from St Mary’s to a new site at Darlinghurst, for the best of the twenty-two candidates who sat the tests.29 Those students who did not win scholarships either proceeded to the secondary level as fee-paying students or remained in their primary school, some of which continued to send a few students to the Junior Public and Civil Service exams until they were superseded by the Intermediate Certificate after 1912.30 Many students, of course, left school immediately after Standard 6 and some did not proceed even thus far, before leaving to seek employment.31

The trend towards increased participation in secondary education was becoming more pronounced, nevertheless, and Peter Board’s reform of state secondary education in 1910, and the passing of the Bursary endowment Act of 1912 were to have an impact on the Marist secondary schools in Sydney, if not yet on the training of the brothers who taught in them. The Endowment Act, in particular, had laid down that state bursaries, to defray the cost of secondary education, would only be tenable at those non-state schools which had submitted to state inspection and been passed as adequate with regard to premises, number of pupils and the tuition provided.32 Registration, however, did not enter into the area of the staff’s teaching qualifications. Thus, St Patrick’s, Church Hill which was completely demolished and rebuilt in 1919, due to the fund raising abilities of

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27 Letter of Br John to Br Victor (Provincial) 5.3.09. quoted in Doyle, op.cit. p. 443.
28 Doyle, op. cit. p. 345.
29 ibid. pp. 441-442.
30 ibid. p. 526.
31 ibid. p. 348.
32 Barcan, op. cit. p. 189.
a particularly charismatic Parish Priest, Père Piquet SM, was registered as a Commercial School, to Intermediate Certificate level, by the NSW Education Department in 1921. Why it changed from a primary school to an Intermediate Commercial School is not clear from the records. Given the demographic trends in The Rocks and the almost derelict state of the old building, the brothers would probably have closed the school, had it not been for Père Piquet’s initiative. As it was, they were compelled to run it as a school, for mainly ‘commuter’ enrolments, for almost another fifty years, and with a staff who usually had no tertiary or commercial qualifications. Certainly the first two Directors of it’s ‘life’ as a commercial school, Brothers Walstan Curran and Aidan O’Keefe, had no more than the catch-as-catch-can ‘training’ then the norm in Marist Sydney.

II. The High Road.

Although, as mentioned earlier, the New Education reformers focused more on elementary than on secondary education, when one reads the following account of community life at St Joseph’s, during the Directorship of Br Borgia, one might imagine that the brothers, teaching in the Colleges at least, had embraced the Knibbs-Turner reforms with a vengeance:

University studies were encouraged amongst the staff, and visiting lecturers were invited to address the staff. The Australian poet and scholar, Chris Brennan, was a very frequent visitor to the College in those years, not only as a lecturer, but as a close personal friend of some of the Brothers, such as Br Wilbred, Br Edwin and Br Gerard. The College Library treasures an autographed copy of Brennan’s Poems ... (and) ... A letter from Brennan (8 December 1914) to Br Wilbred is … (also) … preserved at the College; it concludes, after a discussion of Herodotus’ account of the defenders of Thermopylae:
And will you convey to Bro. Director … my deep and grateful sense of the cordial and kindly welcome at St Joseph’s which I have now come to count upon as one of the very treasured things of my life.
With heartiest good wishes to yourself and the community. C.B.

Unfortunately, this snapshot, though authentic in itself, was so a-typical of the Marist experience in Sydney, as to be quite misleading. As an anonymous wag of later years put it: ‘There are three kinds of Marist Brothers in Sydney: the young brothers, the Professed Brothers and the St Joseph’s Brothers.’ The senior teachers at St Joseph’s seemed to be in a class of their own: long term fixtures on the college staff, unaffected by the annual ‘shifts’ which affected lesser mortals and Marists.

34 John Braniff, From Cradle to Canonisation, (Sydney, 2001). pp. 59-60.
35 Kavanagh, op.cit. pp. 16 and 28.
37 The present writer heard the remark in the Marist community at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide, some fifty years after Brennan penned this letter.
In fact, even those brothers who were teaching the senior secondary classes at St Joseph’s, at the High School, Darlinghurst and at the New Zealand and inter-state Colleges, could only gain their university degrees by part-time or correspondence studies. Their initiative had certainly been facilitated by the decision of the Marist General Chapter of 1907, to lift the ban on the studying or teaching of Latin; but although that decision unlocked the door to formal university work, which still required Latin for matriculation, it was left to the individual’s own initiative, the often reluctant permission of the Provincial, and the ‘luck’ of his postings, to earn a degree. One of the first to do so was Br Borgia Coughlan, mentioned above, who obtained his BA from Auckland University while teaching at Sacred Heart College in that city. He was appointed Brother Director of Darlinghurst and then of St Joseph’s, from 1913 till 1917, during which time he participated in Peter Board’s 1913 discussions for the revision of the NSW secondary syllabus; supervised the transition to the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate Exams at Hunter’s Hill; and was elected chairman of the GPS Headmasters’ Association. His successor, both at Darlinghurst and at St Joseph’s, Br Osmund Rice, another native of New Zealand and another active participant in the secondary education discussions, gained a BA, BSc, and a DipEd as an evening student at Sydney University. While Br George O’Meara, an Australian, but an MA graduate of Auckland University, and yet another Director of St Joseph’s College, was elected as chairman of the Catholic Education Association and a life-member of the Headmasters’ Association, so highly was he regarded as an educator.  

However, if these Directors and senior brothers of Darlinghurst and Hunter’s Hill were the ‘superstars’ of Marist part-time teacher training, it is, again, Br Andrew Power, whose career gives us a more typical picture of how the brothers gained their secondary qualifications during the first half of the twentieth century. Soon after passing his Junior Public Exam, by weekend study, while teaching at St Mary’s in Sydney, Br Andrew was transferred to Sacred Heart College, in Adelaide, where he was a teacher, dormitory supervisor and sportsmaster from 1909 till 1915. During that time, he twice applied for permission to begin a degree at Adelaide University; but each time gave precedence to older brothers on the staff who also wished to commence tertiary studies. No Marist community, of those days, could afford to have more than one or two brothers attempting part-time tertiary studies, the local workload being so heavy. While in Adelaide, though, he did manage to teach himself enough Greek for matriculation requirements, with only one weekly lesson from his tutor. Then, when he was posted to St Ildephonsus’ College at New Norcia, from 1916 to 1925, he enrolled in the External Student’s course at the University of Western Australia and completed his BA there, using up many of his summer holidays in the process.  

Br Andrew returned to Sydney after his time in Western Australia and went on to become Director of the new Marist High School at Randwick and then Provincial of Australia. In this latter role, he: re-established the scholasticate, this time at Mittagong; renewed links with the Victorian Registered Schools Board; and re-vivified the brothers in-service training, with a carefully supervised Cycle of Studies and an annual Summer
Schools. But before turning to this teacher-training renaissance, the reluctance of the Australian Marist Province’s commitment, to tertiary studies for brothers, requires some comment. Br Clement Murray was the Australian Provincial from 1915 until 1925, but although, as Director, he had raised educational standards at both St Joseph’s and Sacred Heart College, Auckland, as Provincial, he had a fearsome reputation for severity in observing the vow of Poverty, keeping to the letter of the Common Rules and trying to maintain the brothers’ semi-monastic seclusion from the ‘World’. He may have allowed a few of the senior, finally professed brothers, like Br Osmond Rice, to complete their university studies in Sydney; but they were the exceptions who proved the rule.\(^{40}\)

Of Br Clement’s successor as Provincial, Br Brendan Hill, who continued as Provincial until Br Andrew succeeded him in 1931, an anonymous interviewee of Br Frederick’s had this to say:

Brendan was kindly enough, but negative. He discouraged me from attempting a University Exhibition. One would be shocked at the lack of training.\(^{41}\)

While, another of Br Frederick’s interviewees, Br Ethelred Ferguson, made this comment about the prevailing attitude in the province:

At that time there was prejudice against scholarship on the part of some Brothers, their viewpoint being that scholars were dodging manual work, that study was dangerous to humility etc. There were echoes of this in some of our old spirituality books, for example, Thomas à Kempis: ‘it is better to feel compunction than to know the definition,’ and ‘cease from an overweening desire for learning.’ And it must be admitted that we were brought up on this type of spirituality. This was the outlook in the general public too. From the nineteenth century, there was a distrust of University scholarship. Brother Andrew broke away from this.\(^{42}\)

There are several points to be considered here. First there is Br Ethelred’s judgment that the general public was suspicious of university scholarship. This was not special pleading on his part. Even the contemporary, and ‘legendary’ state Directors of Education in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales had reservations about making university qualifications too easily accessible to primary teachers:

Peter Board in New South Wales was nervous about extending university study to primary school teachers, lest ‘the glamour of a University degree throw into the shade the more prosaic professional qualifications of the primary teacher.’ A similar reservation came from Frank Tate of Victoria:

‘It is a good thing for the Department to aim at a high standard of culture for teachers, but, after all, the Education Department must look upon itself as a great employer of labour, aiming at supplying a high quality of education, and a

\(^{40}\) McMahon, \textit{op.cit.} pp. 16 and 77.  
\(^{41}\) ibid. p. 17.  
\(^{42}\) ibid. p. 12.
teacher is to be valued not so much by his scholastic attainments as by his power to bring these to bear upon his teaching work.\textsuperscript{43}

And like the State Education Departments, the Marist Provincial in Sydney was a great ‘employer’ of primary teachers. The Marist Brothers’ Colleges in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria had all developed into secondary schools by this time, with only two or four primary classes attached to each; but ten of the thirteen Marist schools in Sydney were still mainly primary schools, with only small, junior secondary sections attached. The Sydney-based Provincial, quite naturally, felt he had to keep his primary brothers focused on the job in hand.

The second point to be made is that this suspicion of university learning can be traced back, at least as one strand in the Marist tradition, to the Founder and the early brothers: to Fr Champagnat, throwing the \textit{Grandes Méthodes de Succès} on the fire; to the older brothers at Grange-Paye and the Hermitage, smashing and throwing the display board into the latrines; to Br François resigning rather than countenance the expensive multiplication of \textit{pensionnats}, which Br Jean-Baptiste regarded as ‘\textit{tue-frères’}. In the Mittagong novitiate, as in its French models, by then dissolved and dispersed, the novices were still screened for their ‘love of work’ and that meant hard manual work, like wood-drives and hay carting, not just diligence in studies. Even in the ordinary Australian Marist school communities, the young brothers were still expected to do a good deal of manual work: housekeeping, cooking, gardening, keeping the ovals mowed and the cricket pitches in order. Among the young brothers in Sydney, physical prowess, dexterity and skill in football, cricket or handball were often more widely admired than application to higher studies.

Yet if this anti-intellectual strand in the Marist tradition has a traceable history, so too, does the more educationally ambitious strand, dating back to Br Louis Marie, Br Nestor, Br Jules, Br John Dullea and the likes of Br Borgia Coughlan or Br George O’Meara. The French brothers’ campaign, at St Joseph’s, had not been anti-intellectual, it was much more evidently anti-sport. And after the withdrawal of the ban on teaching Latin, the policy of the Marist General Council, by that time located at Grugliasco, near Turin, was certainly directed towards better, pre-service teacher training of the brothers. When Br Brendan sent out Juniors and Postulants to fill the gaps in the teaching force, he received a reprimand from the then Assistant General, Br Columbanus.\textsuperscript{44} Ironically, even Br Andrew received some exhortation from the conservative Br Clement, who succeeded Br Columbanus as Assistant General, to encourage more of the Sydney brothers to undertake evening classes at the university or technical colleges.\textsuperscript{45} Moreover, despite his desperate response to the teacher shortage in the late 1920s, Br Brendan had encouraged some brothers, not based in Sydney, like Br Frederic Eddy, to complete their university studies and, in 1926, he recommenced the Summer Schools for young brothers at St Joseph’s which had earlier been initiated by Br Clement, but allowed to lapse. In so

\textsuperscript{43} Quoted in Hyams, \textit{op.cit} p. 122.
\textsuperscript{44} Doyle, \textit{op.cit} p. 518.
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{ibid.} p. 533.
doing, Br Brendan was laying the foundations of the teacher-training renaissance which Br Andrew was to launch in 1931, and to which we can now turn.

The Second Wave 1930-1945

I. Summary

According to Alan Barcan the onset of the Great Depression had somewhat ambiguous effects on State Education in New South Wales: secondary enrolments continued to rise every year except 1936, but teacher recruitment was reduced as a cost-saving measure and the teacher-student ratio rose, especially in primary schools. By 1937, the worst of the Depression was past and the arrival of the second, Dewey-inspired wave of the ‘New Education’ was signaled by the foundation, in that year, of an Australian Branch of the ‘New Education Fellowship’. For the Marist Brothers, the effects of the Depression were a good deal less ambiguous. The boarding schools reduced their fees and allowed parents to defer payment, sometimes for years, but still enrolments dropped. Building projects ground to a halt and expenses were pared to the bone: only St Joseph’s College, the Marist High School at Darlinghurst and St Ildephonsus, New Norcia were allowed to maintain their school magazines. In parochial schools, like St Patrick’s, enrolments and fee-income also dropped and in one ex-student’s opinion, the brothers’ community would have gone hungry had it not been for the efforts of a Mothers’ Club, organized by a local publican’s wife, who made sure that they had one hot meal each day. In addition to their day school work, the St Patrick’s community also started taking evening classes, which continued till after World War II. Considering these circumstances, Br Andrew’s decision, when he was appointed Provincial in 1931, to overhaul the educational and religious training of the Australian brothers, was an act of very considerable courage.

The reforms and programs established by Br Andrew are already well-documented in Australian Marist literature, notably in Br Alban Doyle’s Story; and the details, dates and facts in that earlier account have been augmented, in Br Frederick McMahon’s Not Shaken by the Wind, either by interviews or by written commentary from some of the brothers who experienced the reforms, firsthand. Consequently, this section of the chapter will not attempt to repeat, much less expand upon, the published material. Rather, it will summarise Br Andrew’s educational achievements, quite briefly, and then, in keeping with the main thrust of the thesis, attempt to analyse the extent to which these programs were departures from, or developments of, the Australian Marist teaching tradition, till that time. Before attempting the summary or analysis, however, it seems worthwhile quoting Br Andrew’s assessment of the state of Marist schools, not just when he came to office, but even a good six or seven years after his reforms had begun:

48 Braniff, Cradle to Canonisation pp. 64 -69.
The need of improvement (is) too frequently evident... and it is dishonest to persuade ourselves that our schools approach the ‘satisfactory’ mark. Let us lay the axe to the root – like teacher, like class; and consequently, like teachers, like school.49

Br Andrew began ‘laying the axe to the root’ from the very moment he was appointed Provincial, in June 1931. At that time, he had been Director of the High School at Randwick for five and a half years and, simultaneously, a member of the Provincial Council for four years, thus he knew the Sydney situation very well. However, he felt compelled to see the year out at Randwick and he was committed to attend the General Chapter in Grugliasco, in July of 1932. Nevertheless, he decided to retain the group of novices who took their first annual vows in July 1931 at Mittagong, to commence a twelve month pre-service course of teacher training and, in the postings for 1932, he sent two highly qualified teachers, Br Frederic Eddy and Br Urban Corrigan, to take charge of these ‘scholastics’, as the student-teacher brothers were called. The already established Commission of Studies, of which he had been chairman since December 1930, went ahead and organized the Summer School for young brothers for January 1932. When he returned from the General Chapter later that year, he foreshadowed the establishment of a Cycle of Studies, again for young brothers, to commence in February 1933. These three programs: the Scholasticate, the Summer Schools and the Cycle of Studies were the three prongs of Br Andrew’s teacher-training ‘renaissance’ in Marist Australia.

Establishing the scholasticate at Mittagong had been made possible by the transfer of the Juniorate to that location in 1918. Although numbers were relatively small - about forty in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties - it had been operating as a full secondary school since the changes of 1906 and, by Br Andrew’s time, all the Juniors were expected to at least attempt the Leaving Certificate. It therefore had two or three secondary classes, where Br Frederic and Br Urban could give demonstration lessons for the scholastics, although the latter travelled up to some of the Sydney schools to do their two-week teaching rounds, each term. Br Frederic, himself, was another factor in the scholasticate’s feasibility. Already a trained teacher when he entered the Mittagong novitiate from Western Australia in 1922, he had gained a BA through the Bendigo School of Mines and a DipEd from Melbourne University, while teaching secondary classes in Victoria. He was thus known and respected by Mr J. Seitz, the Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools for Victoria, who came to inspect the training program and facilities, at Mittagong, and the qualifications of the model teachers in the Sydney demonstration schools, in 1933. As a result of this visit, the new scholasticate was successfully registered as a training institution, with the Victorian Registered Schools Board, and twenty-one brothers, including four of the scholasticate class of 1933, received Victorian Registration as teachers, two for secondary, the remainder for primary.50 The scholasticate then continued to operate, albeit at different locations, and to qualify its

49 Marist Monthly, March, 1939.
graduates for Victorian primary registration, until the 1970s, except for a four year break between 1943 and 1946.

Although the second prong, the Summer Schools for young brothers, had been launched at Mittagong in Br Brendan’s time as Provincial, Br Andrew had been involved in their organization almost from the start and he continued them, from the outset of his Provincialship, although they were re-located to St Joseph’s at Hunter’s Hill. This meant that a greater pool of visiting lecturers would be within reach. Simultaneous Summer Schools were also organized at Assumption College, Kilmore in Victoria and Sacred Heart College in Adelaide, to avoid the expense of interstate travel and to secure the services of lecturers appropriate to the state education system involved. They lasted two weeks, from early January to the second last week and, at the end of the session, the ‘shifts’ or postings for the new school year, were read out at a general assembly. These Summer Schools were aimed at brothers who had missed out on scholasticate training and university studies and, being so short, could not be accredited for academic qualifications; but they did function in the way that regional in-services do to this day: introducing practicing teachers to current developments in the curriculum, educational technology, new techniques in teaching art, physical education, and administering first aid.51 The Summer Schools too, continued to operate until the mid 1960s, by which time almost all the brothers had achieved registration, a university degree or a diploma level of qualification.

Despite the success and longevity of the Scholasticate and Summer School programs, perhaps the most ambitious of Br Andrew’s prongs was the ten-year Cycle of Studies, which the young brothers were expected to work through, after leaving the novitiate or scholasticate. Initially, four courses in Christian Doctrine, Ascetical Theology, Church History and Education were drawn up by the Province Commission of Studies. And each year the young brothers had to sit two two-hour papers in these subjects, immediately before the annual retreat, which was held just before Christmas at Mittagong, Kilmore and Sacred Heart in Adelaide. These papers were corrected by the members of the Commission of Studies, and the results were published in the annual Bulletin of Studies, another innovation of Br Andrew’s. Copies of this little booklet were sent to each community early each year and it also published a summary of the Summer School activities, the scholastics’ results and the University or Technical College results of any brothers engaged in part-time study. When the Cycle of Studies was first set up, it was proposed to issue a certificate, signed by the Provincial, to those who completed the first five years, and by the Superior General, to those who persevered to complete all ten years. In the event, the major incentive to complete the first five years was that results in the ‘Bicycle Race,’ as it came to be known colloquially, were taken into account when a young brother was considered for final profession, after five or six years of annual vows. In those pre-Vatican II days, when Catholic theology advanced at the rate of a glacier, such a course could be supervised by some senior brothers with the assistance of a few sympathetic seminary professors. After the revolution in Scriptural and Liturgical studies unleashed by Vatican II, of course, the Cycle of Studies was overwhelmed and was soon discontinued.

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51 *Bulletin of Studies*, 1934, ’35, ’36 etc.
II Analysis

Since the Cycle of Studies and the Summer Schools were conducted entirely within the Marist Province, with only minor external input, any question about the Marist character or authenticity of Br Andrew’s reforms should, probably, begin with the scholasticate course, which was under the immediate direction of Br Frederic and the supervision of the Victorian Council of Public Education. Br Frederic, like Br Basil Kelly of St Joseph’s fame, had been a state-trained teacher before entering the Marist novitiate and he had gained his secondary teaching qualification, his Dip.Ed., also under secular auspices, through Melbourne University. Moreover, the training program he established for the scholasticate was specifically designed to meet Victorian State requirements and even the text books used by the scholastics, like those of W. S. Elijah and P. R. Cole, were the same as those used in the Sydney Teachers’ College. Further, although the Victorian Inspectors, like Mr Seitz, thought Br Frederic’s classroom technique was excellent, some of the older brothers in Sydney, self-conscious graduates of the ‘school of hard knocks’, thought it too flashy and melodramatic, too laced with barbed one-liners like ‘I have one more pearl to cast’, and not at all like the muted, minimalist, quiet classrooms of Br John Dullea’s *beau ideal*. Even Br Frederic’s attempts, as secretary of the Commission of Studies, to help the non-scholastics to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, in the ‘Bicycle Race’, were viewed with some suspicion and a degree of passive resistance: vestiges of the anti-intellectualism referred to by Br Ethelred.

Yet Br Frederic retained Br Andrew’s confidence and support from 1932 till 1939, when he had to be placed on light duties, due to sheer over-work, and he died from a stroke some four years later, aged just forty. Moreover, in considering his Marist authenticity, it should be acknowledged that many of Br Frederic’s graduates went on to become Marist Provicials, Masters of Scholastics, Directors of Australian Marist schools. One, Br Quentin Duffy, even became Vicar General of the entire Order. In the quotation from Br Andrew with which this section began ‘like teacher, like class … like teachers, like school’ he underlined the essentially teacher-centred, instruction-oriented Marist Brothers’ approach to education. Br Frederic had embraced this concept wholeheartedly: thorough teacher training and thorough teacher preparation of lessons were fundamental values for this Marist Master of Method:

There is no subject on earth, no matter how intrinsically fascinating, that can’t be rendered boring by a poorly prepared lesson.

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52 McMahon, *op.cit.* p. 37.
53 The 1937 and 1938 *Bulletin of Studies* contain the outline of a course in Scholastic Philosophy, drawn up by a seminary professor, Fr. H.B.Loughman SJ, which was to constitute the ‘body’ of the second five years of the Cycle. In the 1938 edition, there was also some discussion as to whether this was beyond the range of some brothers, and an alternative, lower level course was provided.
54 Quoted in McMahon, *op.cit.* p. 37.
Although Br Frederic uses the word ‘fascinating’ here, it is surely not difficult to hear an echo of the Herbartian and neo-Herbartian ‘interest’ and ‘interesting’ in his language and style.\textsuperscript{55} And if he had imbibed the neo-Herbartianism of the early New Education teachers’ text books, he had done so consciously and in the honest belief that the moral purpose and historical framework of the neo-Herbartians was fully compatible with the best in the Marist tradition. If the scholastics consulted Elijah and Cole, they also studied the recently revised, and now complete, English edition of the Marist \textit{Teacher’s Guide}, which interestingly, had itself been issued with an acknowledgement to a Scottish, secular educationist.\textsuperscript{56} Br Frederic and Br Andrew, in other words, were doing what Br Basil and Br John Dullea had done in the 1890s: developing, upgrading and re-defining the Australian Marist teaching tradition.

As well as running the scholasticate and acting as secretary to the Province’s Commission of Studies, Br Frederic had Br Andrew’s support to attend the increasingly frequent education conferences organized by State and Catholic authorities in the late 1930s. Br Frederic and his deputy, Br Urban Corrigan MA, DipEd, were much in demand as speakers, especially at the Catholic Education Association Annual Conferences. And some of the leading Marist teachers of the earlier generation, such as Br Gerard O’Donoghue, as well as lecturing at the Marist summer schools at Hunter’s Hill, were encouraged to represent Catholic Education on Syllabus Committees and the NSW Board of Secondary Schools Studies. Br Urban’s MA thesis, on the history of Catholic education in New South Wales, published in two separate sections in 1930 and 1937, not only justified the educational performance of the Religious Orders in terms of their public exam results, it also staked a claim for the re-introduction of state aid. In addition, at a deeper level, it asserted the Catholic and Marist right to participate in the public discourse of Australian education.

If Br Andrew’s encouragement of Br Frederic, Br Urban and Br Gerard was raising the wider public profile of the Marist Brothers as teachers, his adoption of the Cycle of Studies and Summer School strategies was demonstrably Marist in a more monastic, nostalgic, almost historical sense. The Mittagong complex had been christened ‘The Hermitage,’ and the annual mass migration of the young Sydney brothers, in their black clerical street dress, from Central Station down to Mittagong for the Cycle of Studies exams, the Retreat and Summer holiday; followed by their mass transfer back to Hunter’s Hill, for the Summer School, must have reminded those with a more reflective cast of mind, of the early days of the order. Then the young brothers from the small, French, rural school communities returned to \textit{l’Hermitage}, each year, for the long Summer vacation, to have the samples of their school work checked by the senior brothers and to sit at the feet of Fr Champagnat. Although economy – an expression of the vow of Poverty - in boarding all the young brothers at Mittagong or St Joseph’s,

\textsuperscript{55} Selleck, \textit{The New Education} pp. 233 – 234.
\textsuperscript{56} A Dr Robert Rusk, who is listed as Principal Lecturer in Education to the Glasgow Provincial Committee for Teacher Training; Director of the Scottish Council for Educational Research; and Examiner in Education to the National University of Ireland. Interestingly, Br Andre Lanfrey refers to this 1931 revision of the \textit{Guide}, in these terms: ‘Besides, it is probable that, by that time (the \textit{Guide}) was, for the Marist Brothers, just one pedagogical reference among others and not the most important one at that.’ Lanfrey, \textit{Marcellin Champagnat & les Frères Maristes}. p. 224.
rather than in small separate city communities of six or eight, may have been a minor motive for thus concentrating the young brothers in one location; the opportunity this provided for deeper religious enculturation and for shaping their ‘family spirit’, was much more of a consideration for the Brother Provincial, as it had been it had been for the Founder.

After the ‘Bicycle’ exams and the annual Retreat, the holiday program at Mittagong maintained the early-to-bed, early-to-rise routine of the normal, working-term timetable, together with the regular exercises of piety; but it also incorporated some manual, farm and maintenance work, gardening, long bush-walks and picnics and, this being Australia, some competitive sport. Cricket, handball and even athletics were played competitively, with the yearly profession groups forming the competing teams. In this way, the young Marist Brothers bonded further not only with their peers, but with the Province and with the Institute in general. One profession group, the 1929 Leaving Certificate class at the Juniorate, bonded so strongly that they became known throughout the Province as ‘The Men of Harlech’ from their frequent and spirited renditions of this venerable warhorse in concerts and community sing-songs.

When the whole cohort moved from Mittagong up to Hunter’s Hill for the Summer School, free afternoons were also built into that program, to allow for participatory sport and even the occasional visit to the Sydney Cricket Ground for a Sheffield Shield or a Test match. These trips to the cricket were virtually the only tolerated exposure to the ‘outside world’, however, and in those pre-television days, when the cinema was frowned upon and custom permitted only one daily newspaper and one community radio, both very much under the control of the local Br Director, the monastic seclusion at St Joseph’s was almost as complete as it was at Mittagong. On Friday and Saturday evenings, instead of the week-night lectures, community sing-songs and concerts of instrumental and choral items, together with an occasional vocal solo or recitation, staved off the onset of the Great Silence. A good singing voice, the ability to play a musical instrument or skill in training choirs were talents almost as widely respected as sporting and coaching skills.

If the Cycle/Summer School regime effectively heightened the young brothers’ sense of Marist identity, however, it could only gradually raise their level of professional competence as teachers of either religious or secular subjects, even when their numbers were being augmented by the annual increment of scholasticate graduates. At the start of Br Andrew’s term as Provincial, teaching standards had been maintained in the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate classes by the pressure of exam result expectations; but the situation in the junior secondary classes was considerably more ‘chaotic’. To overcome this, Br Andrew co-ordinated the drafting of a First and Second Year syllabus which became compulsory for all the NSW Marist schools in 1934 and was supervised, like the primary classes, by an externally set and corrected portfolio of term and annual exams. Thus, the notion of a Marist Education that developed through the first half of the twentieth century, especially in New South Wales, was one that was highly

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57 This word is used twice by one of Br Frederick’s correspondent’s who is unnamed; but who was an ex-student of the brothers and a teacher and Director of some of the Sydney schools. McMahon, *op.cit.* p.128.
exam-oriented. This was so much the case that, in 1949, when the NSW Education Department made the Intermediate Certificate an internal assessment, the individual Marist Intermediate High Schools were still not allowed to set their own papers, but continued to sit for centrally set and marked, Marist Brothers’ papers. Not only were the schools exam-centred, they were also very competitive. The results in the annual examinations, both the Marist Brothers’ exams and the public exams, were centrally collated and published during the Summer School at Hunter’s Hill and at Kilmore. Comparisons were made not only between individual schools but also between individual teachers.

Competition, or ‘emulation’ as it was referred to in the English edition of the *Teacher’s Guide* – which had now became a central plank of the Cycle of Studies - was a fully endorsed Marist technique for motivating students; but in the Australian context it is difficult not to see it, also, as a contagion from the culture of competitive sport which was so much part of the Sydney Marist scene. The battle for the right to play competitive inter-school sport had been won at St Joseph’s in the eighteen nineties, and even there it was not without its problems; but it quickly spread to the Low Road schools of the inner city, like St Patrick’s, and to the newer, more suburban openings at Kogarah, Randwick, Eastwood, Lidcombe and Bondi Junction. By the mid 1930s, there was a vigorous Marist Brothers Inter-schools Sports competition in cricket and rugby, with an annual Swimming and Athletics Carnival, thrown in for good measure. These schools did not have the sports facilities of St Joseph’s and the football they played was working class Rugby League rather than the GPS-style Rugby Union. Instead, their competitions were played out in council parks and swimming pools. Br Andrew, himself a keen sportsman, believed that competitive sport was good for the students and for school morale, but he did try to keep the level of competition and rivalry within reasonable bounds.

While in due moderation sport can be an invaluable aid, it can be a very real usurper in schools, both in the matter of time, and, in particular, of interest. Its great value is in its keenness and its proper control, while a surfeit of it produces sluggish indifference to other activities in school life.

To maintain this moderation, he and the Provincial Council, appointed the mature and very capable Director of the Bondi Junction school, Br Paulinus McColl, as President of the Marist Brothers’ Sports Association and nominated each of the brothers, who represented the other schools, as well. But carefully exercised control and Provincial exhortations in the *Marist Monthly* could not always be completely successful. On one visitation to a Sydney school – the Provincial still made an annual inspection of every school – Br Andrew found a handful of students running laps of the school yard, during the period after morning recess. When he stopped them and enquired why they weren’t in class, they replied that ‘Brother’ had let them out to lose weight.

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58 Provincial Council Minutes 19.1.49.
59 There was a public perception of St Joseph’s, in the ’thirties, as being sports ‘mad’: a perception which the Br. Director and the editors of the Old Boys’ magazine at pains to dispel. Nauhtin, *op.cit.* pp. 188-89.
60 *Marist Monthly* March, 1939.
In those days, junior rugby teams were classified by weight, not by age, and players had to weigh-in at the start of a season, or even of a carnival, to be eligible to play in their preferred division. Br Andrew promptly led the weight-watchers to the kitchen of the brothers’ house, where he made them eat a substantial morning tea of milk and biscuits, before sending them back to class, heavier than when they’d set out.  

Br Andrew also made use of this competitive spirit to broaden the Sydney Marist primary and junior secondary curriculum which, with its emphasis on exam results and inter-school sport, was in some danger of emaciation. End of year concerts for Prizegiving, were already an established feature of Sydney Marist schools and, as Provincial, Br Andrew put no obstacles in the way of those Br Directors who hired an ex-student of St Joseph’s, Jack Radford, as a visiting teacher of Elocution, Verse-speaking and Drama, to improve the quality of their annual entertainment offering. In 1945, however, Br Andrew, by then only Vice-Provincial, decreed that there would henceforth be an annual Sydney Marist Eisteddfod, in which the primary and junior secondary classes of all the Sydney schools, including St Joseph’s, would compete in choral singing. Since there were, by then, more than a dozen Marist schools in Sydney, they could not all be accommodated in any one venue, so three regional preliminaries were staged and then the regional winners travelled to the Sydney Town Hall to face the adjudicators, with Br Andrew sitting beside them, to act as recorder and collator. The primary and junior secondary brothers across Sydney took the proffered ‘bait’ and music, at least in the form of choral singing, retained its place in Sydney Marist schools’ curriculum well into the ’seventies.

Although this comment by Patrick O’Farrell, himself an ex-student of the Marist Brothers, albeit in New Zealand, relates to an earlier period, about the turn of the century, it still seems to capture accurately the character of Marist education in the period we have just been discussing:

The Brothers’ education was oriented towards cramming and competitive public performance, often at the expense of less tangible educational and cultural gains. And religion was taught in much the same terms as football – a tough team endeavour, obeying the captain and the rules, the domain of action, not thought. These developments were particularly notable in New South Wales, less in Victoria, where the Brothers’ education came later and developed more slowly.

This reference to the teaching of Religion, one of the brothers’ major raisons d’être, after all, brings us back to the Cycle of Studies and the Marists’ growing involvement in senior secondary education. Until World War I, when most of the brothers were involved in primary schools, the Religion lessons they gave mainly involved drilling the catechism; with preparation for reception of the sacraments, attendance at Mass and the inculcation devotional practices, especially in honour

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61 This story, too, became part of the ‘oral tradition’ to which the writer, as an ex-Marist Brother, was once privy.
62 McMahon, op.cit.
of Our Lady, the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Sacrament, providing some sort of emotional relief. The senior primary and junior secondary classes also studied Schuster’s *Illustrated Bible History*, the Lives of the Saints and Power’s *Manual of Religious Instruction*; but, given the clerical domination of the Catholic Church at that time, there was no widely-felt need for anything further in the brothers’ catechetical or theological formation, nor in that of their senior secondary pupils. As Br Ronald Fogarty remarks:

Catholic education in (C19) Australia had anticipated most of the later pronouncements from Rome. The directives of Leo XIII and later Popes were not without their effects, but they had little to add to the ideas and principles enunciated with astonishing clarity by Geoghegan … Serra … and Vaughan.65

Br Ronald lays particular emphasis on the Thomistic philosophical background of these nineteenth century Australian Catholic leaders, a philosophical basis which was made compulsory for Catholic clerical education in Leo XIII’s 1879 encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, and is implicit in Pius XI’s 1929 general education encyclical, *Divini Illius Magistri*. Yet this grounding in Thomistic, or Scholastic, philosophy, which was introduced by Br Andrew, albeit with some resistance, into the second five years of the Cycle of Studies, is almost the only discernable Australian Marist response to Pius XI’s encyclical. The Pope’s caution against the undue optimism or ‘pedagogic naturalism’ of Pestalozzi, Dewey *et al.* and the risks involved in co-education or sex instruction were already instinctive in Australian Marist practice.67

In his critique of Religion teaching in NSW secondary schools from 1900 to 1945 W. A. Mullins, another contemporary ex-student, though of the De la Salles, rather than the Marist Brothers, largely blames clerical domination of theology and of the supervision of Religious Education for the stagnation in catechetics and especially in senior secondary catechetics in this period:

During the ’twenties and ’thirties there was little interest in progressive teaching methods. The teachers were not a particularly well educated professional body. The vast majority were content to continue with the well-tried conventional approaches in the teaching of secular subjects. This same outlook existed among Religion teachers who, for the most part, wanted to maintain the status quo … The Hierarchy and the clergy set up the programs and generally played too large a part in the religion syllabuses that were then prescribed for the schools. This was particularly true of the Sydney inspectors of schools … This developed too great a dependence on the clergy for leadership and direction in the catechetical field. But the diocesan priests were not experienced in the techniques of

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65Fogarty, *op.cit.* pp. 476-77.
67*ibid.* p. 27.
classroom teaching nor did they always have much understanding of child psychology.\(^\text{68}\)

Fr Mullins had little to say in favour of any of the clerical Inspectors of Sydney schools between the Wars, except perhaps Fr Crowley (1922-26), and he singles out Archbishop Sheehan, Archbishop Kelly’s coadjutor from 1922 till 1937, as the only qualified theologian among the Australian hierarchy, to ever attempt the production of religious education text books for adults or children. Dr Sheehan was already the author of a standard text in apologetics, which was, in fact, introduced as part of the senior secondary syllabus in 1929, and during the early 1930s he also drafted and trialed a *Child’s Book of Religion* in some of the junior primary classes in Sydney. The idea behind the introduction of apologetics was presumably to prepare the senior students to defend their faith against attacks by secularists and ‘atheists’ in the universities for which they were destined; but as an approach to religion teaching, it was quite out of favour with the New Catechetics movement, which was then burgeoning in Germany, but news of which had scarcely reached Australian shores. The *Child’s Book of Religion*, too, although prescribed in 1935 was withdrawn from the syllabus when Archbishop Sheehan retired to Ireland, in 1937, a victim of Archbishop Kelly’s longevity and of the growing opposition among Australian-born clergy to domination by Irish bishops.\(^\text{69}\)

The Catholic Education Association, which was founded in 1922, under the auspices of Archbishop Kelly, did provide a venue, at its annual conferences, for the discussion of issues affecting Catholic Education. And a body called the Catholic Teachers Association, also founded in 1922, perhaps as an offshoot of the Education Association, ran a series of Saturday morning lectures throughout the 1920s and 1930s 'on religion and secular subjects for religious Brothers and Sisters’.\(^\text{70}\) But, as Fr Mullins remarked:

> For the first twenty years that these in-services programs were held, the lecturers, (who were) local seminary professors and teachers, concentrated on teaching the theological content of the Christian Doctrine syllabus, as it was taught in the current (seminary) manuals. There is no reference, in any of these reports, to discussion of methods of imparting religious instruction.\(^\text{71}\)

In 1938, the Catholic Education Association changed its name to become the Catholic Secondary Schools Association and, perhaps as a response to the new, enlarged and quite unrealistic Secondary Religion Syllabus published in 1940, by the recently appointed Inspector of Schools, Fr Pierse, the ‘new’ group set up a secondary religion syllabus sub-committee which met five times during 1941 under the chairmanship of the Marist Br Frederic Eddy. Fr Pierse published a revised version of his 1940 Syllabus in 1942; but it took no account of the sub-committee’s work and was ‘hardly an improvement on the

\(^{\text{68}}\) Mullins, *op.cit.* pp. 87 and 89.


\(^{\text{71}}\) Mullins, W.A. *op.cit.* p. 91.
one it replaced’. Br Frederic died, as we have mentioned, in 1943 and no new secondary syllabus appeared until 1947.

Conclusion

It may have struck the attentive reader, that almost the whole of the foregoing ‘Analysis’ section was focused on doings in New South Wales and in Sydney, especially. And while it is true that, by 1940, Sydney had become the city with the highest concentration of Marist Brothers, anywhere in the world, the Australian Province, by the end of the Second World War also had several schools in each of the mainland state capitals and several more in both country NSW and Victoria. But despite the existence of these other schools, all of which Br Andrew visited each year, and even allowing for his enormous industriousness and the length of his first term of office (1931-1941) it seems unlikely that he could have left such a mark on the character of Australian Marist teaching without the concentration of resources that he had available to him in the Sydney-Mittagong nexus. With the Juniorate, Novitiate, and Scholasticate at Mittagong and the numerous parochial schools, the Westmead printery and the St Joseph’s complex in the city, Sydney had achieved a critical mass which could become a self-sustaining system. It was certainly powerful enough to imprint its ‘style’ on all who passed through its processes, and that was what tended to became the pattern. Young brothers were usually sent to Sydney or, at least NSW schools, where they could be closely supervised, for the first few years after the novitiate or scholasticate. Only then were they sent further afield, having had the Sydney pattern established as the parameters of their teaching repertoire.

By the end of World War II, however, and even more so when the baby-boom and the post-war immigration wave began to build, the Sydney operation became too big to manage. Even the central setting and correction of exams became a ‘monster’ which devoured senior teachers’ preparation time. In 1948, Australia was divided into two Marist provinces with Sydney, most of New South Wales and Queensland becoming the Northern or Sydney Province and the Wagga and Wilcannia-Forbes dioceses of NSW, plus Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia forming the Southern or Melbourne Province. Br Andrew, who had been vice-Provincial of Sydney, from 1942 until 1947, was re-appointed as Provincial of Sydney and one of his many ex-students and admirers, Br Placidus Redden, became the first Provincial of the Melbourne Province. For a time, Mittagong continued as the Juniorate and Novitiate for the whole of Australia; but Melbourne soon established its own facilities, for these stages of the brothers’ training. The scholasticate, however, after a brief sojourn in Melbourne, moved first to Sydney’s Drummoyne and then to Dundas, near Parramatta, where it served both provinces for the next fifteen years.

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72 ibid. pp. 85-86.
73 Again this word comes from one of Br Frederick’s anon. Marist contributors. McMahon, op.cit. p. 129.
As we have seen, the developments in Marist education during the first half of the twentieth century can only partially be explained as a response to ideological and practical changes in the State Education systems of New South Wales and Victoria. The requirements for teacher and school registration in Victoria and for the registration of secondary schools accepting NSW Bursary Holders, certainly forced the Marist Province to, at least, make efforts in the direction of compliance. And Br Frederic’s adoption of the neo-Herbartian thrust in the first wave of the New Education reforms could be identified as a broadening and refining of the original Marist educational vision. But it was the economic and manpower shortages of the 1920s and the Depression which forced the brothers into the exam-centred, vocationally-oriented, junior secondary syllabus and which made them somewhat impervious to the anti-exam drift of the second, Dewey-inspired wave of the New Education.\textsuperscript{74} After World War II, it was simply the increase in the Catholic school population and the increasing, nation-wide demand for secondary education that led to the division into two provinces and the transition to becoming a full secondary school provider. It is to these post-Second World War developments that we shall now turn.

\textsuperscript{74} Cunningham, K.S. \textit{Education for Complete Living}. (Melbourne, 1938). pp. 319-329 and 586-600.