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# CAMBRIDGE AUSTRALIA TRUST

## The Australian Committee of the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust

Patron: Professor Anthony Low AO FAHA FASSA FRHistS  
Chairman: Dr Richard Dammery  
Secretary: Professor Nicolas Peterson FASSA  
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### MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN



2009 has been a year of change for the Cambridge Australia Trust, with more developments still ahead of us.

After eight years as Chairman of CAT, Simon Longstaff stepped down at the 2009 Annual General Meeting,

and I was elected to the role by the national committee. This is both a privilege and a responsibility, and I am grateful to the committee for its support.

As Simon noted in the 2008 Annual Report, the changes now upon us in Australia have been planned for some time. At one level they mirror the process of renewal being initiated by Michael O'Sullivan, the new Director of the Cambridge Commonwealth and Overseas Trusts, and successor to Dr Anil Seal who established them. I have suggested that Michael write separately to us about these developments (see the following report).

The Cambridge Australia Trust plays a more important role than many Cantabrigians, whether here in Australia or overseas, may appreciate. Our records suggest that, since the establishment of CAT, over 1000 Australians have been supported, under a variety of schemes and for degrees at all levels, to study at Cambridge. Over 300 have received financial support via CAT. In Australia, we are now the beneficiary of a significant endowment, and we actively seek further funds from potential donors. With

increased costs for British postgraduate study by overseas students, it is vital that we continue to grow our funding base and build an organisation that can sustain itself in the future.

As some of you may know, the Cambridge Australia Trust was established on an informal basis, in conjunction with the Australian National University, in the early 1980s. Compared with how most established not-for-profit organisations operate today, its governance arrangements have not been altogether best practice – for example, while called a 'Trust', no such legal entity exists. CAT has relied on the goodwill of the ANU, and interested members of the broader Cambridge community at both Federal and State levels, to operate. Even now, the governance arrangements are highly unusual: an informal national committee, a very active State committee in Victoria, a less active State committee in NSW, a joint CAT/Cambridge Society committee in SA, and no active committees in any of the other States.

Accordingly, in 2007 and again in 2008, the National Committee of CAT resolved to form a new entity, with a formal board of directors and members, to replace CAT. That entity, to be known as **Cambridge Australia Scholarships Ltd**, is in the process of being formed and negotiations with ANU continue about transition issues from CAT to Cambridge Australia Scholarships Ltd (or CAS, as the new entity is likely to be known). The intention is to preserve and modify the longstanding relationship that CAT has enjoyed with the ANU, while ensuring that Cambridge Australia Scholarships Ltd has independent operation, with directors drawn from each State where possible, to be a truly national organisation.

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The CAT/CAS State committees will continue, and new State based groups established if possible in Queensland and WA. It is to be hoped that closer links with the Cambridge Societies can be formed, and, in my opinion, consideration should be given to creating a single national Cambridge organisation for both social, fund-raising, scholarship award, and wider purposes. This would allow Cambridge Australians to marshal their energies and activities under a single 'banner' – a grand aspiration, perhaps, but not an impossible one by any means.

I am pleased that Michael O'Sullivan, as Director of the Cambridge and Overseas Trusts - who visited Australia to meet with us last year - has expressed support for the changes to CAT, as had his predecessor Dr Seal.

So why do this?

- Firstly, the CAT national committee is keen to ensure that Cambridge Australia Scholarships Ltd becomes a vibrant organisation, with the ability to renew itself as generational change occurs. Transparent and modern governance arrangements will support this.
- Secondly, it is hoped that the new entity will successfully involve a large number of past CAT scholars, and future CAS scholars, in the organisation's activities. Scholars are being offered the opportunity to become members of the new entity – as will other interested Cambridge alumni and donors – and to offer themselves as directors. By this means, directors will be fully accountable to one of their most important constituencies, past and present CAT/CAS scholars. Collectively they will 'own' the future of the organisation.
- Thirdly, it is to be hoped that improved governance and transparency will attract additional donors to Cambridge Australia Scholarships. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some prospective donors wish to see more formal governance established before they will commit funds to new Cambridge scholarships.

- Fourthly, consistent with the international profile of the University of Cambridge, it is hoped that an independent identity for Cambridge Australia Scholarships will support raising the profile of the important work that CAT has undertaken, and that Cambridge Australia Scholarships will, in the future, undertake.

A first step towards creating a fresh face for Cambridge Australia Scholarships has been the commissioning of a new website: see <http://www.cambridgeaustralia.org.au>. This website replaces the old CAT website. Importantly, it contains the ability for Cambridge Australia scholars (and other alumni) to update their details in a database, allowing us to keep in contact with them. Sadly, up to now our ability to keep track of our past scholars after completion of their Cambridge degrees has been difficult. This new website will greatly assist. Our thanks go to Dr James Forrest (my successor as Chair of the Victoria Committee) and Dr Gareth Forde, a past member of the Victoria Committee, for their efforts in creating this new website.

Cambridge Australia Scholarships, and CAT before it, exists today for one purpose only: to create opportunities for talented young Australians to study at one of the world's great universities. All of us who have experienced the joys and rigours of Cambridge know that it is one of life's rare privileges. Who has ever met a single Cantabrigian who is not keen to help others of calibre to have the same opportunity as they enjoyed? That is our purpose. We need financial resources to achieve it, but we also need the commitment of people – and, in particular past Cambridge Australia scholars - to ensure our objectives continue to be met.

Many people over the years – from ANU, from Cambridge, and locally – have sought to ensure that CAT is successful. I am confident that many more will continue to do so in the future.

**Richard Dammary**  
(Trinity, PhD, 1987)

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## REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF THE CAMBRIDGE COMMONWEALTH TRUST TO MEMBERS OF CAT/CAS

Cambridge Australia Trust and Cambridge Commonwealth Trust have worked together for 28 years to give outstanding young Australians the opportunity to study at Cambridge. Together they have selected over 1,000 students for scholarships. To date, 321 students have been given awards partly funded by CAT, with a further nine expected to take up their places at Cambridge later this year.

In the increasingly international student community at Cambridge, where half of our 6,000 postgraduate students now come from outside the UK, Australians continue to be an important group: last year we were host to 131 Australian graduate students, working across all the disciplines, in the sciences, engineering, social sciences and humanities. Australian-trained talent continues to make its mark in Cambridge.

Our partnership with what has up to now been known as Cambridge Australia Trust, and is being revitalised as the new Cambridge Australia Scholarships, is the most enduring and flourishing arrangement anywhere in the world through which our Trusts work with alumni of Cambridge to support the next generation of students. That is why one of my first overseas trips on taking up my post in October 2008, was to visit Melbourne and Sydney. This helped me to understand your deep personal attachments to Cambridge, and the value of continuity over nearly three decades in building up the endowments which have made Cambridge Australia Scholarships such an important partner for Cambridge.

Like the National Committee of CAT, we have been thinking about where we go from here, and I congratulate you on the steps you are taking to put the formal status of the organization on a more secure footing, and to increase the visibility of the scholarships we offer together. Your new website is excellent – you beat us to it by a few days, but I can now recommend to you [www.cambridgetrusts.org](http://www.cambridgetrusts.org), which I believe is doing much to make the operations of our Trusts better understood, not just to students, but also to academic staff and managers throughout

Cambridge. We have also tried to use our new website to give recognition to the many partner organizations with which we work worldwide.

After extensive consultation in recent months with Cambridge's 31 Colleges and 80+ Departments, it is clear to me both that what the Trusts have brought to the University over the last 28 years is enormously valued, and that there is wide support for a number of changes in the way we work. We will continue to support very large numbers of students, and in almost all cases financial need will be a basic qualification for consideration, followed by rigorous assessment of academic quality. We will continue to provide sufficient but not over-generous living expenses, and to offer a mixture of full- and part-cost scholarships. Working with partners remains central to our way of working, and we have recently entered new funding partnerships in places such as Latin America and the Middle East, which have not been major sources of graduate students for Cambridge in the past.

So what will change? We will publish selection criteria and expect students to identify themselves as candidates for particular scholarships, and to make their case. We will reduce a little our undergraduate funding so as to increase funding for PhDs, while maintaining support to MPhil students at current levels. Selection will follow published timetables and criteria, and in general be faster than in the past. We will no longer offer small awards of less than £6,000 a year, and will leave it to Colleges and Departments to provide smaller "incentive" awards, as many already do. We will not tailor the size of each award to the individual student's need, as we believe that measuring need with great precision is in practice usually impossible. Selection of scholars will be placed in the hands of expert panels, rather than remaining in many cases my personal responsibility. The total number of awards will fall somewhat: having peaked at over 1,600 scholars in residence over the last two years, we are now allocating a larger total fund to a smaller number of students: currently just over 1,300, which will rise slowly over the next three years as we increase

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our funds: we will not eat into our capital. We are delighted that Trinity College recently agreed to increase its annual donation to the Trusts, while the University's financial support is at its highest level ever.

I hope you will be pleased, but perhaps not surprised, to know that what the Trusts will increasingly focus on is very much the kind of thing we have been doing together in Australia for many years: offering substantial awards to carefully selected postgraduate students of the highest quality, with real financial need, such that without our help they would not come to Cambridge. So it is not by chance that the model

of collaboration between Cambridge Australia Scholarships and CCT fits in well with new policies.

I hope we can work together to increase public awareness of what we offer, speed up selection processes – on which we made a good start last year - and expand the programme sustainably through successful fund-raising and new partnerships.

**Michael O'Sullivan (Wolfson, MPhil, 1985)  
Director, Cambridge Commonwealth Trust  
and Cambridge Overseas Trust**