Drugs in Sport: Congress

In April, 1987, one of West Germany's finest Olympic-level female shot-putters was rushed to hospital for a stabbing pain in her lower back. Doctors tried to save her, but she died within hours. Investigations revealed that she had been swallowing, inhaling and injecting approximately 100 different drugs in her pursuit of Olympic gold.

It has been estimated that in Western countries about 70 elite athletes have died as a consequence of doping in the past 30 years.

Interviews taken at the 1972 Olympics revealed that 68 per cent of field and track athletes were steroid users, and statistics have also revealed that during the last decade the incidence of school children using performance-enhancing drugs and suffering from their side-effects has increased exponentially.

These statistics motivated Professor Ron Laura, of the Department of Education at the University and Chairman of the Sports Medicine and Health Education Committee of the Hunter Academy of Sport, to initiate the organisation of Australia's first International Congress on Drugs in Sport. Assisting Professor Laura were Dr Geoff Booth, a Newcastle medical specialist in rehabilitation, Dr Alan Taylor, Head of the School of Education at the IHIE, and Dr Christina Lee, Lecturer in Psychology, all members of the Sports Medicine and Health Education Committee.

The implementation of the proposal has become the task of the Congress Organising Committee, consisting of Professor Laura, Professor Saxon White, Chairman of the Hunter Academy of Sport, Mr Ken Clifford, the Executive Officer of the Academy, and Ms Lucy Smith, Co-ordinator, Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute, Faculty of Medicine.

The Congress has gained the formal support of the New South Wales Ministry of Sport, and will be opened by the New South Wales Minister for Health, Mr Peter Collins.

The recommendations from the Congress will be used as guidelines and be put to the relevant State and Commonwealth decision-making bodies for implementation.

The panel will include distinguished professionals such as Emeritus Professor Arnold Beckett, member of the Medical Commission of the International Olympic Committee and member of the Medical Committee of the International Amateur Athletic Federation; Professor Vernon Howard, former Olympian and Associate Director of the Philosophy of Education Research Centre at Harvard University, along with a number of well-known sporting personalities including Alex Watson, Jane Flemming, Mark Richards and Robyn Leggatt.

The Congress will be held from August 22 to 25 in Newcastle.

Amalgamation imminent

The New South Wales Minister for Education, Dr Terry Metherell, has indicated that the new Act will be proclaimed early in August with the expectation that amalgamation of the University, the Hunter Institute of Higher Education and the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music will be effected no later than October 1, 1989. Membership of the Interim Council, which will be the interim governing body of the University, will be announced by Dr Metherell in August.

Several of the working groups established by the Amalgamation Implementation Committee have now reached advanced stages in their work.

The amalgamation of the University, the Hunter Institute and the Conservatorium of Music will establish a consolidated University of substantial size and accomplishment. It will have about 12,000 students, 1,500 staff and a diverse range of courses appropriate to the important role that it has in meeting the needs of the people of the Hunter Region.

The Administrative Structures Working Group is now completing a report that was circulated for comment within the University some weeks ago.

The report establishes the basis for the central administration and focuses on the new needs to be met to take the University ahead into the next century, including the formation of an office for research, an overseas student office to deal with 'full-fee' overseas students, a management information unit and a better resourced central registry. The report also draws attention to the need to make provision for additional attention to student equity programs, property management and EEO matters.

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Amalgamation Update

One of the early priorities will be the bringing together of the central administration staff from the University and the Institute so that those doing similar work will be integrated and located together. However, there will still be a considerable number of general staff located in departments, schools and faculties throughout the University.

The Academic Structures Working Group has achieved agreement on the main elements of the academic structure, which will be based on nine schools. These are, from the University: School of Humanities, School of Economic and Information Sciences, School of Engineering and Architecture, School of Medicine and School of Science and Mathematics.

The position of the Conservatorium of Music in this academic structure is soon to be finalised.

The amalgamation legislation approved by the Parliament of New South Wales makes provision for an Interim Council of 19 members (with the power to elect a Chancellor).

In order to ensure that the University has access to a wide base of information for its decision-making processes, it is intended that there will be a broadly based representational Academic Senate with provision for about 100 members.

The Academic Structures Working Group is also considering aspects of the committee structure that will support the work of the Academic Senate and the academic management functions of the University.

Library integration is being pursued by a working group which is reviewing the best way of providing library services to the new University. In view of the highly technical nature of much of the library collection and of the materials themselves, this is a quite complex matter. In addition to the very substantial library collections held in the Auchmuty Library and the Hunter Institute library, there are specialist collections held in the Conservatorium of Music and the Medical collections housed in the Hospital libraries.

An appropriate integration of Computing Centre services and facilities is likely, though the University and the Institute have different bases for providing these services, with the Institute making provision for administrative and academic computing services from the one unit. The manner in which computing services will be integrated is being considered by a special task force.

The Student Services Working Group has reached substantial agreement on the way in which student services will be provided for the consolidated University. An important change in emphasis is likely with student services units, such as health, counselling, careers and student employment, working as an integrated array of services, while continuing to recognise the particular professional expertise of the staff involved. Integration of Student Services will be further achieved when the relevant offices can be brought together so as to achieve a better use of office space (for example, shared foyers) and a more advantageous use of support staff.

Important student services are also provided by student organisations such as the SRC and the Union. In this case a productive re-arrangement is envisaged in which there will be a student services liaison committee to consist of the executive members of the several student services organisations with a chairperson being the student member of the University Council, this liaison committee to seek to maximise the benefits to students from the student service groups and to provide a 'single voice' on student matters.

The important cafeteria, dining, recreation and entertainment facilities provided by the Unions are to continue to operate from the present outlets in the University Union and the Institute Union buildings for the foreseeable future.

Book Fair's wide interest

For more than 12 months, a group of active supporters of the University has been sorting and pricing books in anticipation of the biennial fund-raising Book Fair. The Fair attracts wide interest with 40 categories, including 78 rpm records so buyers will have a wide choice. The last Fair raised in excess of $40,000. The University's fourth Book Fair will be held in the Great Hall from July 22 to 29. Our photograph shows Mrs Gwen Hamilton sorting through the huge Australiana collection.
Innovative simulator developed

A Senior Research Assistant in the University's Institute of Aviation is concentrating on the development and marketing of a highly innovative flight training system which was developed in Newcastle.

Mr Michael Ross has been appointed for two years with funds jointly provided by the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce (DITC) and Spengat Technology Limited, of Parry Street, Newcastle, the company which built the system.

The system, the Novasim Flight Simulator, has dual control cockpit configuration and is worth an estimated $130,000 commercially.

The Institute of Aviation received a grant from the DITC under the National Teaching Company Scheme to carry out further R&D on the Novasim Flight Simulator.

Mr Ross resigned from a position as Flight Instructor at the Civil Air Training Academy (CATA) at Cessnock to take up his appointment.

'My main task is to show just how cost effective the Novasim Flight Simulator is as a training and research tool', he said.

He pointed out that Australia, unlike the United States, had no tradition of offering university-based aviation courses. This University was the first University in Australia to introduce a professional course for commercial pilots (1968).

With the establishment of the Institute of Aviation, the flying industry in Australia is now able to combine research into flight methodology training and flight training technology with university-based education and training of pilots.

'Therefore, we now have a very valuable bridge between research and tertiary training on one side and the aviation industry on the other', Mr Ross said.

He said the Novasim Flight Simulator was computer-based and provided better visualisation than other flight simulators owing to its advanced computergraphics. It was also cheaper.

'We have acquainted the aviation industry with the simulator's strengths, we should have a system which will attract an international market', he said.

Last April Mr Ross presented a research paper at a conference on aviation psychology at the University of Ohio. He distributed information about the simulator to representatives of aviation interests from several countries and established preliminary contacts with AUSTRADE's office in New York.

Mr Ross is well equipped to work on applications of the Novasim Flight Simulator in training pilots. He was a flying instructor in Melbourne before he became a student at the University of Melbourne, graduating as a BA and a Diplomate in Applied Psychology. He is enrolled as a PhD student and is working on a thesis on integrated commercial flight training.

Famous pilot attends prize giving

The Institute of Aviation had one of Australia's most famous early pilots as its special guest recently.

Mrs Nancy Bird Walton, who presented the prizes at the Institute's Prize Presentation Dinner at the University, was 17 when she began taking flying lessons at Charles Kingsford Smith's Flying School at Mascot in Sydney in 1933.

Little wonder that Mrs Walton was impressed when she was shown the Novasim Flight Simulator in the Institute's new premises in the former Metallurgy Building and was briefed on the extensive curriculum for the aviation course.

'I used to stay at Mascot all day learning what I could', she said. In two weeks I went off solo, and one month later I had my licence. I was the youngest woman in the British Empire to hold a commercial pilot's licence', she said.

By contrast, the 50 students who are studying either the two-year Aviation Science Diploma or the three-year Bachelor of Aviation Science Degree have available to them considerable advanced new flight training technology. The new Novasim Flight Simulator is an example.

The Institute of Aviation's first graduates will leave with pilot's licences at the end of 1989.

Mrs Walton said she thought it was fabulous that a university in Australia offered a professional course for pilots at last.

'With jet liners cruising throughout the globe, it is essential for pilots to undertake academic courses and learn as much as they can about modern techniques', she said.

'Everybody gains from a university education — I know because I didn't have one', she said.

Mrs Walton's early flying ventures included barnstorming in the Outback and flying nurses to country centres.

She was awarded an OBE in 1966. Her experiences provided the framework for two autobiographies, Born to Fly and, the soon to be published, My God, It's a Woman!
Conservatorium welcomes merger

Mr Michael Dudman, Principal of Newcastle Conservatorium of Music, talks about the work and organisation of the Conservatorium and explains why the State Government's decision to incorporate the institution into the University has been welcomed.

Q: Can you give a brief overview of the Conservatorium's activities?

Mr Dudman: We sometimes think of our activities as falling into two very broad main categories. On the one hand, there are all our teaching activities — the activities we undertake within our own four walls. On the other hand, there is our community outreach programme. This includes not only the 150 public concerts we do in our own hall every year, but also broadcasts in conjunction with the ABC, visits to centres in the Hunter Valley, and other things.

In terms of our teaching, we have 130 full-time students engaged in the Bachelor of Music Education or the Diploma of the State Conservatorium of Music.

We have 500 single study students, many of whom are children who come to the Conservatorium for an hour or half-an-hour a week to study the piano, violin, clarinet, or whatever, and we teach theory, musicianship and certain other class subjects.

Q: How many lecturers does the Conservatorium have?

Mr Dudman: We have 10 full-time members of the academic staff, and some 25 part-time staff. Some teach in specialist areas, such as double bass or bassoon, for only a few hours a week.

Additionally, we have 10 support staff. Our Administrative Officer is responsible to me for the overall functioning of the Conservatorium and he is supported by members of the administrative staff.

Q: And what is the situation from a management perspective?

Mr Dudman: The story of the Conservatorium for the last eight or nine years has tended to be one of gradual emancipation from the Conservatorium in Sydney. While we have conserved very friendly links with the parent body, the relationship has changed from a parent/child relationship to an equal partnership.

The Conservatorium in Sydney is administered by a Board of Governors. A new approach has been the establishment of a Board of Management for the Newcastle Conservatorium. This is a development of which we are very proud. The Board is made up of 14 Newcastle people, all leaders in their fields — education, the arts, law, commerce, and so forth. The Board has contributed a great deal. The composition of the Interim Council to govern the amalgamated University is not finalised at this stage, but we're hoping that the Board of Management can be continued, perhaps under some new title. We'd see it as unfortunate if we were to simply lose the expertise and support of the Board.

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COMPUTER SEMINAR SERIES

TUNRA, in conjunction with the University's Department of Management and Computer Centre, offers you the following Computer Seminar in July.


Advanced courses in Lotus and D Base will be held in September and October. Other courses can be arranged on request; e.g. expert systems and project management with micro computers. In-house computer training can also be arranged for a broad range of topics and skill levels.

Seminar details — Gary Pullen at 67 1811.
Q: Is it true that Newcastle Conservatorium was established in a hut in Civic Park?
Mr Dudman: Yes. We began life in a Nissan hut in 1952. Four years later, we moved into the War Memorial Cultural Centre. A move of considerable consequence came in 1980, when the State Government bought for us the Salvation Army's People's Palace. Since that time, the Government has progressively carried out a program of extensions and renovations. Excellent as the work has proven to be, a performance space was not included.

Q: What is the background to the provision of your new performance hall?
Mr Dudman: Initially, our needs were met by the Mackie Building next door. However, it was far from ideal for our purpose.

We were invited to submit a project as part of the Bicentenary in 1988. I was delighted when my own scheme for a 500-seat performance hall was given the nod. The hall, which was completed in July last year, is astonishingly successful. It's not just a good hall. It's a quite marvellous hall. It was designed by a local architect, Mr John Carr. People from all over the world give concerts in the Conservatorium and, unfailingly, they tell us that the hall is of world standard. The total cost was $5.37 million.

The furnishings in the hall are no less remarkable. We have a beautiful organ, built by Knud Smenge, an expatriate Dane who lives in Melbourne. We have two Steinway pianos, including a brand new one from Germany, and a harpsichord which was made in Boston, USA, for us. We are about to acquire a second harpsichord and an instrument called a forte piano, because, as we see it, increasingly the study of pre-nineteenth century music will occupy us.

Q: Can you provide an insight into the expansion of the academic program to follow amalgamation?
Mr Dudman: I believe that one of the good things that will come about is the opportunity amalgamation will give our students to study at the University. Perhaps even more exciting is the opportunity it gives us as an institution to offer music in University courses.

We would hope to offer music quite soon as a strand of the BA course. We don't see it as being a particular difficulty. A detailed study is being made of music courses at all universities throughout Australia. The courses vary widely from those heavily-oriented to academic work to those strongly oriented to practice. So, we are viewing with some interest the job of designing the musical offerings for the BA. A desirable objective would be the introduction of a full Bachelor of Music course.

Q: Will we hear more 'live' music at Shortland now?
Mr Dudman: Within the limit of our resources and when it is possible, we certainly will provide music on the campus.

Q: Where would you say the Conservatorium's main strengths lie?
Mr Dudman: In the direction of musical performance.

The Conservatorium is the prime entrepreneur of concerts in the Hunter Valley. Some are sellouts at the moment. We would like to see a publicity network developed which would ensure that all our concerts were very heavily patronised.

Our responsibility is to provide a first-class Faculty of Music. While the fine tuning has yet to be worked out in terms of academic and organisational structures, this is our primary role. We hope that the new Faculty will have the capacity to embrace all the things we're presently doing. As a consequence of becoming part of the University, we hope not to have to minimise any of our work, including our work with children.
Community Health

Heart Study Targets Community

What does it mean to you, asks Dr Claire Parsons, 'to have your blood cholesterol measured?'

The University of Newcastle sociologist addresses this question, and related questions, to members of the general public who are participating in a study aimed at gaining an understanding of community attitudes towards preventing heart disease.

Although health providers recognise heart disease as one of the major health problems being faced by modern industrial societies, little is known about what the prediction of health risk factors means to members of the general public.

According to Dr Parsons, an understanding of lay perceptions of health promotion strategies, such as 'health screening', is imperative if methods of preventing heart disease are to be improved.

A centre has been set up at Adamstown Uniting Church, with Dr Parsons in charge of a research team that is interviewing people from the Hunter. The participants were chosen by scientific sampling methods.

The study performs two kinds of analysis. One looks at high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cigarette smoking and other factors that increase the risk of heart disease.

The other part examines community attitudes to such 'health screening'.

Dr Parsons asks 'What effect does having your cholesterol measured have on you or being told that you are "at risk" of contracting heart disease? How do you feel about the kinds of advice given to you about low cholesterol diets and so forth?'

In return for participating in the study, the people obtain free health checks, including cholesterol and blood pressure measurements.

They also have the opportunity to inform health professionals about how they feel about the kinds of heart disease advice given. They are able to speak their minds about what they see as the problems, and benefits of undergoing tests and being assessed for susceptibility to heart disease.

'Death rates from heart attack in the Hunter Region are definitely declining', says Professor Annette Dobson, Professor of Biostatistics and Director of the Monica Heart Study.

The study being conducted by Dr Parsons is the collaborative work of academics in the Departments of Sociology and Statistics and the Faculty of Medicine.

Support for the study is being provided by the BHP, the National Heart Foundation and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

CIBA-Geigy medicine award

The CIBA-Geigy Prize for the University's top student in Medicine was awarded for the first time this year. The prize is a full 10-volume set of Netter's Anatomical Atlas and was won by Dr Jill Griffith, who graduated as a Bachelor of Medicine with Honours and is an intern at Royal Newcastle Hospital. She is pictured receiving the prize from CIBA-Geigy representative, Ms Ann Moullynix. Looking on is Professor John Hamilton, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.
The Japanese Section of the Department of Modern Languages has made remarkable progress in the last three years of its operation.

The Japanese Section has more than doubled its student numbers and has attracted wide community support.

Interviewed by UNINEWS, Head of the Japanese Section, Associate Professor K. Ono, said the expansion had happened so quickly that the Section faced serious staffing problems.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Michael Carter, said that the work being undertaken in the Japanese Section was well respected. He said the University was considering an increase in staff and the establishment of a Chair in Japanese Languages.

We now have 359 students enrolled in Japanese, compared with 268 last year, and 157 in 1987.

What is very noteworthy is that this year's enrolment includes a pleasing number of postgraduate candidates. The Section is very active in research, Professor Carter said.

Professor Ono interpreted the expansion of the Section's work as conforming with a global trend. He said there had been an increased interest in Japanese language and culture in most world countries because of Japan's very strong economy.

In Newcastle, further interest had stemmed from the Sister City activities between Newcastle and Ube City in Japan. The University and Kumamoto University in Japan exchanged students, as did some high schools.

Professor Ono said that the Department of Education was sponsoring an ambitious teacher training program to promote the learning of Japanese in high schools in the Newcastle Region. Encouraged by the results of an initial year's training, the Director of the Area Office of Education, Mr Allan Beard, sent us 47 school teachers for admission this year. The stated aim is to introduce Japanese at all of the 37 high schools in Newcastle by next year, Professor Ono said.

The Section is now regarded as a strong supporter of the Rotary Students' Exchange Program. Every year, an intensive course is provided in conjunction with the Department of Community Programmes for the school students who are sent to Japan.

Professor Ono pointed out that career opportunities for graduates who had acquired Japanese as a second language had been enhanced by the increased interest in Japan.

Graduates of the University of Newcastle who speak Japanese had found employment in universities, schools and the financial, tourist and aviation industries. Others are working in Japan as teachers of English as a second language.

Professor Ono said that he was pleased to announce that a new lecturer, Dr Y. Ito, would take up his appointment on July 1.

Professor Ono said the research being pursued in the Section had brought wide recognition. Articles on a number of areas of research, particularly Japanese linguistics, had been published in scholarly journals and overseas scholars visited the University to carry out research projects.

On the campus, the Japanese Section is well-known for staging traditional tea ceremonies its Calligraphy classes and for the social activities of the Galjin Club.
The Auspharm Institute for Mucosal Immunology is a unique model for co-operation between academia and industry within Australia and perhaps the world.

The Institute is located in the Hunter Technology Development Centre adjacent to the campus of the University of Newcastle.

It was established by Auspharm International Ltd. to further enhance the company's ability to search and develop products and processes associated with the common mucosal immune system (MIS).

The MIS is the first site of infection for many disease conditions in both man and animals.

Under the direction of Dr Allan Cripps, the Institute began operations in 1988. It developed out of long standing studies on mucosal defence in the Immunology Units of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Newcastle and the Royal Newcastle Hospital. These links are still strongly evident today. The Institute enables a synergistic and beneficial interaction to evolve between the basic and applied aspects of mucosal immunity, but as a result of its independence and its recognition of commercial realities, it also provides an organisational structure and direction that cannot occur within tertiary educational institutions.

The Institute is currently studying a number of oral preparations aimed at inducing protection against infection at various mucosal sites. Work has also begun on several associated diagnostic assay procedures.

The Institute has laboratory facilities for microbiology, protein chemistry and immunology, small animal research, as well as resources for biostatistics. Much of the work of the Institute incorporates a program for researching and developing products related to the prevention of respiratory and gastrointestinal infections.

Complimenting this work is a delivery system project aimed at formulating the various antigens for delivery to the intestinal and other mucosal surfaces, especially the respiratory tract. The objectives of the project are to develop flexible delivery systems, applicable to a wide range of antigens and capable of production within the current manufacturing resources of Auspharm.

This is in keeping with Auspharm's primary objective of creating a significant Australian-based pharmaceutical group of international standing, while limiting its exposure to high risk expenditure in product development. By applying its drug delivery systems to established products of proven commercial value, Auspharm believes it can create a range of products with superior efficacy that will achieve a high degree of therapeutic benefit and commercial success.

Dr Cripps believes the close liaison with tertiary education is evident by the number of joint projects currently being undertaken by the Institute. These projects include:

- a basic research program in immunology of the eye (in conjunction with the University of Sydney and the University of Newcastle);
- a study of how oral vaccines work (with the University of Newcastle);
- a search of immune enhancing agents (with the University of Newcastle);
- a drug delivery research program looking at various ways of vaccine delivery to obtain the best mucosal response (with the University of Sydney); and
- development of animal vaccines (with the New South Wales Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the University of Newcastle).

Dr Cripps said it is hoped to have some of the resultant products registered in the first-half of 1990.

But it is not only in direct joint research programs that the Institute is interacting with the academic world. The Institute has approached the University of Newcastle about participation in the Teaching Company Scheme, Dr Cripps said.

This scheme is designed to enhance industry performance and assist restructuring by improving links between industry and the tertiary education sector. It would involve the Institute working in partnership with the University on a research and development program.

Already the Institute employs a PhD student from the University of Newcastle's Faculty of Medicine and a mixture of other students are enhancing their learning experiences through contact with the Institute.

'The Institute's involvement with the University of Newcastle results in a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge', Dr Cripps said.

'There is a definite two-way flow of information between the University and the Institute.'