Feature:

UNIVERSITY ENTERPRISES

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QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

Universities have always been about quality, and consequently it comes as something of a surprise to find additional funds being allocated by the Government for a separate Quality Competition.

The question is whether we, as a community, can actually benefit from the attempt to induce quality in the universities, and it would appear that we can.

Universities are much older than contemporary quality management theory. We do not read of quality issues being predominant in the way in which the medieval Sorbonne was managed. There is no great emphasis on the language of "outcomes" or "goals".

We can all be grateful that humanity has made the progress which now enables us to identify these issues, and we are now free to organise universities in the clear light of day, as opposed to the comparative gloom in which the ancient academics of Bologna, Paris and Athens operated. We should all be pleased that human culture has made such progress, and that we now have available for our own self-organisation, the idea of "goals" and "outcomes". It is a misfortune that universities have been so directionless for the last 2000 years, but we will get it right in 1993.

Notwithstanding the above remarks, there has been issued to the universities a "statement of principles", which are quite simple and to the point. These are:

1. Why are we here?
2. In the light of 1, what should staff be expected to do, and what should students be expected to do?
3. In the light of 2, what should staff and students expect of the institution?
4. How may we measure the performance of the University in the light of these principles?

The arguments for this particular group of seven universities being preferred, rest on what is probably a distinctly distorted classification system. Any particular evidence that the Big 7 were more "hard done by" in the funding stakes than any other would have to be privileged, since the report of the Group is confidential to the NBEET Working Party.

There has been no substantiated claim that the Big 7 are universally excellent in all that they do. Given their size and their history, it is not surprising that they do have many excellent researchers, in the widest range of disciplines. They certainly are not obviously superior in the training they give to research postgraduates.

The University of Newcastle's position is quite clear. We support funding schemes which respect the excellence which we can readily identify. We require a funding scheme which allows us from overall resources to identify our areas of potential excellence and to support them in the point where they can sustain themselves in the competition with others from other Institutions. We want the freedom to plan for our future within these bounds and to compete where competition is necessary on an equal footing as is possible. We cannot support positive discrimination in these contests where the basis for the discrimination is not excellence measured on the same scale in each institution.

In the area of research, we are doing fairly well. Over the past few years we have moved up several places on the scale of excellence used currently. It is unlikely we will ever move more than another two or three places up, simply because of the existence of a group of big universities. But remember...big is not always beautiful.

Ron Macdonald  Dean for Research
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & PRACTICE

John Drinan’s Edited Report from a visit to the United Kingdom 21.3.93 to 4.4.93.

This section of John’s report discusses the British experience and has been edited severely. The full text is available from members of Academic Senate.

INTRODUCTION

British universities have addressed the issue of quality assurance since the Academic Audit Unit (AAU) was established in 1990. It was thought that quality should be audited by universities themselves.

AAU was owned by the universities and in less than two years, carried out around 100 Quality Audits. Then, in 1991, the Government released a White Paper which implies that AAU was not going far enough. It wanted tighter accountability for the large sums of public money being spent. Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC) were set up and required to implement a Quality Assessment procedure. Quality Assessment differs from Quality Audit by focussing on disciplines rather than the institution, but both focus on teaching and learning. The two procedures seem complementary. The Government clearly intends to emphasise teaching and learning and to create more competition.

In 1992, AAU was replaced by a new body called the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC). This body, owned by all the higher education institutions, was to carry on the function of Quality Audit. It would be unwise to assume that the current approaches in Britain will remain in their present form. While people appreciate the benefits of Quality Audit, there is disquiet about Quality Assessment. However, concerns with quality will not go away. There is widespread acceptance of the Government’s right to accountability, and a feeling that teaching and learning were overdue for closer scrutiny.

The system proposed for Australia differs from that in Britain. In Australia it is proposed to audit aspects of teaching and learning, research, and community service in every university every year.

QUALITY AUDIT

Quality Audit is the main focus of this report, as it is to this that the Australian system bears greatest resemblance. Quality Audit is “a systematic and independent examination (of a university) to determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives”.

Quality Audit concentrates on mechanisms assuring for quality in: the approval, validation and review of programs of study; teaching, learning and communication; student assessment and award classification procedures; staff development, training, appraisal and incentives; verification, feedback and enhancement; and the extent to which the university’s promotional material is fair and accurate.

The starting point for Audit is the university’s own aims and objectives, but Audit does not express a view on appropriateness. It focuses on how the university manages those aspects of its work which impinge on the quality of what is provided, and how it satisfies itself that its chosen standards are being achieved.

The university decides how it will ensure effective quality assurance, but these decisions are subject to scrutiny in future audits. In simple terms, Quality Audit asks the following questions: What are you trying to do? Why are you trying to do it? How are you doing it? Why are you doing it that way? Why do you think that is the best way of doing it? How do you know it works?

Quality Audit is voluntary, but it is not expected that any university would fail to be involved. Universities take different approaches but, generally a senior academic works with a committee representative of faculties and student welfare.

The University submits documentation which describes its quality assurance processes. This is then read, and a draft program for the visit drawn up. Visits appear to be generally cordial but intensive. Auditors concentrate on institution-wide matters, but also follow two or three trails into particular areas. Reports are written to a standard format, and conclude with lists of Commentations, and Recommendations.

As it is the initiative of the higher education institutions themselves, Quality Audit outcomes are not attended by funding.
Quality Assurance ...  
Continued from p1
sanctions or rewards. However, publicity that emerges could have considerable consequences.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT
Quality Assessment aims to ensure that all HEFC funded education is of satisfactory quality or better, and to ensure speedy rectification of unsatisfactory quality; encourage improvements in the quality of education through the publication of assessment reports and an annual report; inform funding and reward excellence.

It thus implies the promise of rewards and the threat of penalties.
Quality Assessment uses a framework encompassing student learning experience and achievement, examined in the context of its own aims and objectives. Quality is specified in terms of the match between the teaching and learning process and the students' ability, experience, expectations and achievement.

HEFC's view is that quality can be described or determined by reference to any number of dimensions, for example learning support facilities; quality of staff and arrangements for staff development; scholarship and research; the ethos of the institution; the academic standards of graduates; employability of graduates; and student and employer satisfaction.

Perhaps it could be said that Assessment determines "what is", while Audit determines "what processes exist to ensure what is".

Assessment is not voluntary. Universities are advised about the disciplines to be assessed and the schedule to be followed, and are required to submit documentation based on self-assessment.

HEFC recommends that self-assessments should be informed by the relationship between the mission and course aims and objectives; discussion of the department's understanding of quality, informed by policy; plans for maintaining and enhancing quality; external indicators of quality; input from students; a judgement on the quality of education achieved.

The Scottish Council is more explicit in its framework and includes: aims and curricula; curriculum design and review; the teaching and learning environment; staff resources; learning resources; course organisation; teaching and learning practice; student support; assessment and monitoring; students' work; output, outcomes and quality control.

HEFC also suggests provision of a statistical profile drawn from the NIS, together with their own statistical indicators compiled from national data: entry profile, expenditure per student, progression and completion rates, student attainment, employment and further study.

NEXT EDITION
In the next instalment we will reprint John's report on reactions, impact and possible implications. This is a "closing event" for Australian universities.

INCOME GENERATION  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE  
A VIEWPOINT

The era of the clustered, financially protected world of academia has ended. Responsibility for the total financial support of the academic way, whereby the academic is somewhat protected from the economic realities of the real world, is no longer accepted by Government, nor acknowledged as an academic right.

Many universities have recognised this and for a long time have been preparing for an economic crunch. Several have seen self-sufficiency as the answer to true academic freedom and have worked assiduously towards this goal. Some have set a target of (say) 50% of income to be generated from other than Government grants. Some have taken a minimalist approach and will remain the hostage of Government decision. Those who observe contemporary political attitudes about higher education can only predict a downward slide for those opting for this minimalist approach.

The University of Newcastle faces a number of challenges, particularly as a consequence of the withdrawal of the subsidised overseas student program. In its heyday, the University enrolled 14% of its total student population as subsidised students. There has been a gradual decline in these numbers over time, this decline partly being compensated for by the assumption of increased Australian student numbers, using staff initially funded by the subsidised program.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of the subsidised student program comes as a major financial blow to the University. Although the impact was graduated over several years, the bottom line is that the University in 1993 had to adjust to a reduction in recurrent income of $2.781M. As an example only, and assuming 47% of the budget is spent on academic salaries and 30% on general staff salaries, such a reduction theoretically might have been reflected as:

Example 1:  
A reduction in the capacity of the University to employ 22 general staff at $30,000 pa and on-costs;  
Plus a reduction in the capacity to employ 13 Professors;  
Plus a reduction in money available for operating expenses of $640,000.

Example 2:  
A reduction in the capacity of the University to employ 27 general staff at $34,000 pa plus on-costs;  
Plus a reduction in the capacity to employ 30 level A academic staff;  
Plus a reduction in money available for operating expenses of $640,000.
Income Generation ...

Continued

Of course these figures are indicative only and can be varied according to percentage distributions available for staffing; categories of staff appointed; percentage retained for operating expenses, and so on. The point of the examples remains unchanged.

The University is faced with a reduced capacity to achieve its established goals unless the income can be reinstated or the workload reduced.

The government’s expectation and the University’s short term approach have been to replace the shortfall with fee paying overseas students. In 1993, a budgeted income of $7.795M has allowed the shortfall to be redressed and, in addition, to generate $1.115M for allocation to capital developments. Furthermore, budget predictions to 1996 indicate that without fee paying overseas student income, the University would be operating at a deficit.

The University of Newcastle is not a big player in the overseas market compared with (say) Monash or NSW, both with fee paying overseas student income approaching, if not exceeding, $30M pa. With its limited budget and other marketing constraints whether or not it can even maintain its place is open to question. What is certain, however, is that regardless of the extent of fee income, its constancy should not be depended upon, and it should be regarded as adding to the discretionary spending power of the School/Faculty rather than contributing to fixed budget item expenditure (such as tenured staff costs).

In these difficult times, fee paying overseas student income has provided temporary relief from a pressing problem. However, demands on it highlight the need for the University to develop a portfolio of income generating activities which will protect the University not only from the exigencies of the moment, but also from becoming more and more the handmaiden of the system. In this context, immediate attention needs to be given to at least the following:

- Increasing fee paying income, both by increasing student intakes and by improving retention rates of continuing fee paying overseas students.
- Establishing even further links with industry as a means of generating financial support, particularly for postgraduate studies.
- Accessing DEET special project funds on a more regular basis.
- Fostering the consultant arm of the institution so that the University reaps more of the benefit of applying our widespread expertise to both national and international proposals.
- The aim should be a few big dollar projects rather than a host of small resource consuming ventures.
- Broadening recognition of achievement within the University in a way that fosters involvement in other than (but not excluding) fundamental research, and that promotes this recognition through action rather than by words.
- Fostering a more caring alumni. (As a comparison, the University of Alberta (Canada) alumni has endowments in excess of $169M. In 1992-1993, $32.2M worth of private financial support was received of which $14.4M was made up of gifts ranging from $100 to in excess of $1M).
- The University might like to consider encouraging an alumni matching grants scheme with the State and/or Federal Governments.
- In association with a caring alumni project, promoting a bequests scheme.

It is one thing to be pleased that fee paying income covers the present shortfall. The challenge, however, is to do more than simply adjust to the present financial climate. It is time to start taking responsibility for our own financial future, and to then access the freedom that comes with such a responsibility.

Les Eastcott
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development)
The game is about money. It involves players from academic and research staff and can take many years to complete. It is a game of wit, inventiveness and patience. Karel Greif from the University's commercial arm, TUNRA, explains the rules.

Let me start with a definition: University intellectual property is any knowledge generated by university academic and research staff which is capable of being protected by law and exploited for commercial gain. It may arise through the sole endeavours of staff in the course of their research work on-campus, or as a result of thoughts or work off-campus or in conjunction with non-university organisations.

University intellectual property may take various forms, including patents, copyrights, trade secrets, registered designs, plant varieties and trademarks.

Why are so many people so interested in intellectual property these days?

The answer is simple - it's all about money.

At the very least, all players in the game expect that substantial revenue can be generated by playing. In fact, those who generate any revenue at all from intellectual property these days, fingers are quickly pointed and questions are asked about relevance to society's needs.

The answer is: probably not.

Some of this is a little unfair; the preservation of scholarship and academic excellence are ends in themselves and may form the bulk of what is offered in some traditional university disciplines. In the more-obviously applied areas of engineering, science and medicine, however, more is generally expected.

So, can we realistically expect to look forward to generating much, let alone substantial, net revenue from intellectual property?

The answer is probably not.

One might reasonably draw the conclusion that Australian universities are still in the early stages of capitalising on intellectual property. One might further speculate that many universities have a limited capacity to involve themselves in the "licensing game", simply due to their relative youth and inexperience.

In TUNRA's case, even though our royalty returns are still somewhat modest, I am happy to say that, with one exception, our licensed technologies are being exploited internationally.

We have licensed technologies in the areas of photogrammetry, rolling mill strip thicknes control, satellite antenna tracking and control, mineral flotation and for the treatment of acute bronchitis.

In the mineral flotation area, our licensee, MIM holdings limited, has made sales in Malaysia. Our licensed satellite antenna tracking and control technology has been used as far afield as Vietnam and Russia by Telstra (formerly OTC). We are actively promoting this technology in Indonesia and South-East Asia.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT LICENSING

Licensing is about many things, including the ambitions and aspirations of individuals and organisations; intellectual property; money, markets and profits; contracts and law; trust and ethics; collective wisdom; enterprise and drive; vigilance and strength. Some of these are based on logic and objectivity; others are based on emotion and subjectivity. As a consequence, some things can be learnt; others must be experienced.

In university environments the realisation is dawning that intellectual property may be financially valuable. The AVCC is presently reviewing intellectual property protection and exploitation.

TUNRA approaches intellectual property licensing as a risk management exercise.

We involve the inventor(s) in negotiating licence agreements and prepare them for the difficult and time-consuming tasks ahead.

I'VE DONE ALL THE HARD WORK... HAVEN'T I?

Once licensing agreements have been negotiated, the hard work really begins! There's a 1:10:100 ratio for research/ development/commercialisation. The US-based group, Research Corporation Technologies (RCT), evaluated more than 15,000 inventions since 1912; of those licensed, RCT claims that only about 10% returned $100,000 or more in royalties whilst only 1% brought over $1 million.

The odds are against much money being made out of most university-derived inventions; those which might make some money need an enormous commitment from the inventor(s) to properly transfer the technology to the licensee. This might take years rather than days, weeks or months.

Not many individuals, be they academics or otherwise, are up to such an extended "love affair" with their invention.

BUILDING FOR 1994

Seven new buildings, three of which should be ready for 1994, are to be built at Callaghan at a cost of more than $19 million.

The University's Senior Architect and Planner, Mr Philip Pollard, said tenders close late June and that a start on each project would be made this year. Overall costs are as follows:

- Architecture building ($1.25m) - will provide studio space for students.
- Design building ($3.3m) - will provide workshops for industrial and graphic design and illustration specializations, including six graduate studies, a teaching gallery and administration space.
- General purpose building ($5m) - providing for a Speech Pathology Department, offices and teaching space - two lecture theatres, and a basement/storage area.
- PFE building ($2m) - including refurbishment of old premises in Auchmuty Library will provide space for building maintenance, warehouse, office space and amenities.
- Chancellery Stage 2 ($3m) - will provide office accommodation and amenities, and free-up other space for academic purposes.
- A $500,000 childcare centre is planned for early next year providing 40 places.

The buildings are in addition to the $4m CALT Building which should also be ready for 1994.
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY UNION - SERVICE OR PROFIT?

HOW IS THE UNION FUNDED?

The main source of funding for the Union is the $137 levy on students (part of the $264 General Service Charge) - one of the lowest in the State. This funds Union buildings, facilities and services and the Board believes that Universal Membership is the most equitable way to provide facilities and services to all members.

We still need to augment fee income to meet the costs of electricity, gas, maintenance and construction and year-round operation. Accordingly, some services reflect comparable commercial prices whilst others are subsidised.

WHAT DOES THE UNION STAND FOR?

The primary objective of the Union is "to provide a common meeting ground and social centre for persons who are members of the University". Other goals include promoting the educational, intellectual and cultural wellbeing of members and providing facilities for refreshment, entertainment, recreation and convenience and premises for other amenities.

How does the University meet its objectives?

There are a range of programs and matters before the Board.
• Intellectual and Cultural Development
  Programs include the University revue and art and band competitions; sponsorship of inter-union debates; student art gallery; University Chess Club; scholarships; subsidised functions; affiliation with Convocation.
• Facilities
  Tenancies include hairdresser, travel office, credit union, banks, bookshops; retail post, games rooms, vending machines; external functions trade.
• Services
  We run catering, bars and shops; meeting rooms; second-hand book sales; academic dress hire; travelpass and photographic services.
• Upgrades
  Major building works

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

Higher degree research students conduct original work which enhances a university's reputation for excellence. Any increase in enrolments is therefore warmly received, so the growth at Newcastle by more than 150 percent since 1988 is a real achievement.

The University now has close to 700 students enrolled in research higher degrees, in greater numbers than postgraduate students in other courses. For many students, finances remain a problem and scholarships and part-time jobs a necessity.

Scholarships Officer, Ms Arien Petrovic, says that recent reforms in higher education have had a positive impact on scholarship support and this University has experienced a steady growth in support from government sources and from primary industry R&D corporations, private industry, private citizens, foundations and fundraising bodies.

In 1988, some 60 postgraduate research students were supported by either Commonwealth or University funded scholarships providing a living allowance. By 1993, this increased to 242 postgraduate research and 20 undergraduate students. About 510 postgraduate and 56 undergraduate students also receive scholarships which pay for HECs. A further 120 overseas students are supported through the Australian Government Foreign Aid Education Budget or home country sponsors.

Arien feels that we should aim to provide support for at least ten to twenty percent of the overall student population, rather than the current one percent. This year, some 2000 applications for support for all levels of study were received here. There simply aren't sufficient funds.

The situation isn't unique to Newcastle. At the AVCC's meeting in May, it was pointed out that despite the increase in the proportion of Australian Postgraduate Research Awards provided for 1993, there were still insufficient awards to meet the increasing demand.

This meant a large number of eligible applicants (more than 4,400 around Australia) were unable to undertake studies - a 20 percent increase on 1992. The AVCC also reiterated its support for an increase in the proportion of Australian Postgraduate Awards to Australian full-time students to 40 percent for each year of the 1994-96 triennium.

Ms Meryl Wright of the University's Graduate Studies and Scholarships Unit, says that even then, the situation won't improve as newer faculties establish research programs. "The tendency now is for DEET to encourage universities to attract more funding themselves," Meryl said.
"The importance of community and industry support is obvious and academic staff members are often ideally placed to make contacts."

While this University is attracting more scholarships, increasing student numbers mean that the gap isn't narrowing.

John Broughton, General Manager, University Union

AN INVITATION to attend

CONVOCATION'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held at 7pm on Thursday, August 26, 1993 at The Southern Cross Lounge University Union Supper provided

All enquiries please phone Ms Kim Britton 21 6459
SCHOLARSHIP CONNECTIONS

In a world where students and their parents are increasingly burdened by the costs of a tertiary qualification, universities can play a vital role in providing links between current and potential sources of funds.

At the postgraduate research level, the most promising scheme is the Australian Postgraduate Industry Research Award Scheme. This DEET initiative, requires minimal support from sponsoring bodies and involves submission of a joint University/sponsor proposal. The sponsor provides annual support of $5000 in cash and $5000 in kind, for the duration of the research higher degree, and DEET provides a priority level APRA scholarship to successful proposals ($18,679pa living allowance 1993 rate). For 1994, external sponsorship of less than $5000 may be considered for the humanities and social sciences.

At the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework level, the University could consider establishing similar schemes through local clubs and associations, industry and commerce. If we consider vertical scholarship support for students from undergraduate through to postgraduate study, then we may approach our potential donors from a different perspective.

The main port of call for information about scholarships is the Graduate Studies and Scholarships Office near the main entrance doors of the Hunter Building.

Staff are pleased to help and advise. We even provide guidelines and guidelines to the guidelines if necessary!

Arien Petrovic
Scholarships Office

WHAT MAKES A “GOOD” RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATION?

Having read several hundred applications and seen their outcomes, there are some obvious criteria for a “good” application.

The first is that the application must be clear and logical. While some applications are assessed solely by “experts in the field”, the majority are assessed by a mixed panel, including those who can critically assess the scientific content and those who take a more general view - your application must appeal to a wide range of assessors.

Some “golden rules” could be summarised as a clear, balanced and current introduction to your project; have a testable hypothesis and clearly described aims and experiments which test the hypothesis; demonstrate your expertise in the techniques required; have a timetable for the work planned; justify your budget. It helps if you have a track record in the area and, preferably, have pilot data.

If you want to have a say in who external assessors are, refer to their work in the body of your application. Panels may use this to select external assessors. Don’t make reference only to your own work in the application - you may be good, but not that good!

Errors are irritating - including incomplete forms, poor layout and typing, or spelling mistakes. They would be even more irritating to a professional who is judging the proposal and is short of time. A poorly presented application is often interpreted as a poor research proposal and a poorly organised researcher. Making your application look good is worth the time and effort.

Read the granting body’s guidelines carefully. Ensure your application addresses the specific assessment criteria for the granting body - a focused application is more likely to be successful than a general one written to suit a multitude of granting bodies. And finally, ask a colleague to read the proposal in its final draft form and to provide critical feedback.

Lyn McBriarty
Office for Research

CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS

Adam Technology
Aged Services Association
Aldo Steel
AUSPHARM
Australian Manganese Co Ltd (BHP - Minerals Division)
Australian Telecommunications & Electronics Research Board/CSIRO
BHP Engineering
BHP Research
Centre for Industrial Control Science
CMTEK Pty Ltd
Commonwealth Department of Health Housing and Community Services
CW Page & Associates Pty Ltd
Friends of the University
Harbourside Haven Retirement Village
Hunter Water Corporation Ltd
Hunter Catchment Management Trust
ICI Chemicals
Industrial Automation Services
Land and Water Resources Development Corp.
Menz Australia Pty Ltd
MIM Holdings
Motor Accidents Authority
Mrs H Porter
National Soil Conservation Fund
National Heart Foundation
Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group
New South Wales Cancer Council
Ore Sorters (Aussie) Pty Ltd
Pacific Power
Royal Australian College of Surgeons
Royal Commission
State Electricity Commission of Victoria
Sugar Research and Development Corp.
TOMAGO Aluminium
TUNRA - Newcast Division
Wide Bay Brickworks/BHP

Scholarship support is also provided by the Vice-Chancellor and Departments within the University. This support is generally in the form of Supplementary Scholarship benefits.

PROPOSALS FOR 1994
APRA INDUSTRY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE DUE NOW.
CLOSING DATE WITH OFFICE.
9 JULY 1993. APPLICATION PACKAGES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE SCHOLARSHIPS OFFICE.
TAPPING THE GRADUATE POOL

There is a growing trend in Australia to develop stronger networks within the graduate body. Most Australians view their university years with an affection that seems to inexplicably grow in proportion to their distance from them.

Some prominent Newcastle graduates interviewed this year provide a case in point. Karenen Jurd, science graduate and national director of the Australian Wilderness Society, described hearing conservationist Bob Brown speak at Newcastle as the event that set her on the path to her controversial career.

And recently appointed Managing Director of the Sydney Water Board, economics graduate Paul Broad, said his university years had affected his philosophy of life. "University life was wonderful," Paul said. "I grew up and turned from a boy to a person of the world, and it was then I developed a social conscience."

Popular communicator John Doyle (alias Rampaging Roy Slaven), enjoyed his time here so much he was loath to leave and delayed graduation for some years. "One learns reasoning, one learns objectivity, one learns per se and that has a profound effect," he said.

These high profile graduates are just the tip of the alumni iceberg. There are almost 40,000 names on our Convocation register, each with their own talents. But harnessing the tremendous force of graduate loyalty will be a slow process.

It begins with building that loyalty at an earlier stage, with positive links on campus. Convocation's Management Committee is working steadily to achieve its aim of "Strengthening the links between the University, its graduates and the community."

2NUR BUILDING APPEAL

The relaunch of a building appeal for Radio 2NUR, the University's community radio station, was given a great start recently with a donation of $5,500 from the Friends of the University.

Manager of 2NUR, Mr Grahame Steel, said the cheque was a most welcome start to the Appeal which hopes to raise $145,000 to upgrade equipment and relocate to a new building.

"We are currently operating in very cramped conditions and need to upgrade our equipment," Grahame said. "When I took up my appointment as Station Manager recently I thought, "How do these people do it?"

Grahame said the station has a mission to promote excellence in community broadcasting and a commitment to local performance and analysis of issues that affect the people of the Region. "For that we need money."

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES - ADAPTING FOR THE FUTURE

From a narrow range of offerings which included large entertainment and concert projects in its early days during the seventies, the University's Department of Community Programmes has come a long way.

It now offers 120 different projects each year which include professional and occupational in-service and development projects, conference and seminar services over a wide range of topics, educational tours and travelling seminars and activities such as "Train the Trainer" courses, report publishing and many other activities. Its profile also includes the highly successful Open Foundation Course (mature age matriculation), Newstep (an equity program for school leavers) and a number of relevant bridging courses for academic study.

The Director, Mr John Collins, describes Community Programmes as moving inexorably down the track to commercialisation, and at a fairly accelerating pace.

He says though, that when you look at the Department of Community Programmes within its University context, commercial success becomes a little more difficult to measure than it may appear.

"Last year our costs amounted to $1.2 million, of which the University's contribution was $220,000. This essentially covered the cost of six full-time staff. However our commitments are such that we employ, using earned income, another six full-time staff as well an army of part-time and casual teachers and organisers to do our work," John says.

"The Open Foundation course is the single biggest project, but it's also the single biggest cost. It provides to the University a very large number of high quality, long lasting and loyal undergraduate students. In a sense, it can be said that the Open Foundation course is an investment by the University using Departmental risk funds. But it's not something we should get too carried away with otherwise we could be living the life of Riley on the argument that everyone else is benefiting so why shouldn't we?"

"If the Department is to be judged commercially successful, is that judgement to be dependent upon the state of our books at the end of any particular accounting period?" he asks.

John says the commercialisation process started about five years ago. He says it meant changing attitudes as well as a whole set of procedures and the entire equipment base.

"For 15 years we saw ourselves as a public service and we prided ourselves on being able to do good things cheaply."

"Over the last few years we have had to learn that the world doesn't necessarily appreciate that. Even in the recession the world doesn't necessarily appreciate low cost provision."

Continued p12...
IS THERE ANY SUCH THING AS “DIRTY MONEY”?  

The debate can rage. Or at least fill in a few blank moments in a faculty meeting. 

The trouble is there is no right answer. We’re dealing with values and things get caught up with competing worldviews, economic pragmatism, ethics, and government funding models. It is however an issue that will increasingly concern intellectual life and the shaping of society as we become more and more driven by marketing dollars. 

The problem’s not new. What brings it forward is that Government moey is shrinking, philanthropy is dead and hard-nosed marketers measure the impact of every dollar spent. On the other hand, we’re debating how to control a pretty small proportion of research funding so we should keep it all in perspective.  

The Tobacco Industry: A Case Study. 

We’re picking on the tobacco industry here which may or may not be fair. But it’s making news at the moment and it will do to look at the issues. You can apply the same logic to other major industries if you move along the spectrum - mining, baby foods, pest control, agriculture, manufacturing. The issues there may not be health, but they are about economic or cultural destruction, or human, political and civil rights. 

The decisions are as complex as when the U.N. wants to hang on trade sanctions to force civil and political change. You’ll never find a compromise that meets everybody’s criteria. 

Viewpoint One 
Tobacco smoking is the major preventable cause of mortality and morbidity in Australia. Tobacco makes you feel rotten and will very likely kill you if you use it. Tobacco companies promote their products through association with healthy lifestyles, strong and beautiful bodies and sophisticated behaviour. We must not add credibility to these images. 

Viewpoint Two 
We accept the evidence that smoking is a health risk. However there is good research, some of it critical of the tobacco industry, which is accomplished using tobacco industry grants. We endorse the right of any group to determine its own policy. The decision to accept funding is an individual one, although we would explore the acceptance of any funding from sources which attempt to dictate the outcome or prevent or censor the dissemination of the outcomes or results. 

Viewpoint Three 
Tobacco’s tied up with issues about health. Some funding bodies disqualify you if you accept funding from tobacco groups. It’s all right to be strong on the ethics but not at the cost of losing all funding for things you believe are important. There are issues of individual rights and groups dictating to others but you have to decide on the grounds of which issue is most important. 

Viewpoint Four 
We shouldn’t take funding from sources like this. The personal and social costs of such industries are too high to do business with them. But where do you draw the line? If you take the high ground you should also look at what personal and social costs come from industries which sell First World products into Third World countries and destroy local customs, health practices and diets. How “moral” can you be? 

Viewpoint N - Yours???
Dirty money?
Don't be funny!
We ain't got none round 'ere!
Why, ours is all clean.
You see it's done in a machine.
Even the smell can be made to disappear.

Speaking of smell
I was in a hotel
Once and saw a respectable bloke.
It was a five star job;
His mate wasn't short of a bob.
But do you think he'd laugh at the joke?
You see, I've been 'round long enough
To know some's made of stuff
Makes me blood run cold at the thought.
They'll tell all their mates
That they all must go straight,
But for them it's alright to be bought.

If you've read Graham Greene,
You'll know what I mean -
The Whiskey Priest he was the sort.
He said do as I say,
But please turn away,
Whilst I helps meself to another snort!

So I asks all ye wise
Who would else moralise
'Bout the virtue of so-and-so's stump.

Who the hell gives a stuff?
If your soul's clean enough
You can tell' em all to go jump!

Ne'er Doowell
April 1993

'Ne'er Doowell would like to have been a First Fleeter, but wasn't around early enough. She's had to accept a less-glamorous latter-day role as an occasional spokesperson for otherwise-unchampioned causes.
Continued...

Community Programs...

Where we had operated on a low cost budget and provided a "no frills, no nonsense" product, we became aware that our customers might think that "if this is the quality of their brochure, then what is the quality of the educational service they are providing?"

"I'm not sure that we've actually changed much in terms of the quality of the educational service that we provide. It has always been high. What has changed though is the way in which we describe ourselves to other people. It has required us to look at ourselves in the way that others perceive us and try to anticipate their needs."

"Community Programmes is very much a community relations exercise in as much as it brings people in contact with the University and onto campus who might otherwise never have done so. It is an avenue for us to reach out to the people and provide opportunities for learning. In fact, facilitating learning by adults in their professional, business or hobby lives has been our only concern for more than 20 years."

"However, with the nation's rapid progression to a service and information economy, the demands on training and human resource development are enormous. Most failures that organisations experience are not due to technical failure. They are human problems, the failure of people to adapt to change, to communicate, to set goals and solve problems. They are, in fact, learning failures."

"We are continuing our work to meet the needs of our customers. We are listening to the market, providing what our customers need and as a consequence becoming more commercial," John said.

NETWORKING FOR EFFICIENCY

Computer networking. It's certainly the catch-word of the so-called "Information Age". Businesses and organisations around the world are linking departments and even trans-global offices via computer networks in an effort to become ever more efficient and cost effective. For most of us "networking" extends as far as hitting the right keys on the computer keyboard and linking somewhat magically to someone else's computer. We spend little time worrying about the intricacies of the connections, or indeed, how to make the system more efficient. But there are people who spend their lives solving problems associated with processor networking and other mathematical dilemmas. Dr Mirka Miller from the Department of Computer Science is one such person. Mirka, who says there is a growing interest in the design of processor networks, is conducting collaborative work with two researchers from Slovakia.

Professor Stefan Zvoun and his former PhD student, Professor Jan Plesnik, from Komensky University, Bratislava, Slovakia, visited the University earlier this year. Together with Mirka and PhD student, Edy Tri Boskorn, the two visitors are studying problems within the framework of Graph Theory.

Mirka explained that Graph Theory looks at nodes (or points) which could represent anything (be it computers, or telephones) which can be interconnected. "In such networks it is obviously desirable to minimise distance between any two processors," Mirka said. "This would, in turn, reduce the delays and also the load on the interconnecting lines. Ignoring other factors, the smaller the distance between any two processors, the more efficient the network," Mirka said.

There is a catch, however. The cost of the interconnections between the processors increases with the number of lines in the network. It is therefore desirable to design networks with both the minimum distance between any two processors, and the minimum number of lines. But if the number of lines is decreased then the distance between the processors tends to increase and vice versa.

"There seem to be some kind of inverse relationship between these two criteria, although this has not been proved in general and there might be some anomalies," Mirka said.

The collaborative study will investigate the relationship between the two criteria (number of lines and distance) and the number of processors.

Mirka hopes to travel to Hungary for an international conference on processor networking in July this year.

PROBABILISTIC EVALUATION OF STRUCTURES

One of the areas in which the Department of Civil Engineering and Surveying is very active is in the analysis of complex structures for the probability of failure some time during their working lives. Although it might be considered by many practitioners engineers to be a rather esoteric and theoretical research area, it does underpin the much simpler design rules which engineers use in everyday practice. There are a number of research groups around the world active in this type of research: Newcastle is one of them.

Probabilistic evaluation and probabilistic arguments are gradually becoming accepted by professional engineers and others for making decisions. Hence it is only natural to attempt to introduce such ideas for complex structural systems.

Traditionally, complex systems were designed by various approximate methods using hand or simple calculator-type calculations. More recently the introduction of the computer has had a major impact on this type of calculation, and techniques, such as the finite element technique, have become mainstream for the analysis of complex structural systems.

The Geomechanics Group within the Department of Civil Engineering and Surveying has developed particular expertise in finite elements and this expertise was brought to bear on the project carried out by Ms Guan Xiu-Li. In her research she brought together the computer program with both the minimum distance between any two processors, and the minimum number of lines. But if the number of lines is decreased then the distance between the processors tends to increase and vice versa.

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Alcohol plays a major role in the Australian way of life. A case of beer and a bottle of chardonnay are icons of the traditional "Aussie barbie". Australians, like people around the globe, drink to their success and celebrate major events with popping corks. But sadly, for some, alcohol can become a way of life. Gripped by the power of the bottle, these people develop a dependence on alcohol, suffering many social, psychological and physiological problems in the process.

Heavy alcohol intake has long been linked to the development of liver disease and cirrhosis in particular. Whilst it is accepted by most people that this association is real, many working in the field of liver disease have been puzzled by the fact that many heavy drinkers do not develop liver disease at all.

Associate Professor Robert Batey from the University's Faculty of Medicine and Director of the John Hunter Hospital's Gastroenterology Unit, is conducting research into liver disease and alcohol related tissue damage. "Mechanisms that have been suggested as being important in the production of liver disease in alcoholics include biochemical factors associated with alcohol metabolism, nutritional factors which promote alcohol related toxicity, immunological mechanisms promoting alcoholic liver damage, and other factors such as viral infection," Robert explained.

Alcohol is toxic to the body's cells. The liver, as the major organ involved in metabolising alcohol, is exposed to high concentrations of alcohol after each drinking episode. The primary metabolite of alcohol, acetaldehyde, is even more toxic to liver cells and is known to induce cell damage. Acetaldehyde also binds to proteins in the body, rendering them foreign to the body's immune system and thus promoting the production of antibodies against these proteins. "It has been known for some time that alcoholics who stop drinking may continue to have problems with ongoing liver injury," Robert said. It is this immune mechanism that may be responsible for the ongoing problems in many patients.

The term "liquid diet" is often associated with alcoholics, who may substitute alcohol for a nutritionally sound diet. According to Robert, nutritional deficiency certainly promotes susceptibility to alcoholic liver damage. "It is clear that impaired nutrition and alcoholic liver disease go hand-in-hand, and modifications of the diet in a normal animal model can lead to more marked alcoholic liver damage," he said. Other nutrients which appear important in protecting from or promoting alcohol related liver disease include cholesterol, vitamin A and zinc.

In the human, a diet high in cholesterol appears to protect against alcoholic liver disease. A balance of vitamin A is critical in alcohol metabolism; vitamin A deficiency appears to promote scarring in the livers of those exposed to alcohol, whereas vitamin A excess leads to a marked fatty change which can be associated with scarring. Zinc is affected by alcohol ingestion and regular drinkers tend to have an increased urinary loss of zinc and decreased levels of zinc in the bloodstream.

Robert explained that factors other than biochemical ones come into play in individuals with alcoholic liver damage. "It is clear that alcoholics with liver injury have high levels of antibodies circulating in their blood stream. Furthermore, alcoholics are more prone to infection because their T-cell function has been impaired and this may, under certain circumstances, facilitate liver injury," he said.

"It is also apparent that some individuals develop alcoholic liver disease because they are also exposed to other toxic compounds," Robert added. "Certain drugs will promote liver damage in alcoholics. Paradoxically, the commonly used pain reliever, can cause quite acute damage in people who are regularly consuming alcohol."

More work is needed to ascertain why certain individuals are more susceptible to alcoholic liver damage. Research at the University of Newcastle, John Hunter and Royal Newcastle Hospitals is focussing on the immunological and inflammatory mediator arms of the equation in the hope that better treatments might be evolved for patients with developing alcoholic liver injury.

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**ALCOHOL AND YOUR LIVER**

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**EDITORSHIP OF THE JOURNAL OF PACIFIC HISTORY**

Professor Alan Ward of the University's Department of History, will co-edit the *Journal of Pacific History* for a term of two years. The JPS was launched in 1966 by the first Professor of Pacific History at the Australian National University, Professor JW Davidson, and has gained a reputation as the leading journal in the field.

Editorship is by two co-editors, one based at the ANU, one at another University in the region. Professor Ward succeeds Associate Professor Hempenstall, who also served a term as co-editor of the JPS.

Professor Ward has also been invited to membership of the Conseil des Océanistes, Paris, which publishes the leading French language journal relating to the Pacific region. The appointments indicate the standing of Pacific historical studies at the University of Newcastle.
A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Do you wake up feeling tired and cranky? Not getting enough sleep? We all know that lack of sleep can have adverse effects on psychological well-being, and on physical and mental performance. But the implications of sleep deprivation are more far reaching than that. Researchers from the Psychology Department have, for the first time, linked sleep deprivation with the body’s immune response. Dr Richard Brown has gone against accepted medical and scientific belief that sleep deprivation has no effect on the immune system. While previous experimentation had merely deprived the subject of sleep and tested for abnormalities in the immune system, Richard’s group tested the effect of sleep deprivation on sick subjects. Initially, Richard vaccinated a group of mice against influenza and then gave them an injection of influenza virus. One group of animals was put back in their cages and allowed to pursue their usual routine, including sleep, while the others were kept awake for a period of seven hours. Three days later, those animals allowed to sleep had no traces of the virus in their lungs, whereas the sleep-deprived animals had two lungs full of the virus and had developed a fatal infection. The results from experiments on humans are not nearly as dramatic, although of some concern. Richard vaccinated a group of volunteers and let one group sleep overnight, while the other was kept awake for 24 hours. The results showed sleep deprivation interfered with the immune response in humans.

Two academic friends from opposite sides of the world are hoping that the United Kingdom can learn from Australia’s experiences in the complex field of self-assessment for income tax. It could be a case of Australia leading the “Mother Country” as Britain is restructuring its tax system and looking at the Australian model. Self-assessment has been part of the Australian taxation scene for the past four years but in the UK it is a new area.

Simon James from Exeter University and Ian Wallschutzky from our Department of Commerce have been friends since they wrote their first joint article in 1979.

Both are experts in the field of taxation and hope to have their research findings published by the end of the year.

Simon was recently in Australia for four weeks, the main purpose of his visit was to see

Richard Brown

A TAXING SYSTEM

if the UK can adopt the Australian system of self-assessment for income tax. He visited Canberra and Sydney in addition to Newcastle and found the local tax office very helpful in discussions.

"I'm learning from Australia and seeing if there are any lessons for Britain," said Simon.

"The tax system in the United Kingdom is different to Australia as most UK taxpayers do not have professional help in dealing with their tax affairs," said Simon.

"We have found the PAYE (pay as you earn) system to be fairly accurate and as a result there has been no need to lodge returns or receive rebates.

"Self-assessment would be aimed at about one third of Britain's population - these people mainly being high income earners, small businesses or people who have complicated circumstances in regard to their tax. British's tax system is very old but is facing rapid change."

Ian said that he and Simon were planning to have their ELS research published in an international journal, again by the end of the year.

Simon combined a little teaching with research while in Newcastle. He lectured on UK tax reform to Diploma in Taxation students and delivered two seminars for the Department of Economics and Commerce.

"Sleep disorders are among the most commonly occurring disorders of mental health," Richard said. These findings raise questions about how many people who suffer from insomnia or related conditions have this dysfunction. But, with the creative and energetic Newcastle psychology student on the trail, the answers may be just around the corner.
The University of Newcastle is about to experience a scientific influx with almost 100 scientists, engineers and technicians moving on campus to form the research and development centre for New South Wales electricity producer, Pacific Power.

Staff from Pacific Power and from the University of Newcastle will start moving into Pacific Power's new $15 million Advanced Technology Centre in about a month. About $10 million in scientific equipment including advanced analysers such as a Scanning Electron Microscope and a Mass Spectrometer will be installed in the Centre.

The Advanced Technology Centre is the two storey complex nearing completion adjacent to the University's Engineering Faculty. It will house offices, laboratories and workshops and will be "environmentally friendly," making maximum use of ambient air and natural lighting, with only "top-up" air conditioning.

The Centre will house Pacific Power’s Technical Services Branch which supports the state's power stations and transmission supply groups with specialised expertise in electrical and mechanical plant testing, metallurgy, chemistry and environmental monitoring.

Newcastle University engineering graduate, Tom Bryant, has been appointed Pacific Power’s manager of the Advanced Technology Centre.

"This is the only known development of its kind in Australia where university and industry experts are being brought together and integrated into a new, state-of-the-art laboratory complex located at the centre of a university campus," Tom says.

Pacific Power’s General Manager, Ross Bunyon, says the Centre is a co-operative project between Pacific Power and the University of Newcastle and has the potential for world-wide recognition.

"The Advanced Technology Centre will provide the opportunity for Pacific Power and Newcastle University staff to, work closely in the areas of scientific services and technology development for the power supply industry," he said.

The Project has not only involved a significant financial commitment but also a commitment from Pacific Power’s scientific and technical staff to relocate with their families to the Newcastle area.

The Centre marks the relocation of Pacific Power’s technical services base. It will also house the University’s Institute of Coal Research and the Institute of Bulk Materials Handling.

DISTANCE LEARNING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS

1993 sees the third cohort of Distance Learners enter the books of the Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CCEB). The Hunter Region has a relatively small population and we were keen to develop a national role. Our educational offerings are unique and much needed by health professionals. Such people cannot usually take the time from a busy career to come to Newcastle for a year or more and the obvious way for us to play a national role was to develop our courses for a distant audience.

The educational methods we use lend themselves well to transfer to a distant audience since we use tutorials based on pre-prepared modules with exercises. All we had to do was convert the tutorial experience to distance communication with a tutor using model answers to the exercises. This, together with residential courses and a couple of telephone conferences formed the basis of our transition to Distance Education.

It has been a staggering success. High quality health professionals from every State and Territory in Australia have enrolled in, kept with and completed the Postgraduate Diploma course. A number of our first cohort have enrolled in the Masters component (the research is designed during the Diploma coursework and completed for the Masters) and some will go on to a PhD if all goes well. Numbers are increasing each year despite the steadily increasing fees we charge (this is a cost recovery exercise). An evaluation of examination and assignment scores shows that Distance Learners do just as well as the full-time and part-time postgraduates who take the courses in Newcastle - and sometimes considerably better.

We also offer the courses overseas. We have a program in its second year in China as part of the International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN), and we have been asked to offer programs in Vietnam and the South Pacific and are looking at an ambitious plan for Africa.

Newcastle is now the hub of a national and international educational exercise designed to improve the research capacity of the health professions. We are adding more educational options (from our base of Clinical Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Health Social Science we have added Health Promotion, Pharmacoepidemiology, Psychiatric Epidemiology and plans to add General Practice). We have other plans for co-operative education with other universities in Australia as well as overseas. This will include getting some of our Distance Learning graduates to join our academic staff at a distance.

Richard Heller
Annette Dobson
SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

Five finalists have been chosen for the 1992 University Sportsperson of the Year Award. The candidates have been chosen on their sporting achievements within the 1992 academic year. The winner of the award will be announced at the Blues Dinner which will be held at the University Union on Friday August 6, 1993. The winner will receive a $500 travel/equipment grant and each of the other finalists will receive a $150 grant, sponsored by The Universities Credit Union.

Adrian Lakin, Executive Officer, Sport and Recreation, believes that each of the sportspersons show a great deal of maturity and sophistication in their management of their sporting commitments and academic studies.

Twenty-two year old Andrew Beazley, enrolled in Bachelor of Aviation, is currently a 'men/masters' rated skier in all three facets of "Classic Skiing", slalom, trick and jump. There is only one rating higher than masters which is the Open (or professional) rating.

For Andrew, one of the most rewarding and challenging aspects in his eighteen years of water skiing, is the jumping facet. "While it is highly competitive, the competition is very friendly," explained Andrew.

After a knee injury in 1989, Andrew spent much time training for the Oz Ski Pro Tournament, where he placed twelfth in the Open Men's Jump. "To represent my country was the most exciting aspect of my skiing career to date," he said.

While water skiing remains a seasonal sport and most of Andrew's training is done throughout the summer months when his study commitments are lower, he still trains on weekends during the winter months and therefore requires a little time management to balance both his sport and study.

Andrew is at present working towards improving some of the aspects of ski jumping.

At least ten hours of athletics/judo training and a hectic study schedule is all in a weeks work for Martin Kelly, who is enrolled in a Bachelor of Science degree. "It's a matter of organising your time well," explained Martin.

One of the most memorable and rewarding experiences in Martin's sporting career to date, was the 1992 World Title, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was also selected in the Under 20 Australian Judo team for the 1992 Oceania Championships held in New Zealand.

Martin's sporting achievements also include outstanding results in athletics (javelin) events where he placed first in the Under 20 Country Championships and fourth in the Under 20 Australian Titles.

Martin is at present preparing for a judo tour of NSW, Victoria and Queensland in September of this year.

Bachelor of Arts (Communication Studies) student, Elizabeth Heslop hopes to combine her sporting career with her academic communications training.

Nineteen year old Elizabeth said that one of the most exciting aspects of tumbling was the travelling. "It gives me the opportunity to meet so many people and visit different places. I like to meet people, and I hope that I may be able to combine my communication skills with my knowledge of sport whether it be journalism or public relations," she said.

In 1992 Elizabeth had an impressive list of sporting achievements in local, regional and state events. She won the Victorian Open Women's Tumbling event and the Australian National Championships Open Women's Tumbling.

As well as a hectic study schedule and competition tours, Elizabeth trains approximately six hours per week and coaches children in gymnastics two nights per week.

Elizabeth is currently number one in the World Age Ranking, and number seven in the World Women's Open ranking.

Years of hard work have begun to pay off for twenty one year old Alison Lipsey, due to fly to Barcelona in September for the Junior World Cup Hockey tournament. During 1992 Alison travelled with the Australia Institute of Sport Women's Hockey team, touring England, Ireland and Spain.

"Travelling to places such as New Zealand with the Australian Under 21 team was a fantastic experience," Alison said.

While Alison is fairly modest with regard to her aspirations in hockey, she is confident that her degree of Bachelor of Commerce, which she is due to complete this year, will prepare her well for a career in accountancy.

"At wish most other sportspersons, I think the time spent training is hardly a chore - it's enjoyable. It's really a matter of finding a balance between sport and study," she said.

Alison is fairly modest with regard to her aspirations in hockey, she is confident that her degree of Bachelor of Commerce, which she is due to complete this year, will prepare her well for a career in accountancy.
The University of Newcastle has recently awarded tour/match expense grants to six students of this University who have been selected to take part in representative sporting events.

Megan Lippey, enrolled in a Bachelor of Business Degree was selected in the NSW Under 21 Women's Hockey team earlier this year and in the Australian Under 18 team which recently played test matches against New Zealand at the Australian Institute of Sport.

Michelle Prouten, who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing Degree has been selected in the Australian Universities Women's Soccer team to compete in the World University Summer Games to be held in Buffalo, USA from 2 July to 19 July, 1993.

Eleanor Clifford, enrolled in a Bachelor of Science (Psychology) Degree, was a member of the Under 19 Northern NSW Women's Volleyball team (State Team) which competed in the National Junior Volleyball titles held recently at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra. Eleanor was a member of the NSW Under 17 Volleyball team in 1991.

Nikala Van Whye, who is completing a degree in Environmental Science, has been selected to represent the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron to compete in the International Yngling Class World Championship which will be held in Helleup, Denmark during July 1993. Earlier this year Nikala sailed in the Australian Titles placing second in the 420 Youth Dinghy Class and second in the Laser Youth Class.

Lucky Carathanassis (Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies) and David Thomas (Physical Education) were elected in the NSW Tertiary Rugby League 1993 Representative Team which toured Victoria in early June and will tour Queensland from 29 June to 1 August.
ACTION IN MOBILISING COMMUNITY WISDOM

Well known media personality and Patron of the University's Family Action Centre, Geraldine Doogue, described Di James, Judi Eggie and their 'small army' of colleagues as 'facilitators for mobilising community wisdom'.

The remarks were made at the launch of the Family Action Centre as an officially constituted Centre of the University. The Centre has grown significantly since its start in 1986 as the van Leer Hunter Caravan Project. Programs now include the Hunter Caravan Project, Homestart, Homelink, Mobile Health promotions and the National Dissemination Program.

The aim is to promote individual and family well-being and family friendly environments.

Speaking at the launch, Geraldine said she was thrilled to be Patron as she was impressed by what the Centre is doing now, and where it is moving for the future.

"I am now familiar with the programs and am impressed by what I see. It's still developing and people are looking for new ways to do things. It is necessary in our community to adapt programs to the needs of society as it is now," Geraldine said.

"The Centre's programs are so practical. It's one of those things that you think 'it's so obvious, why didn't I think of that?'"

"The notion that family life is really a craft is something I have always been aware of. It's a gift with some people."

Geraldine applauds the vision of the project leaders. "It takes more than well-intentioned people to bring about social change. It's focussing down, articulating, developing strategies and then putting them into practice. From my experience, what families need is love, work and strategies." These programs, she says, are obviously a result of watching the community, listening and learning.

"It's a pleasure to watch people who have made a dream come true in such a positive way."

A SPECIAL PLAYGROUND

The University's Special Education Centre will soon have a new playground thanks to the design efforts of second year Architecture student, Brett Nathan, and generous donations from a number of community sources.

Conducted under the supervision of Lecturer in Architecture, Mr John Cochrane, the project involved 40 students who were briefed by the Director of the Special Education Centre, Associate Professor Phil Foreman and the Team Leader of the Centre's Early Education Program, Ms Margo Chipilin.

John said the playground design brief had to take into consideration the physical, social, cognitive, developmental and safety needs of young children with disabilities. "The students also had to have an understanding of the needs of staff in supervising and administering educational programs, an empathy with parents of the children and an understanding of the physical and perceptual limitations experienced by children with disabilities," he said.

The playground will provide a safe and pleasant environment for young children with disabilities, provide quiet refuges as well as places for group interaction and motivate children to make full use of playground activities.

"The importance of play is well accepted as an essential component of normal child development. In the case of young children with disabilities, special consideration needs to be given to providing environments which are safe yet stimulating, secure yet challenging and natural yet interesting."

"This proposal seeks to provide a playground which will contribute, in a planned way, to the enhanced development of young children with disabilities," he said.

Associate Professor Phil Foreman, said the commissioning of the redesigned playground has been made possible by a donation of $10,000 from the BHP Community Trust and $3,400 from the Toronto Lions Club. He said the Special Education Centre's Parents' Association, Firstchance, will provide top-up funding.

AWARDS FOR CSRU

Professor Nikolai Bogduk, Director of the Cervical Spine Research Unit of the Faculty of Medicine, has announced that the Unit's two PhD students have won prizes for their research. The Unit was established in 1991 under a grant from the Motor Accidents Authority of NSW to conduct research into whiplash, and is based at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital.

Dr Les Barnsley was awarded the Pfizer Prize for best scientific presentation at the 1992 Australian Rheumatism Association NSW Annual Scientific Meeting. The prize carried a cash value of $3000. Les reported the results of a prevalence study of cervical zygapophysial joint pain in patients with whiplash injuries.

Dr Susan Lord was awarded the Student Essay Prize offered by the Australian Pain Society for her work on the prevalence of third occipital headache in patients with whiplash. The prize carries a cash value of $200 and costs of travel and accommodation to present the paper at the 1994 meeting of the Society in Brisbane.

Les and Susan are both honours graduates of the University of Newcastle Medical School.

Both studies establish how common a genuine, but hitherto neglected cause of pain and headache is amongst patients with whiplash who commonly are accorded no definitive diagnosis and who often are accused of malingering or suffering so-called psychogenic pain. These diagnostic studies pave the way for definitive therapy for these causes of debilitating, chronic pain.
ROY RAMPAGES ON TELEVISION

John Doyle, alias “Rampaging” Roy Slaven, was reluctant to leave Newcastle University when he completed his Arts degree.

Having recently taken the radio program he comperes with satirist Greg Pickhaver, This Sporting Life, to television, John was speaking from his studio at Radio 2BL in Sydney. “University was an enormous eye-opener to me,” John, who came to Newcastle from his Lithgow home after winning a scholarship, said. “One learns reasoning, one learns objectivity, one learns per se and that has a profound effect.”

Having majored in drama and linguistics, John delayed his graduation for some years. “I always planned to do an Honours year, so I didn’t graduate until 1978,” he said. “It was meeting like-minded people and being able to bugger about, and I think I wanted to retain that talisman for as long as possible.”

Having finally made the break, John didn’t naturally gravitate to comedy. He taught drama at Glendale High School for seven years, until he found he was starting to repeat himself. “My life was beginning to be measured in coffee spoons,” John said. “I needed to get out for personal stimulus, but also I knew that, when I began to repeat myself, I was no longer an effective teacher.”

During his university years and those that followed, John had been involved in local theatre and was a player for the Hunter Valley Theatre Company. When he left his teaching job he decided to pursue a full-time acting career and with his wife, Deanna, left for Sydney. He worked for the Sydney Theatre Company and the South Australian Theatre Company doing serious repertory work.

The radio program he presents for the ABC’s 2BL, is a weekly weekday afternoon show. But when he takes to the airwaves with Greg Pickhaver, aka H G Nelson, for This Sporting Life, Doyle slips into the Roy Slaven persona seemingly effortlessly.

Having met Greg in Sydney, while they were both acting in a children’s television program, the two have combined to create a brand of humour that is totally unique. “We don’t tell jokes,” John explains, “we are tremendously disappointed if we tell a joke. Ours is a humour of attitudes.”

And sport was a naturally rich source of humour to the rambunctious satirists. “Most Australian men feel they are able to do anything at a very high level in sport,” John said. “So if the average bloke got a tap on the shoulder from the cricket selectors, most of them know they would be able to swing the willow or roll the arm over and make their country proud of them,” John confided in his serious “Rampaging” Roy style. “The drama that sport provides is exquisite and fulfills all the Aristotelian essentials for drama and comedy,” the real John Doyle admits.

“Of course there is an element of tragedy in sport, but if it wasn’t tragic it wouldn’t be so funny. When the player drops that crucial ball, sure it’s tragic for him but to the spectator it’s tremendously funny. And sport is stupid as well, it’s a gold mine.” And with their fast-thinking, punchy, incredibly disrespectful duo, Roy and H G have built a loyal following of fans to their alternative commentaries on serious, even hallowed, sporting events. But can the formula successfully translate to television?

John is uncertain about the future of This Sporting Life on television. “We were disappointed when the ABC put the program into the 9.30pm timeslot on Mondays,” he said. “That timeslot raises expectations... we would have been much happier with an 11.00pm time so there were no expectations.” And how difficult is it to work in television? “At first we were like a couple of rabbits under the spotlights, we were a bit daunted by the situation, but it is getting better because its getting more conversational. We always knew the first three or four programs would be reasonably ordinary but were hoping for a rapid improvement,” he said. “We want the show to be something as disposable as Saturday arvos, which are completely ad-libbed, and to do that you have to be completely relaxed.”

“It’s a cheap program to make,” John says, optimistically, “and hopefully after we have done the initial ten programs, there will be another series.” But whether they succeed or not, Roy and H G will continue to please their fans, those lovers of mockery, the discerning sports fan, who are able to laugh not only at the great Aussie sports god, but at themselves.

HEALTH SERVICES IN RURAL NSW

The University of Newcastle is to play a major role in the development of quality health services in rural areas of Northern NSW. Funding totalling $243,872 will be provided over three years under the Commonwealth’s Rural Health Support, Education and Training (Rhset) Grants Program.

The Project, which will be managed by Professor Brian English of the University’s Department of Social Work, aims to provide educational support and clinical supervision to approximately 60 Social Workers west of the Great Divide.

“As well as improving the recruitment, retention and competency levels of Social Workers in the region, the project will also provide access to continuing education.”

“This includes units of the Master of Social Work, placing at least six undergraduate students each year, particularly to remote centres,” Brian said. Describing RHSET as an important program, Federal Member for Newcastle, Mr Allan Morris said: “It seeks to improve the health of rural and remote communities by improving the education and training of the rural health workforce.

“These projects are a significant part of the Government’s focus on achieving good health, including mental health, for all people in rural and remote Australia.”

NEIL DICKINSON MEMORIAL AWARD PRESENTED

The Neil Dickinson Memorial Award was presented at a function held recently by the Faculty of Economics and Commerce.

The award, in memory of a former academic staff member of the Faculty, is presented each year to the student enrolled in first year Economics who achieved the highest entry TER score in the Higher School Certificate having studied 2-Unit Economics at HSC level.

Out of more than 100 students, the award was presented this year to Paul Parsons, who attended St. Francis Xavier College at Hamilton.

At the same function the Shell Prize in Economics, awarded by the Shell Company of Australia, was presented to Mary Veronica Wooley. This prize is presented each year for the best performance in first year full-time study in the Bachelor of Economics or Bachelor of Commerce.

The C.J. Chandler Memorial Prize was presented to Linda Maree Pillidge. This prize is presented each year for the best performance in first year part-time study in either Economics or Commerce.
HISTORIC FLAG NOW A PART OF UNI COLLECTION

A historic flag on permanent loan in the Auchmuty Library, carries with it not only the flavour of history, but a reminder of a bygone age. The flag was used by the Lieutenant Governor of Papua between 1906 and 1940, Sir Hubert Murray. Presented by retired school principal, Mr Alf Taylor from Gosford, the flag was originally the property of his father, Mr Roy Taylor, a Methodist missionary in Papua at the time.

Alf Taylor, born in Papua, recalls the story of how his father acquired the flag. Returning to Australia during the 1930's, his father heard the flag was going to be replaced and wrote to Sir Hubert, requesting it as a memento of his time in Papua. He enclosed three shillings for postage and a short time later the flag was his, complete with the three shillings.

Sir Hubert Murray was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Papua when Australia took over control of Papua from Great Britain in 1906. Papua, the South East quadrant of the island of New Guinea, became Australia's first colony.

Sir Hubert was not always admired by Australians who went to Papua and New Guinea in the early 20th century as settlers, planters, miners and businessmen. Dr Peter Hempenstall from the University's Department of History, says Sir Hubert was not all sweetness and light. He also brought in, under pressure from the plantation and settler interests, a set of Native Regulations which kept Papuans subservient in their own land - severe dress codes, censorship, curfews, segregation rules and criminal sanctions against Papuans consorting with whites, designed to prevent "race contamination".

Peter said that in comparison with what was happening in New Guinea under the Germans and the Australian, Papua was peaceful, quieter and less violent under Sir Hubert's rule.

"The flag is a fitting symbol of one of the national and international strengths of the History Department, namely the history of colonialism in the Pacific: what did it mean to Pacific Islanders caught in its net, what social and economic impact has the colonial era had on the development of our near neighbours and how has Australia handled its own colonial past in reflecting on our community history," he said.

P.D. Alexander
Returning Officer

ELECTION OF A MEMBER OF COUNCIL BY THE STUDENTS

At the close of nominations for the election of a member of Council by the Students, one nomination had been received, namely that of Marion Monica Williams. I therefore declare MARION MONICA WILLIAMS elected as the member of Council being a student elected by the students for a term of one year from 1 September 1993.

P.D. Alexander Returning Officer

ELECTION OF A WARDEN OF CONVOCATION

At the close of nominations for the election of the Warden of Convocation, one nomination had been received, namely that of Marion Monica Williams. I therefore declare MARION MONICA WILLIAMS elected Warden of Convocation for a term of three years from 1 September 1993.

P.D. Alexander Returning Officer

"Van Gogh's Ear" is published monthly and is edited by Sonja Dunsmuir, with layout and design by Gillian Stack. Letters to the Editor (no longer than 300 words and signed); reports on outstanding and unusual research; news and human interest stories are welcome.

Please contact either Sonja Dunsmuir or Rosemary Russell at the University's Information and Public Relations Unit on 21 6440 or 21 6463

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