UNIVERSITY INTERFACES

The University Drama Department last month presented “The Professor”. Set on a tense, fractionated stage, the play mixed the metaphors of ancient and contemporary Japanese social artefacts, and through them explored the interfaces between teacher and student, old and new cultures, money and control, racial differences, gender politics and power.

All in all, a quirky reflection of broader university life in the 90’s!

This month we’ve used the theme of “interfaces” to glance at some of the changes that will shape decisions and practice over the next couple of years - our interface with national trends, with schools, with students and with technology.

For the historical perspective we’ve started with the staff-student interface, mirrored in the eyes of Professor Bill Pickering, retiring from the University after 41 years of uninterrupted teaching and research.
He's a local boy through and through. Educated at Kurri Kurri Public School and Mainland Boys High School, the young Bill Pickering obtained his Leaving Certificate in 1943 at the age of 15, after “skipping a couple of classes” in primary school. Fifty years later, Professor Bill Pickering graduated from the University of Newcastle after 41 years of unbroken teaching and research.

Bill Pickering began his working life as a trainee metallurgist with the Commonwealth Steel Company, Warialda. He recalls that between 1944 and 1946 most of his time was spent in a laboratory where he was involved in alloy steel analysis. At the age of 18, he was appointed Senior Assistant Chemist of the newly established Coal Laboratory owned by Northern Colliery Proprieters Association. He conducted a range of fuel, water and air analyses, and was involved in underground sampling for dusts and mine gases.

“I became familiar with the underground of every hole from here to Gunnedah,” Professor Pickering recalls.

In 1950, the young Bill opted for a change by becoming an undergraduate at the newly established NSW University of Technology (now the University of NSW). Two years later, at the age of 24, Bill Pickering was appointed Lecturer in chemistry at Newcastle Technical College (with a joint appointment to Newcastle University College). Eight years later he was promoted to Senior Lecturer and shortly after to Associate Professor. In 1969 he was awarded a “Personal Chair” in Chemistry. Professor Pickering served as Head of the University of Newcastle’s Department of Chemistry for a number of years, and was Dean of the Faculty of Science for a total of six years.

His contributions to the University have been many. He watched it grow and change while serving on many major Senate and ad hoc committees. During this time, Professor Pickering obtained higher degrees, based on research studies which he conducted part-time. He gained the University’s first Master of Science and third PhD awarded for work completed at Newcastle College. Professor Pickering was the first person to be awarded a higher doctorate (DSc) by the University of Newcastle in 1977.

When asked about the changes he has seen, Professor Pickering commented on the increased number of full-time as compared to part-time students now attending University. He also pointed out that the number of female students had increased substantially. He adds, that the best of our current students match the best of past students, despite increased distractions.

“There are certainly more social distractions now than in the past,” Professor Pickering said. “In the early days, the younger generation may have been home by 10.00pm; the modern ons now go out at that time.”

As far as pressure on students, Professor Pickering says claims that there is more pressure on today’s high school and University students is “media hype”. “There have always been strains and pressures, and there will be strains at every step of your life, but I get the impression that young people now tend to be more relaxed about life than in the past,” he said.

“This may be a false impression. I don’t think their career prospects are as certain as in the past, and this is reflected in the changes you now see in the number of people doing honours and higher degrees,” Professor Pickering said. “It is going to get harder and harder for people who just get a degree. There will be a need for a second qualification in order to get employment,” he said, adding that this may take the form of a teaching diploma, a management diploma, or other graduate qualification.

His advice to students: “Get the best degree you can, follow your interests, set your goals and be willing to work 50 or 60 hours a week to achieve these goals. Seek outside experience and above all, be optimistic about the future.”

According to Professor Pickering, the University’s role in educating and developing students is to reflect in its courses what the country wants. “I guess one of the challenges for academics is to respond to change. Some say we don’t do it fast enough. Some old conservatives like myself hinder the process,” he said smiling. “Most importantly, the University needs to build on its strengths.

“I think the University of Newcastle is doing its best to respond to the external social, environmental and employment pressures,” Professor Pickering said. “Only time will tell if the approach is right. If you produce graduates in fields where there are no jobs for them, then you’re wrong. If most of the people you have educated go out and prove themselves, then you’re right.”
A DEGREE OFF THE BOIL

Demand for university places in Australia increased by seven percent this year, compared with an unprecedented 10 percent rise last year, the Australian Vice-Chancellor’s Committee announced.

Issuing its 1993 Survey of Applicants for Undergraduate Higher Education Courses, AVCC President, Professor Bob Smith, said the total number of eligible applicants for university places was 249,000 this year, up 16,600, compared to a jump of 20,000 between 1991 and 1992.

“The growth in the number of eligible applicants receiving an offer (up to 158,000 in 1993 compared to 134,000 in 1992) is significant, and signals a swing against the trend of recent years.

“It also reflects the result of Government initiatives in providing wider community access to higher education including the provision of additional places in 1993.

“Although the picture is complicated by new tertiary entrance arrangements in Queensland, there is a definite trend towards a reduced number of eligible applicants who failed to gain a place at university. This year the range of such students was 29,000 to 43,000, compared to a range of 34,000 to 50,000 last year. This drop in the number of eligible applicants unable to gain a place is very gratifying.

“Most states registered decreases in the number of eligible applicants not receiving an offer, reflecting a turnaround in the trend for the numbers of unsuccessful applicants to grow in recent years.”

SURVEY OF APPLICANTS
FOR UNDERGRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES 1993
AVCC EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1993, there were 243,061 eligible applications to the State Admission Centres for undergraduate higher education places, which was an increase of 15,517, or nearly seven percent, over the number for the previous year. Of total eligible applicants (including Tasmania) in 1993, 91,505 did not receive an offer of a place in a higher education institution, compared with 99,201 unsuccessful eligible applicants in 1992. This represents a decrease of nearly eight percent over comparable data for 1992.

After application of a range of discounting assumptions, there were between 29,100 and 42,900 students eligible for entry and willing to accept an offer who were unable to obtain a place at a higher education institution in 1993.

There was an overall decrease of 14 percent in the range of eligible applicants not receiving an offer (an increase of about 15 percent in NSW, to a decrease of 44 percent in Queensland). The following ranges set out the number of eligible applicants unable to obtain a place in NSW and the country as a whole in 1993, together with the data derived for 1992.

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<td>Males</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
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<td>All States</td>
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The increase in the number of eligible applications was greater for females than males (10,289 compared to 6,349). As in 1992, the 1993 analysis indicated that Victoria had the highest number of eligible applicants not receiving an offer. Data collected by broad field of study indicates that the higher level of unsuccessful applicants occurred in the broad fields of Arts, Health, Education and Science.

A MATTER OF ACADEMIC STANDARD

The next month will be important for Year 12 high school students. Applications for university places in 1994 close with the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) on September 30 and nearly every Year 12 student will have listed six university course preferences by the deadline. The next step will be the Higher School Certificate, a time when the spotlight shines on academic standards; a time which is not only important for Year 12 students, but also for universities. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Carter, was interviewed by Keith Powell from the Information and Public Relations Unit on the issue of academic standards of those coming from high school to university.

Q. Professor Carter, it has been very competitive during the past few years for Year 12 students to gain entrance to university. Are you happy with the academic standards of those coming from the school system?

A. In overall terms, yes. In fact, the entry standards which have been rising over the past few years in some of our disciplines, have very high cut-off points as you well know - Medicine and Law for example, certain areas of Engineering and other parts of the University. If one takes some of the lower cut-off point disciplines then these too have risen quite substantially in the last year or so...I'm thinking of Nursing and Education.

Q. Is Newcastle University on an equal footing with other universities in Australia?

A. On equal footing in terms of standards? Undoubtedly. Whilst there may be lower cut-off points in certain disciplines in this University compared with some others, the fact is that when the students graduate they are of equal standing, if not better than other universities in Australia. That is to say that the standards we apply across the University are very high indeed. If you gain First Class Honours in any discipline in this University that is to be compared with the nation as a whole and indeed, internationally.

Q. From a University point of view, are high schools preparing Year 12 students to a standard that you believe is adequate to come into first year studies?

A. I think that this does vary from one faculty to another. It has to be said that there

Continued over...
university.

is a general worry within the University, in reference to the standard of English and the capacity to express in writing... that in mathematics there are questions of competence... and I think that universities generally, not just this one, feel that the students don't have a sufficiently tight discipline base when they come to university.

In part, that has to do with different objectives in the schools and we have to recognise that the universities are taking in a substantially higher proportion of the age group than hitherto has been the case. We can't sensibly expect that all people coming to university will be strictly academically orientated. However, on the whole, I would have thought that the standards which are achieved whilst at university do reflect reasonably well on the school studies once the students have adapted.

Q. Are you worried about the high retention rate in Year 11 and Year 12 and what effect that actually has on the competition for university places?

A. This is a national problem. The University can only take so many people, namely numbers for which it is funded and one has to feel disappointment with, and on behalf of, those candidates for admission who do not secure a place. At the same time, strong competition undoubtedly does raise the general calibre of the students who come.

We should not want to forget of course, the substantial proportion of mature age students we admit...and whilst we are talking today about students coming out from school, the number of places available to those students from school is in some sense modified by the numbers we admit as mature age people, who haven't had the opportunity in the past or in fact a background which induced aspirations to go to university... so, in a way, there is a double squeeze on school-leavers.

Q. If there is a double squeeze, would you like to see any changes?

A. I am not too sure about changes. I think one has to look to the TAFE sector for expansion... that would seem to be government policy and it would seem to be a sensible way to go. Certainly we need expansion of higher education opportunities. I don't think the universities as a system is the appropriate way to extend opportunities in a very significant manner in the future. I wouldn't want this university to be much larger.

Q. Do you then think we have reached our diversified peak - are there specialisations in which the university could expand?

A. I don't have particular areas in mind. It is unlikely for example that we would go into dentistry... it is conceivable that agriculture and horticulture might develop in the future, but we are a very good university. We've got a nice mix of disciplines... one could expect some rationalisation perhaps in the future... a measure of re-organisation which will optimise our capacity to present good courses; but I don't see any major plans other than those which are already being aired... bio-technology and medical technology are possibilities.

Q. Looking back, are our university students better prepared today for academic studies than they were a decade ago?

A. It is very difficult to say. Students have changed and the consequence in part is that there have been changes in schools. The proportion of the age group coming through to university is extended... and at the same time universities have changed in response to their increased responsibilities.

It is also the case that the 17 or 18 year-olds coming from school are very different individuals from 10 years ago. They are much more sophisticated. In many ways I think they perhaps have travelled more widely and read more widely and come with a set of expectations which they think are important and should be satisfied. So, in many ways I think they are more self-confident... this is a generalisation, of course.

Q. What about the future? Can you see any changes in academic standards - will standards be maintained at the plateau at which they are now?

A. By academic standards, you mean the measure of the ability of students coming up? (Yes) I think the competition will continue to be quite strong, especially if one looks at the extended life expectancy and the reduction in working years. One can expect much stronger demand for places amongst the older age group - those in their forties, fifties, sixties and seventies and be it said their eighties - and so the competition will be stronger. Also, one has to recognise that in the world as a whole everything these days is international... knowledge is being produced at a rapid rate and knowledge is being conserved and re-arranged in a very significant way and the communications industry... the technology associated with information science... all of these things I think are going to feed into much more complex and, in a sense, vital knowledge environment. So yes, standards are going to increase.

UNIVERSITY INTERFACES UNIVERSITY
Andrew Denton and Wendy Harmer’s “Great Australian Debate” screened by the ABC from time to time can be one of television’s great joys.

However, their recent attack on the motion that “men deserve more respect” failed to delight. One had a sense that our well-known acidics were engaged in intellectual cross-dressing for the occasion. The distinctions were blurred in a flurry of fashionable thinking.

So too, the current debate on national education policies, curriculum and profiles. Even senior political speakers sound as though they haven’t lined up the issues and implications in their heads. The inputs, links and outcomes don’t hang together at all well.

A national curriculum would have provided a set of agreed criteria for the outcomes of learning in each year across a range of subjects. As a shared framework for the content and scope of teaching in our schools and focussing on accountability, it would have many positives - an improvement on what Professor Helen Praetz in the Australian (21/7) called “cottage industry curriculum and assessment”. It now seems to be hopelessly de-railed in the name of anti-Federalism.

“Profiles” on the other hand aim to set minimum outcomes tied to “levels” rather than age cohorts. Because they set minimums, profiles may adequately describe neither content nor experiences, nor inform post-secondary systems well.

Professor Ron MacDonald, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research), argues that “Whilst universities cannot demand certain standards for entry they are in a position to advise and should do so.” He also suggests that there is a danger that accepting minimum standards translated to the status of a curriculum, could lay down an inadequate knowledge base for further study. As a result, institutions which need to give a competency guarantee to employers in areas of professional training may have to provide bridging content - making undergraduate courses longer and increasing resource demand.

Furthermore, whereas the use of levels rather than age cohorts aims to free up the rate students move through learning stages, an external examination brings them hard up against an efficiency barrier at the critical late secondary stage. To coin a phrase: the handicapper moves back on the scene mindless of the barrier trials.

In NSW, where good processes for gifted children are developing through accelerated progression, distinction courses and individual programs, overlaying an arbitrary set of levels may distort the system to the point that it cannot address the general social goals of education.

Many professional bodies have expressed concern about the profiles, their effect on standards if they direct curricula, and about the lack of consultation.

Overlaid on all of this is the finding by the Economic Advisory Planning Council that “Education and training reforms have been mis-directed and fail to address a legacy of neglect in providing basic literacy skills for young Australians.” (The Australian, 3/8)

We should take our option to “advise” quite seriously.

FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Debate has recently begun at a national level over intellectual property, and the commercialisation of products and processes. In this University, a good precedent was established by Professor Jameson, with the “Jameson Flotation Cell”, licensed to MIM.

Tied in to this question is the ownership of intellectual property in books, art works, musical works, creative writing and so on.

There is a body of legislation governing these matters which is now beginning to be interpreted in universities, and which will have some odd effects. The main question turns on what the University owns, what the staff member owns, and what the student owns.

And after all the legal work is done, there will still be the major industrial question: what rights should the University attempt to claim, given its desire to establish a fair, creative and energetic working environment. And the answer to this may not have much to do with the law.
The University of Newcastle has achieved notable success with its mature age entry schemes (Open Foundation course 1,025 entrants in 1993) and its equity and admission provisions. This performance has been cited by DEET as "best practice" and with the assistance of a grant from the National Priority (Reserve) Fund, the University will be the convenor of the Australian Equity and Access Conference to be held in Newcastle in October 1993. The continued success of such equity initiatives and the credibility of the University require that the University be able to provide for a reasonable intake of mature students, and its capacity to do so is greatly reduced by limitations on places and the high demand from other students.

The University has informed DEET of its wish to increase the proportion of postgraduate and research higher degree candidates, especially at the Callaghan campus; to the extent that it has responded on this, DEET has indicated that such a change would be by realignment of funded student load from the undergraduate to the postgraduate level. This response does not acknowledge the higher cost of postgraduate and higher degree students and serves to further strain the resources of the University. Limitations will act as a severe choke on the demand for postgraduate and higher degree enrolments at a time when there are strong social and economic calls for a more highly educated and better trained population. Enrolments in 1993 exceed the EFTSU profile levels for postgraduate students.

Conclusions
1. Demographic data derived from ABS Census and residential migration projections identified a growth in the tertiary intake cohorts for Hunter and Central Coast regions; for the Hunter the growth is steady; for the Central Coast, the growth is very strong.

2. The regions have a long history of socio-economic disadvantage which is reflected in higher unemployment levels than state or national levels and poorer participation rates in tertiary education. The long term trend of poor school retention rates continues, with rates that are lower than state or national levels.

3. Growth in demand from the increased population, from socio-economic factors and improved retention rates is expected to lead to a higher demand for places.

4. The new undergraduate student load for the University of Newcastle Callaghan and Central Coast campuses will represent a severe shortfall on the desired provision.

5. The extent of unmet demand in the regions will increase; it will continue to be exacerbated by overflow demand from metropolitan Sydney; it will put severe pressure on enrolments generally and it will put pressure on the equity initiatives designed to reduce regional disadvantage.

STUDENT ENROLMENT TOPS 14,500
The number of students studying at the University this year totals 14,593, an increase of 380 students on last year.

Figures released by the Management Information Unit reveal that 10,222 students are studying full-time, 4,019 are studying part-time and 352 students are studying externally. The proportion of full-time enrolments has risen by two percent over 1992, to 72 percent of total enrolments.

The gender comparison shows female students outnumber their male counterparts. A total of 7,907 females (5,444 full; 1,863 external) are studying during 1993, compared to 6,686 males (4,678 full; 2,009 part; 169 external).

The figures identify 12,009 students studying for a Bachelor degree; 912 for a higher degree, 802 for other postgraduate awards; 597 in other undergraduate courses, 96 in enabling courses and 177 in non-award courses.
Dr. Lee Ann Grace says that about 15 students are on exchange from her university in Australia, but that as many as 30 to 40 could participate in exchange programs.

Dr. Grace is the Director of International Education for Buffalo State and is visiting three Australian universities with which her university has exchange programs. The University of South Australia started an exchange program in the early 1970s and Newcastle first sent students to New York State.

PART 2

Understanding the skills and cultural background of students is a significant factor in supporting their learning needs. They're not all HSC or mature-age entrants, with firmly Aussie expectations. Our students come from 44 different countries including:

Argentina
Bangladesh
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Columbia
Cook Islands
Egypt
Fiji
France
Germany
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Iran
Italy
Japan
Kenya
Kiribati
Malaysia
Mauritius
Maldives
Indonesia
Nepal
Nigeria
Philippines
Papua New Guinea
Singapore
Solomon Islands
South Africa
South Korea
Sri Lanka
Sweden
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
Tonga
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States
Vanuatu
Western Samoa
Yugoslavia
Zimbabwe

NEWCASTLE & THE WORLD

in 1991. An agreement was formulated with the University of Central Queensland this year.

Dr. Grace said her two week visit was very much a "fishing expedition" to get a feeling for the three Australian university campuses. She said it was important that exchange students are sent to campuses offering support to suit individual circumstances (such as study programs and interests) and that her visit was providing valuable background information.

"There has been a tradition of American university students going to western Europe, but new international areas, such as Australia, are now becoming popular," said Dr. Grace. "In fact, Australia is our most popular destination and we are receiving an increasing number of enquiries from our students about studying in Australia.

"Our experience with exchange students between Newcastle and Buffalo State has been good and we have been able to mesh the study programs of students who have been on exchange."}

Buffalo State regularly has between 60 and 70 students on exchange. Our own Faculty of Economics and Commerce has organised exchange programs with the University of Central Washington, Northern Arizona University, Northeast Missouri State University, University of Alabama and Buffalo State. The Dean of the Faculty, Dr. Winston Dunlop, said there was great opportunity for Newcastle students to study in America and that information pamphlets were obtainable at the Faculty office or the International Students Office in the Bowman Building.

Winston, who earlier this year visited America to formalise student exchange programs, said among the benefits were studying in a new academic environment, participating in the culture of the exchange country and bringing back new ideas to be shared with students.

NEWCASTLE & ITS REGION

Our school system has undergone massive changes in curricula in recent years, but it's not only schools that have felt the winds of change. The new curricula indirectly has impacted on the University and brought about a closer liaison between teachers and lecturers.

Teachers, especially those responsible for Year 12 students, are increasingly seeking expert advice on a range of issues and closer academic bonds are being built between schools and the University. No longer do senior high school students complete their Higher School Certificate and look to the brave, new world of university study without any introduction to 'tertiary life'. School Visit Days, Tertiary Information Days, Careers Markets, Information Nights and other events are now all part of the university calendar.

Lecturer in Health Education, Marie Williams, knows only too well the important role the University can play before young people step out of their school uniform and into their casual gear as university students. Marie says the NSW Department of School Education's Excellence in Equity Report and the Carrick Report have brought a series of educational reforms in recent years - reforms which the university cannot ignore.

"One major recommendation was the devolution from State to school level and the introduction of global budgetting," says Marie. "There has been a reduction in the overlap of subject areas so that there are now six key learning areas in the Primary sector and eight in the Secondary sector."

One of those key learning areas in which Marie is heavily involved is Personal Development/Health/Physical Education which has brought together former subjects such as Student Welfare, Life Management, Health Education and Physical Education. The learning area was introduced in 1991 and has had a major impact on Physical Education teachers in schools. The comprehensive syllabus has placed previous unmet demands on the teachers, but also increased their professional standing.

One of the off-spins of the new PD/Health/PE syllabus has been closer co-operation between high-school teachers and university lecturers in Health and Physical Education. Two years ago local Physical Education teachers contacted Marie to investigate avenues in which both could assist Year 12 students. 

Continued over...
The future for the University Conservatorium and Faculty of Music is seen, according to the Dean, Professor Michael Dudman, in terms of consolidation and maintenance of high standards rather than noticeable growth in student numbers.

Its strengths, he says, lie in its strong performance reputation, its keyboard, instrumental, vocal and choral studies. Added to this, a dual role as a Faculty of Music and a community music centre and we have an institution with a well deserved place in the community.

The Conservatorium and Faculty of Music produces graduates of the highest calibre, attracting students from all over Australia and from overseas. It also has links with the community that go back to its earliest days in the 1950's.

Professor Dudman says the amalgamation with the University of Newcastle in 1989 was of particular importance for the Conservatorium. He says one of the best features of the amalgamation was the ability for the 'Con' to institute its own degree programs, both Bachelors and Masters and says that the mechanism is in place for the future introduction of doctoral studies in Music. There are now 166 students enrolled, with modest growth planned to accommodate the new programs.

"We very clearly have a dual role. We are a community Conservatorium, providing music education, music lessons and music experience for a wide range of people, but at the same time we are a Faculty of Music," Professor Dudman says.

"I don't see any conflict at all between the community-based activities of the University Conservatorium and the University-based activities of the Faculty of Music. Indeed they complement each other and it's very difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the two.

"Whereas in the early days we were strictly a Conservatorium and a community music school, we are now planning to offer an Honours program in our Bachelor of Music degree next year as well as a Masters degree by research."

"There has been very interesting and useful dialogue about the relation between research and performance. There are some traditionalists who say performance has nothing to do with research and some who say performance equals research. Various viewpoints are held between these two extremes."

"Our belief is that scholarly musical performance illuminated by knowledge of performance practice does indeed constitute genuine research," he says.

Professor Dudman says the Faculty has established itself as one of the largest music schools in Australia and has developed areas of real strength and specialisation.

"Traditionally we have instrumental and vocal strengths and also particular strengths in keyboard studies," Professor Dudman says.

"We have adopted an approach to the study and teaching of keyboard history which is based upon a study of historical instruments and what is known as performance practice."

"We take the view that if, for example, one is to play the piano music of Beethoven, then it is not good enough simply to play this from a modern edition which may be very different from the original. Equally it is not good enough to play it on a modern piano that bears little resemblance to a piano of Beethoven's day without even being aware of what those differences are."

"We see it as very important to place the music in the context of the social fabric from which it was produced and we are at the forefront in this field."

The Newcastle Conservatorium Choir rehearsing for the choral segment of the Keyboard Festival.

The Newcastle Conservatorium Choir rehearsing for the choral segment of the Keyboard Festival.
Relief for lecturers travelling the freeway between Callaghan and Ourimbah would be possible if a videoconferencing link is installed between the two campuses. Such a link, which would enable interaction between students and lecturers at different sites, is being considered by the University.

Videoconferencing is now used by several Australian universities as a cost-effective way to link multi-site campuses. Its popularity for administration and teaching has increased dramatically as technology improves and costs decrease.

Dr. John Schiller, Head of the Instructional Design and Development Unit, has been involved in assessing viable videoconferencing systems now used in Australian tertiary education, including a nine-site-system used by TAFE in South Australia.

The review showed that the videoconferencing technology becomes transparent to both teacher and learner after only a short time, making face-to-face interaction possible despite distance. According to John, it is an "invisible" technology which is very user friendly. "Although television has been used for many years to transmit lectures and is currently gaining a great deal of publicity through the national TV Open Learning project, videoconferencing more closely replicates the face-to-face seminar and tutorial by providing two-way interaction between small groups via television," John said.

"Videoconferencing enables lecturers and students at off-campus locations to see and hear each other, even when separated by considerable distances."

John, who was a member of a consortium formed to evaluate videoconferencing in higher education, recently contributed to a report being considered by the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) on Videoconferencing in Higher Education in Australia.

The consortium found the most popular form of videoconferencing in Australia at the moment involves the transmission of compressed digital information and requires only two telephone lines to transmit voice and pictures between facilities.

Videoconferencing does not need technicians to operate the equipment and requires only minimal button pushing by the user. A computer controlled touch screen can be used to determine which TV images are transmitted. The system in SA uses a voice activated switching system so real interaction is possible without the need to operate equipment.

John believes it is time for the University to adopt videoconferencing technology to help with distance education. "By increasing student access to tertiary courses, videoconferencing enables a greater number of options to be offered," he said.

At the same time it reduces the need for lecturers and other staff to travel between campuses - which I'm sure would be welcomed by our staff."

A videoconferencing room will be located in the new CALT building and will be equipped for use when funds are available.

A schedule for annual faculty monitoring and evaluation of courses, and rigorous faculty and University review at 3-5 year intervals.

The consortium's findings are expected to be released soon.

The following examples of good practice are extended from those published by the Scottish and English funding councils, and from commendations in Quality Audit reports.

1. Quality assurance and review arrangements
A University plan consisting of well-articulated, well-understood mission statement, goals, objectives and strategies, which are realistic and consistent with national, state and regional policies.

A well-integrated system of University committees and management which establishes policy, monitors its implementation, evaluates outcomes and ensures appropriate responses to problems.

An effective communication system which ensures that all staff and students are aware of relevant matters and which also encourages a reverse flow of information to ensure the higher levels are aware of grass-roots issues and perceptions.

A well-formulated, generally agreed code of good practice for University management.

Comprehensive departmental reviews at 4-5 year intervals.

2. Mechanisms for quality assurance in the approval, validation and review of programs of study
A clear set of guidelines, known and understood in all faculties. 

Mechanisms for systematic gathering of the views of all relevant groups about the need for, purposes and content of individual courses.

Accurate and informative documentation about the course being proposed or under review.

Rigorous scrutiny of academic and professional merits of proposals by special faculty committee.

Rigorous scrutiny by purpose-built University committees to assess consistency with the University Plan, academic quality and resource implications of proposals.

A schedule for annual faculty monitoring and evaluation of courses, and rigorous faculty and University review at 3-5 year intervals.

3. Mechanisms for quality assurance in teaching, learning and communication

Thorough induction of new students.

Teaching approaches and curricula which reflect the best of contemporary thinking.

Up-to-date, imaginative, well-publicised curricula with clear and explicit aims which meet the needs of students and subsequent employment.
Quality Assurance...

Curriculum organisation and delivery which encompasses a range of effective methods of promoting learning.

An appropriate balance of specialist content, general conceptual skills and transferable skills in the curriculum.

An appropriate provision for alternative modes of delivery and credit.

Teaching approaches which encourage independent learning.

Staff who are accessible to students. Effective personal, social and academic support of students from all backgrounds.

Staffing sufficient in number and expertise to implement the curriculum.

Classrooms which are in good condition and adequately equipped.

Adequate library, computing and other learning support facilities.

Facilities to assist students to employment or further study.

Means of evaluating the learning experience and responding to those evaluations.

4. Mechanisms for quality assurance in student assessment and award classification procedures

Assessment which is consistent with course aims and methods.

A variety of assessment instruments.

An appropriate balance of formative and summative assessments.

Procedures to ensure that assessment is fair, reasonable and reliable.

Systematic monitoring of student progress and appropriate support of at-risk students.

Availability of appeals procedures.

5. Mechanisms for quality assurance in staff development, appraisal and incentives?

Foundation training in teaching training for new academic staff, supported by mentor arrangements.

Monitoring of and response to staff developmental needs.

Well-designed Staff Development Review process enabling monitoring of and response to needs.

Promotions policy which gives due recognition to teaching.

6. Mechanisms for verification, feedback and enhancement processes

A Student Evaluation of Teaching system.

Regular monitoring of graduate and employer perceptions.

Mechanisms for ensuring response to feedback.

WOMEN AND EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW

Guests at a dinner held by the National Foundation for Australian Women and the Women's Electoral Lobby were privileged to be addressed by the Hon Justice Elizabeth Evatt, Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, President of the Australian Law Reform Commission and Member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

Commenting on the cyclical nature of political concerns, Justice Evatt revisited the history of the early Whitlam years and contrasted the terms of reference for her work in those days with those for the work of her current appointment to the Australian Law Reform Commission.

To the unanimous approval of the audience there didn't seem to be much contrast - a startling reminder of the 'frontier' nature of Australian gender relationships.

Justice Evatt encouraged people to make submissions to the Law Commission's inquiry into equality before the law which is examining whether the law, or the way it operates, acts unfairly towards women and, if so, to remove those unfair laws or practices.

Public hearings will be held in August and will focus on:

- Political and public life and the legal profession
- Employment

Further information can be obtained by writing to:

The Australian Law Reform Commission
GPO Box 3708 Sydney NSW 2001.

NOTES FROM AVCC BULLETIN

The AVCC Board of Directors met on June 29. These items were among those discussed:

DIVERSITY TASK FORCE The Board noted that the AVCC had agreed to establish a Task Force to prepare an issues paper on diversity within the UNS, and its implications for the nation, universities, and the AVCC.

SENATE'S RESEARCH INQUIRY The Board noted that the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training is inquiring into the organisation and funding of research in higher education, and had asked for AVCC input to the terms of reference.

PERF vs MERIT REVIEW The Board was advised that the ARC had asked how the peer review process could be modified to take account of a "merit" review assessing the likelihood that research would benefit the community.

The AVCC's Research Committee pointed out that the word "merit" obscured the real issue of creating a second stage assessment

to judge proposals on national interest and priority areas. It believed peer review should establish a project's merit. The Board endorsed this, resolving that using merit and peer review as different concepts was inappropriate, and that the assessment of ARC large grants should continue as peer review, although some funds could be allocated to national interest projects.

COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY The Chair of the AVCC Committee on Copyright and Intellectual Property, Professor Raoul Mortley, reported on the increase in licensed copying per student. The Board accepted the findings of the 1992 AGB-McNair Report as the basis for calculating remuneration.

The Board noted that the Committee had prepared a discussion paper on Ownership of Intellectual Property in Higher Education Institutions.

QUALITY COMMITTEE The Board noted that the Minister, Mr Beazley, had announced membership of the Committee for Quality
Assurance in Higher Education, and issued guidelines.

Mr Beazley had stated that, in addition to these principles, the overall excellence of outcomes would be taken into account including national and international impact of research, the production of graduates able to operate anywhere at standards consistent with best practice, and the contribution of institutions to their communities.

**GRADUATE CAREERS COUNCIL**

The Board was advised that information published by the Graduate Careers Council was again topical following a complaint that the survey was published by discipline and not by university. The Board agreed that each institution should determine whether their own data should be published.

**SURVEY OF APPLICANTS**

The Board agreed to the release of the Survey of Applicants for Undergraduate Higher Education Courses, 1993.

Demand for university places in Australia increased by 7 per cent this year-10 per cent last year. Total eligible applicants was 249,000, a rise of 16,600 (20,000 in 1992). The growth in the number of eligible applicants receiving an offer (158,000 compared with 134,000 in 1992), is significant and signals a swing against applicants receiving an offer compared with last year. Total eligible applicants was increased by 7 percent this year-

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"Too many University committees still have only one or two female members, although women constitute 27% of academic staff and 64% of general staff. I think the University can do better than this," says EEO Co-ordinator, Susan Jones.

In June, Academic Senate recommended an increased representation of women on Senate committees. The aim is to establish a female membership of not less than 25% by mid 1995 except where committees must comprise Deans or Heads of Department ex officio.

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Targets may be achieved by co-opting suitably qualified women from within or outside the University. Susan commented, "It is common practice in some areas to draw on the profession or industry and thus involve the community. I would like to see more Departments considering this option."

Senate also recommended that, as women constitute 48% of all staff, all other University-wide committees should have a female membership of no less than 30% by the end of 1993 moving by 5% annual increments to 50% by 1998.

Susan suggested that women could decline membership of a committee if it demanded too much time, but should suggest the chairperson look elsewhere if a vacancy or the sex of a nominee is unknown.

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One way to ensure that committees can identify suitable women is through using the Register of Women. This was first collated by the EEO Unit in 1990 because women were substantially under-represented in many University decision making bodies.

The EEO Unit is updating the Register and would like to hear from women wishing to be included. Copies were sent to all departments and are in the library. Additional copies are available. If you would like to be included in the Register please contact Vincia Martin or Vicki Petersen in the EEO Unit.

**COMMITTEES OF SENATE**

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This table is based on figures shown in the 1992 edition of University Bodies and Staff. This is only a selection of the many committees of Senate but illustrates the variation in the composition of these committees.

Note: In some cases a vacancy is listed or the sex of a nominee is unknown.

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**Wishes to announce an alteration to the date of the Annual General Meeting**

The meeting will now be held on Thursday, September 2, 1993.

Southern Cross Lounge Shornland Union

7.00pm

(not August 26, as previously announced)

Convocation apologises for any inconvenience caused by this alteration.

For further information, contact the Convocation office at 216459, fax 216440.

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**1993 NEWCASTLE LECTURE**

by

Mr Paul Lynham

7.30 Report presented

A witty and incisive journalist at the forefront of the Canberra press gallery, Paul Lynham is Federal Politicians: Rhetoric and Reality

University Great Hall

September 13, 7.00pm

Admission free. For information call Kim Britton on 216459, fax 216400.
CATALYSIS CATALYSIS CATALYSIS

In the last "Catalysis" we printed the third and fourth questions raised by retired Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Planning), Dr Doug Hasley, during his occasional address at the 1993 Graduation Ceremony. Catalysis continues with Dr Hasley’s final question to graduands.

Can we look ahead to the day when intellectual ability is held to be as worthy of admiration as sporting prowess is today?

Eagleday, sweet, four eyes and, for the worst cases, academic are some of the pejorative terms reserved to describe those who are above the intellectual average. Our society admires, even exalts, outstanding physical performance, but is suspicious of exceptional intellectual achievement.

We have a Robert Williams and a Peter Poykley to encourage a public respect for Science. But where are the handful or so others to balance the Rex Mersons and the H.G. Nelsons?

Is it not of greater concern that the Humanities and the Social Sciences lack even one publicist to remind us of their importance to the preservation and development of society?

In 1987, Barry Jones said that Australians should work smarter, not harder, so that the lucky country could become the intelligent country. Bob Hawke knew that the word "intelligent" didn’t generate overwhelming enthusiasm so "intelligent" didn’t produce overwhelming enthusiasm so others to balance the Rex Mossops and the H.G. Nelsons?

Meta have come to this university for more than 10 years now. I am still having trouble popularised the term, the Clever Country.

Is it not of greater concern that the Humanities and the Social Sciences lack even one publicist to remind us of their importance to the preservation and development of society?

Unfortunately, we do not appear to have understood three important postulates of becoming a clever country:

- first, the young must aspire to be clever, astute, imaginative, creative and innovative;
- second, the nation must invest in the development and application of its intellectual resources; and
- third, it is necessary to work hard at becoming smarter.

LETTER LETTER LETTER LETTER

Dear Editor,

Academic Community of The University of Newcastle

I have come to this university for more than 10 years now. I am still having problems finding intelligence. I mean, people with the right kind of awareness of the acute global problems and the minds and hearts that would dearly want to use their brains to correct the present problems sensibly, intelligently and caringly as soon as possible.

If there are such individuals or groups of people meeting already on campus, I would like to know about it and meet them. Year after year I have been coming back looking and hoping for improvement in administration, faculties, staff and students and their union. I receive information through "Students for PEACE and Friends of the Earth" (F.O.E.) on this campus hoping to increase people’s awareness of the global problems and possible solutions. I display work papers from many countries that participated in UNCED for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1992 Rio Summit. Only a handful of people have taken any interest at all. I see very little progress, I lack marketing skills so I have to keep coming back looking and hoping to find the right network to support.

So try this once again in the hope to connect with others who dare to believe that Planet EARTH can be repaired. To create an environmentally sustainable and peaceful future for all of US is a necessary step in human evolution.

Yours peacefully,

Metis

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CATALYSIS CATALYSIS CATALYSIS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

ENVIRONMENT WEEK 1993

MONDAY 13th September

8.30am - 10.00am
Official University Environment Week Launch
Tea/room Breakfast - Shortland Union Building.

2.00pm - 6.00pm
"Bushland Campus Walk" conducted by Kevin McDonald and Glenn Albrecht, incorporating the National Estate listed University Wetlands and the bushland campus flora and fauna. Meet at the Great Hall at 2.00pm SHARP.

5.00pm
"Environment Art Exhibition" Opening of the Art Exhibit in the Foyer of the Great Hall. All the artwork on display will be available for sale.

6.00pm - 7.00pm
"Green Movie" presented in the Brennan Room, Shortland Union.

TUESDAY 14th

1.00pm - 2.00pm
"Bushland Campus Walk" conducted by Kevin McDonald and Glenn Albrecht, incorporating the National Estate listed University Wetlands and the bushland campus flora and fauna. Meet at the Great Hall at 1.00pm SHARP.

6.00pm - 7.00pm
"Local Environment Art Exhibition" Opening of the Art Exhibit in the Foyer of the Great Hall. All the artwork on display will be available for sale.

7.00pm - 9.00pm
"Great Debate" A light-hearted look at the Environment. "Is it too late to save the Environment?" Engineering Lecture Theatre ED72

WEDNESDAY 15th

1.00pm - 3.00pm
"Bushland Campus Walk" conducted by Kevin McDonald and Glenn Albrecht, incorporating the National Estate listed University Wetlands and the bushland campus flora and fauna. Meet at the Great Hall at 1.00pm SHARP.

8.00pm - 9.00pm
"Great Debate" A light-hearted look at the Environment. "Is it too late to save the Environment?" Engineering Lecture Theatre ED72

THURSDAY 16th

1.00pm - 2.00pm
"Bushland Campus Walk" Meet at Hunter Union Lawn Forscut 1.00pm SHARP.

2.00pm - 3.00pm
"Great Debate" A light-hearted look at the Environment. "Is it too late to save the Environment?" Engineering Lecture Theatre ED72

FRIDAY 17th

10.00am - 12.00pm
"Clean up the Campus" in conjunction with the Student’s Association, a clean up of the campus will be undertaken by volunteers, supported by University staff. This will coincide with "Clean up the World Day" - a global "Clean up Day". A BBQ will be provided for volunteers.

SATURDAY 18th September

10.00am - 2.00pm
"Share the University Environment" Shuttle bus between Hunter Bays; Gardens, SOAP Spring Fair to Campus for Bush Walks. Members of the public will also be invited to share the Campus Grounds and other activities. Campus walks commence at the Great Hall at 11.00am and 2.00pm.

For enquiries phone Kani Gillman on 216500 (w) or 572644 (sh)
Research and scholarship research

AN AWARENESS OF GENDER STUDIES

Developing an awareness of research in gender studies in the Faculty of Arts has been high on the priority list for Dr David Lemmings from the Department of History. David's interest in the topic, coupled with an on-going interest by Australian universities in the subject area, resulted in a recent visit by three overseas professors for a one-day symposium at the University to discuss gender and sexuality in the 400 years between 1500 and 1900.

The scholars were Professor Bruce Lenman from St Andrews University, Scotland, Professor Martha Vicinus from Michigan University and Professor Thomas Laqueur from the University of California, Berkeley. They joined Newcastle speakers Curtis Breight, Claire Walker and Hilary Carey in addition to Helen Brash from Murdoch University in Western Australia.

The symposium, entitled Issues of Gender, 1500-1900, was organised by the Research Group in Early Modern Studies in association with the Departments of English, History and Philosophy.

David said the symposium was highly successful and attracted a wide range of staff and students from the University. The American professors raised the profile of the symposium and were in Australia to take part in a series of conferences for the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University.

The Australian conferences highlight the interest by many Australian universities in the various issues of gender and sexuality.

"The symposium covered four centuries although the Research Group in Early Modern Studies concentrates on the period between 1500 and 1800. The 19th Century was included because of Professor Vicinus's knowledge of that time," David said.

ASSISTING ENDANGERED MARSUPIALS

Karen Mate has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for her research on marsupial fertilisation within the Department of Biological Sciences. Her thesis, entitled Marsupial Gamete Maturation and Interaction, examined the ways in which sperm and egg prepare for fertilisation in the tammar wallaby and brushtail possum.

Karen, who was supervised by Dr John Rodger, found that these preparative events differ quite significantly from those which occur in more commonly studied eutherian mammals, such as the human and the mouse. Such knowledge of marsupial reproduction is required so that it can be manipulated for assisted breeding of endangered marsupials using similar techniques to those used in human in vitro fertilisation.

Karen's research also has direct application in the development of marsupial population control in areas such as New Zealand, where the brushtail possum is an introduced pest.

ALTERTNATIVES TO ANIMAL USE

The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) has issued Australia's first guide to teaching materials which can be used instead of animals in university classrooms and laboratories.

Some 200 copies of the book, Alternatives to the Use of Animals in Undergraduate Teaching in Australia and New Zealand, have been distributed free to all animal ethics committees and university biological science departments in Australia and New Zealand.

The book lists videos and interactive computer programs available and in-use in Australia and NZ, giving information such as price, format, running time and market source. Other programs held in libraries for which no information other than title is available are listed in appendices.

ANZCCART Executive Director, Dr Robert Baker, says similar publications have been produced overseas, but "this is a first for this part of the world".

"It ties in well with general community concern about the use of animals in teaching. ANZCCART's approach is that if videos and computer programs can achieve the same results without the use of animals, they should be used," he said.

"Codes of practice in Australia and New Zealand for the use of animals for scientific purposes require members of ethics committees to ask whether researchers or teachers submitting protocols have investigated the use of alternatives to animals. This applies both to research protocols and to the use of animals for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching."

The use of alternatives to animals in university teaching has increased in recent years in physiology and pharmacology, anatomy, zoology, pathology, psychology, biochemistry, agricultural science and veterinary science.

Alternatives to the Use of Animals in Undergraduate Teaching in Australia and New Zealand is available for $6 including postage and packing from The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching, PO Box 19, Glen Osmond, South Australia, Telephone (08) 303 7393, Fax (08) 37 93880.
The Department of Drama will be hosting a 12-week residency by Mr P P (Patrick) Cranney, writer-in-residence, jointly sponsored by the Literature Board and the University.

Mr Cranney is one of the most experienced and prolific writers produced by the community theatre movement in Australia. He has worked as a writer for nearly 15 years, and has written for most of the major community theatre companies in the country, including Sidetrack Theatre in Sydney, Street Arts Community Theatre in Brisbane, Salamanca Theatre company in Hobart, Junction Theatre in Adelaide, and Mainstreet Community Theatre in Naracoorte in south east South Australia (where he was also Artistic Co-ordinator between 1988 & 1990). He has also been involved in a number of ground-breaking one-off projects, such as The Yallourn Story (which was nominated for an Australian Writers' Guild award in 1990) for the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council in Victoria, and The Logan City Story, a huge show with school children on the outskirts of Brisbane.

Mr Cranney's work has already been nationally recognised through an Australian Society for Education and he presently holds a fellowship from the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

The Department of Drama is excited about his residency, as he is a major source of information on work processes within the community theatre movement, and brings with him a wealth of experience in writing and project generation and co-ordination. It is expected that he will contribute to the Department's teaching in this area, both at an undergraduate level and in the Master of Theatre Arts, and his presence will feed directly into research being conducted within the Department.

During his stay, he will also be working in a consultancy capacity with the Workers' Cultural Action Committee of Newcastle Trades Hall Council on a project linking energy unions and Greenpeace (a world first, we believe), which is expected to produce a touring show in 1994. This will offer interested students the opportunity to watch the development of an important project from a fairly early stage, a particularly valuable experience not normally available within the structure of University courses.

One of Australia's leading Queen's Counsel, Mr Ian Callinan, has been appointed as the University of Newcastle's first Bilbie Whitford and Dan Visiting Professor of Law. Mr Callinan, who has an Australia-wide practice, is based in Brisbane and was admitted to practice in 1960 before becoming a Queen's Counsel (QC) in 1978.

Mr Callinan was President of the Queensland Bar Association from 1984 to 1987 and President of the Australian Bar Association from 1984 to 1985. He has appeared in a number of celebrated criminal trials, including those involving the former Commonwealth Attorney-General and High Court Judge, Lionel Murphy, and the Perth-based entrepreneur, Alan Bond.

The University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Raoul Mortley, said Mr Callinan's appointment as a Visiting Professor was an exciting development in the first year of the Bachelor of Laws course. "The students will benefit greatly from classroom exposure to a barrister who has had such broad legal experience," Professor Mortley said.

The Visiting Professorship is sponsored by the Newcastle solicitors, Bilbie Whitford and Dan. A partner with the firm, Mr Alister Henskens, said the purpose of the appointment was to enable a distinguished lawyer to visit the Law School for about a month each year.

"Because the Newcastle University Law School is relatively small in terms of student numbers we believe there is a unique opportunity for interaction between the students and Visiting Professors," said Mr Henskens. "We are confident that by encouraging our local Law School in this way, we will enrich the intellectual environment of the Law School and contribute to improving the quality of lawyers within our region."

The Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor Neil Rees, expressed his Faculty's strong support of the appointment. "Mr Callinan will take a number of classes in Criminal Law and Procedure. It is a rare, but special opportunity for first year law students to be taught by one of the country's leading QC's," Professor Rees said.

"We hope that each year it will be possible to appoint a distinguished practitioner, judge or academic as the Bilbie Whitford and Dan Visiting Professor of Law."
ACHIEVEMENTS

RESEARCH GETS A HIGHER PROFILE

Professor Ron MacDonald has been appointed by the University Council as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). The "Ear" asked him to set out his emerging vision for the future. He replied:

I don't see any major changes in direction because in many respects, I will continue the job I have been doing as Dean of Research. But there will be a different emphasis. Research will be more strongly represented within the university plan, with a higher focus and greater level of activity.

We will look closely at outcomes, not commercially, because that is not what we are about. I believe we could emphasise the contributions our research makes - to researchers themselves, the university and the general community.

For instance, social science research enhances current welfare programs or investigates problems in society. There is no "commercial" return for it but there can be very strong "social" return and a recognition of the role of universities in such debate. The other side, of course, is in engineering and science where outcomes can be patented and licensed.

It is important that we are aware of the potential of work being done by our staff and that we protect their interests. One too often sees material being exploited, and also staff. I expect to put out discussion papers within a few months and to begin raising the university's awareness of these issues.

It is also my personal view that research and post graduate studies are closely related. Therefore one must be involved in things like equipment allocation and academic policy making in order to have an input into the University's overall plan.

An example of the need to do this is when the government tells us we won't get additional funds in the future. One way in which we may be able to attract the necessary extra funding could be through research contracts or other external grants.

The other side of the new position attaches Information Technology as an obvious support to our research thrust. My aim is to develop the university as a computer literate society using modern information technology for communication and information retrieval.

That means that I work very closely with the computing centre and library. We will be trying new systems for communications and electronic mail. For instance, I can see the situation when most meeting agendas and policy papers will be circulated electronically instead of in hard copy. This will call for change on the part of staff to retrain ourselves to new way of doing things.

The computing centre is already looking into these systems. We will consult with other universities who are implementing electronic mail and communication networks, and will put forward a draft document considering ethics for discussion.

RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

"The important thing is to get high quality research into the hands of teachers in a format they can readily use. All the academic contributions to new knowledge created by university staff and students and other people, needs to be disseminated to the people who can take action to use the information for improving the work of schools." Australian Editor, SET: Research Information for Teachers.

Professor Sid Bourke, from the University's Faculty of Education, has been appointed to the SET: Editorial Advisory Board. He is one of three notable Australian educationists to join the Board of the joint Australia and New Zealand publication, SET: Research Information for Teachers.

SET: translates research in education and allied fields into "painless professional reading" for teachers and is published twice a year by NZCER and ACER.

STUDENTS RECOGNISED

The Association of Consulting Structural Engineers (ACSE) of NSW recently presented their annual awards to top engineering students of various universities throughout NSW. The winner from this University's Department of Civil Engineering and Surveying was David Sparkes, who graduated in May this year with 1st Class Honours and the University Medal.

TEA WITH THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

It's not every day that the Governor General of Australia calls in to have a cup of tea.

That's exactly what happened to Professor Don Wright recently after he had written to Sir Bill Hayden in "a cheeky moment" seeking information about the Reverend Sir Alan Walker, the founder of Lifeline, for a book he is writing. The book on Methodism is Australia will include a chapter on Sir Alan Walker and how he set up the telephone counselling service in the early seventies. At the time Bill Hayden was the Minister for Social Security in the Whitlam Labor Government and Professor Wright wanted some insights into the interaction between the government and high profile community workers.
GRAPHIC DESIGN SUCCESS

Graphic Design students have enjoyed some noteworthy success with their design work following the graduation of the first group of students from the Bachelor of Arts (Graphic Design) course in May.

The final year program, oriented towards professional industry practices and delivered by an integrated team teaching method, is beginning to bear positive consequences for undergraduates.

As part of the professional practices co-operative programs requirement of the course, students are required to establish working relationships with design industry practitioners and to seek active work experience with design studios and advertising agencies.

In 1992 the first graduates sought work outside Newcastle to establish viable networking links with mainstream design practice throughout Australia.

Nineteen of the twenty-one graduates have obtained full-time employment. Feedback from industry is that the students from Newcastle are refreshing different, able to direct lateral thought in a creative manner and able to articulate their ideas in a clear, assertive, non-arrogant manner.

The 1993 final year students have been invited to exhibit in the Sydney Opera House Exhibition Hall in October, the first University or College group in New South Wales to do so. Locally, the students will exhibit their work in the Newcastle City Hall in November.

In May, students entered a competitive pitch for the design of a logo for the City of Lake Macquarie Half Marathon. Final year student Belinda Dunn won the pitch - her logo being used in the corporate launch of the event.

In April, CPI (Consolidated Paper Industries Australia) launched a design competition for all tertiary design students throughout Australia. The competition, to launch their conservation range of paper stocks and to provide a quality level of support to graphic design students, attracted entries from graphic design schools from four States.

Of the three works selected to represent NSW, two were by students from Newcastle. Belinda Dunn won first place and Natalie Fountain was awarded second prize.

FIRST GRADUATES FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The first intake of students in the Bachelor of Health Science, Occupational Therapy, degree at the University, completed their course in June. Although students will not officially graduate until May 1994, they celebrated the completion of their degrees at a Final Dinner last month.

Specifically training students in rural, isolated and community situations, the degree is the first of its kind in Australia.

Thirty-three students began the pioneering degree in 1990, which has now attained an international reputation in the field of occupational therapy.

Supported by a Federal Government initiative, the Rural Health Support Education and Training Program (RHSET), the University received a $30,000 grant in 1992 to assist and support research and the placement of students on practical work in rural areas throughout their degree.

Through an innovative curriculum, the three-and-a-half-year degree offers a strong theoretical base which is directly associated with practical clinical experience.

Venturing as far afield as Bega, Batara and Broken Hill in NSW, and in their final year, New Zealand, Canada and England, students experience all facets of community-based occupational therapy work.

The group has, according to Head of the Division of Occupational Therapy, Ms Patricia Jacobs, worked very hard throughout the course under many adverse conditions caused by difficulties associated with the implementation of a new degree.

"In conjunction with the six academic staff, the students have worked hard to raise the profile of the course and the University and should be commended for that," Patricia said.

KEYBOARD FESTIVAL

From August 23-28 the Newcastle University Conservatorium will be the setting for the 5th Annual Keyboard Festival.

From its beginnings five years ago, the Festival attracts performers and scholars from throughout Australia and overseas. It has become a local tradition to include large-scale choral works in the Festival. This year the opening ceremony on Monday, August 23, will provide the setting for a performance of Elgar's great choral work, The Music Makers, with soloist, Katharine Capewell and the Festival Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Dean of the Faculty of Music, Professor Michael Dudman.

Performances of the six Handel Opus 4 Organ Concertos (performed on a German chamber organ from the Conservatorium from the ABC in Sydney) will be held in the specially established Festival Cafe. The organ soloists will be accompanied by a group of young faculty string players, Conservatorium Collegium.

Overseas visitors to the 1993 Festival will include British pianist, Piers Lane, and the American harpsichordist, Jennifer S. Paul.

For tickets or further information, please contact the Concert Organiser, Mr Philip Skechley on 21 4933.