LIBERALITY
OF
OPPORTUNITY

A History of
Macquarie University 1964 - 1989

Bruce Mansfield
Mark Hutchinson
Macquarie University belongs to the great expansion of higher education in the 1960s. The imposition of quotas at the University of Sydney helped prompt its formation, but it also represented fresh ideas (drawn in part from American and British experience) about university teaching and organisation. The authors of this scholarly but readable history make clear its pioneering role in Australian higher education. They describe it as 'an act of faith and a great experiment'. Their main interest is in the academic development of the university, and three central chapters of the work deal with teaching and research in its Schools. But they have not neglected personalities – Macquarie University has had a number of striking and unusual ones. The planning of its beautiful site and the movements among students over the troubled years of the 1960s and 1970s, including the much publicised 'occupations' of 1974, also have a place. The authors' intention has been to tell an interesting story, and to recount the achievements of the university in its first twenty-five years without avoiding its difficulties or inner conflicts. They also make a contribution to the growing body of writing on the history of universities in Australia.
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Map of Macquarie University campus
appearance of a new fluidity at the frontiers between academic disciplines, 'the emergence of new subject areas with less clear lines of definition between them and with extended affinities between them and other subject areas'. The question was: how was this new situation in scholarship and learning to be reflected in academic organisation? How might one devise a structure that would express the unity rather than the fragmentation of knowledge? There must, he had concluded, be a separation between the intellectual discipline and the unit of organisation. Australian universities had adopted from Scotland and the British civic universities the departmental system in which the two were identified. Now Mitchell looked partly to the American liberal arts college, offering a core of studies from which students could develop their later specialist and
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Small-group teaching in History: at end of table, J. Roe

far from substitute lectures. Students, Baumgart established, valued them most when the tutor acted (in Baumgart's terminology) either as a 'reflexive judge' or a 'probe', on the one hand continually evaluating students' contributions in a supportive and corrective way, on the other hand reformulating problems and redirecting them to the group. Some tutorials apparently fell short of this standard. A correspondent to Arena (the students' paper) claimed that tutorials in 'Principles of Economics' in 1968 'seemed to have only one purpose — that of marking the weekly objective assignments'.

Study guides helped make tutorials work. In external teaching they were indispensable. Indeed their general use followed the thought that what they did for external students (teaching for independence) they could do also for internal. On the Abercrombie principle they were not lecture notes or substitutes for textbooks; rather they posed questions, suggested lines of individual enquiry. Mitchell called them 'the teacher at your elbow'.

Essential to any intellectual independence was a capacity to use the library. Scott wanted to tie the library directly into the teaching program; by 1970 there
E. W. Howitt, G. Barwick, A. G. Mitchell

before the Privy Council in the 1940s. In 1958 he had entered federal politics, becoming Attorney-General immediately and later Minister for External Affairs. In 1964 he was appointed Chief Justice of Australia. Howitt was deputed to approach Barwick. Meantime, Else-Mitchell, who could not support Price and was not friendly to a Barwick nomination, approached a number of people, including Walter Scott. When the members of the new Council met on 29 March 1967, the matter seemed too settled for other names to be suggested without embarrassment; Barwick was invited to assume the office of Chancellor.

Price had always acknowledged the possibility of such a decision and, of course, the Council's right to make it. In the event he was devastated. He saw a lack of gratitude and appreciation for his creative effort. Those from the Council who spoke to him reported painful encounters. His own explanation in a letter to the Council was denied in a reply sent on behalf of the whole membership: 'May we assure you that your claims to the office were not overlooked and the fact that you are an appointee of the Minister was in no way a bar to your candidature'. The words were no consolation. Within a month – before the second meeting of the new Council – Price, long burdened with illness, was dead. Mitchell's appreciation had an unusual poignancy: 'The University will always be in his debt. He has an assured place of the highest esteem in its records'.

Barwick had never met Price, though he learned to respect him from Mitchell and Cohen. That he was interested in the Chancellorship himself surprised many people. He had had a brilliant undergraduate career (University
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Minister for Education in library forecourt (April 1969).
From left: A. G. Mitchell, Malcolm Fraser, W. V. Abraham, A. J. T. Ford, K. Jones

widening of opportunities for students in employment, for isolated students, for older students. Everything pointed, the submission said, 'to universities becoming more selective places, and to rejection of the concept that all matriculants have a right to expect entry to a university'.

As part of the same realignment in higher education, Macquarie adjusted its expectations about the balance between students in the different categories. After much debate and some soul-searching, the Council in 1967 decided to give 'some priority' to school leavers wishing to continue their education full-time without a break. This was a recognition of the rising demand for places among the young people emerging from the six-year high schools in 1968 and thereafter. It also meant keeping external and evening enrolments under 'pretty tight control'. Hopes and convictions had to be readjusted. In the first submission to the AUC (October 1965), there was talk of 1,800 external enrolments by 1974; in the second, these were set to stabilise at 500 by 1970. The restriction of external teaching to science, deriving from the minister's intervention of December 1965, was, of course, an element in this scaling down. The planned controls would be felt most in the part-time evening group. There enthusiasm for Macquarie's courses in the humanities, business studies and the social sciences had, from the beginning, been greater than expected. The cessation of evening teaching,
Market garden, future sportsfield (October 1965)
boiled 1000

Functional diagram (W. V. Abraham, May/June 1964)
Despite the description of the university by one student as 'the biggest air-raid shelter in the southern hemisphere,' and the Council building as 'Mitchell's Ziggurat'. A problem neither the APO nor the users of buildings could predict was the growing cost in later years of 'concrete cancer' which was to plague the supposedly 'maintenance-free' material.

The fact that, in its first years, Macquarie was over-enrolled did not help ease the strain on facilities. Often, in the game of musical rooms that took place each year after new buildings came on stream and EFTSUs were calculated, students found that they had lost some of the space to which they had, only that year, become accustomed. In later years, this pattern turned to the disadvantage of the university. With dropping enrolments during the late 1970s, particularly in the sciences, and simultaneously restricted federal budgets, little could be done to make a claim for a capital works program that would catch up to the expansion that had been intended in earlier years. In the course of events, many of the 'finishing' touches around campus had to be sacrificed for immediate services.

IV. First Buildings
Before a building is constructed it is only the conceit of an architect's mind, and during construction only a collection of holes and piles of steel and bricks on a building site, until its use by human beings ties it into a common process of thought that makes it, as much as individual students or staff members, an element of 'community'. Every building on the site has particular meaning for those who have used it and walked past it in the generation of Macquarie's history.
Development of the Site

carparks, and in places of immediate impact in the pedestrian zone of the campus. Later, the prospect was built up to the north and along the southern border. Not all of this is visible to the casual onlooker. Most standing on the northern balcony of the Union, for instance, would take the wooded and winding Mars Creek valley as a natural phenomenon. In fact, the eye is artfully attracted by the curvature of stands and deflected into the middle distance, creating the effect that one is standing in Arcadia rather than in the middle of suburbia. There is no greater art than this: the mind knows its reality, but unconsciously suspends its disbelief to accept the scene before it as ‘natural’.

These efforts quickly had their effect, with the Buildings and Grounds Committee commenting as early as April 1969 on the standard to which university grounds had been raised. It became a symbol of pride to the ‘Class of ’67’ that what later students were undergoing was nothing like what they had suffered. Still, it took a good while for criticism of the built form to be replaced with admiration for the whole campus. Even today, while there is general admission among the university community that Abraham and the APO had a bold vision (if too often limited by finance and bureaucracy), there are sections of the community who begrudge the founders any more recognition than this. In many ways, history will judge it not against the aesthetic of the day, but against its achievements among its peers. Though some scoff at the elevated theory that did not always achieve fulfilment in practice, historians will tend to look at other ‘pragmatic’ campuses developing at the same time, and write their books in praise of theory.
P. Mason delivering first lecture (6 March 1967)
emotion-torn family experiences and having developed considerable disappointment with the mediocrity of his own profession. This passed over into his academic relationships: at times he dismissed Chemistry, thought that the 'soft sciences' should have funds diminished in order to provide for the 'hard' sciences, and attacked the Vice-Chancellor for his commitment to 'all this nonsense of consultation and consensus'. His circle of friends, while finding him a 'charming' and 'enjoyable' companion, also felt the difficulty of touching the core of the man. He began where he thought students ought to be, rather than 'where they are at,' and so often left listeners floundering in his wake. It is a picture of a great mind allied with an isolating personality that points up the 'community' nature of universities. If he and Mason agreed on anything, though their roads to reaching that conclusion were totally different, it was on the need for an applied approach to Physics. This, too, has been a trademark of the School, though in the long run Ward's contribution to Macquarie remains nebulous.

One of the few close friends of Ward through the Macquarie years was R. E. B. ('Dick') Makinson, who had spent 28 years at the University of Sydney building a reputation as 'a distinguished scientist and an outstanding teacher'. Coming out of a turbulent political life, Makinson was needed to plug the gaps in experience produced at senior level by the appointment of two researchers to the Physics chairs. The experiences of Joe Moyal (Mathematics chair, 1978) and R. E. Aitchison (Electronics chair, 1971) were in some ways the reverse sides of a single coin. Both taught in marginal areas that depended on other disciplines.
Jupiter with the ABC. Although there were important instances of cooperation in research within the School and interdisciplinary links with other Schools, many staff felt isolated in research. Of his work on light scattering from collagen solutions, Guy Fletcher said: 'Australia is very cut off by its very distance from other centres of research, preventing interaction with other research workers, which is essential to original and creative research'. Biophysics experiments, often using computer remote control, laser diffraction, light scattering, and electrical noise measuring on molecular, cellular and muscular levels provided the basis for cooperation between such diverse figures as John Ward, Peter Mason, Gunther Rossmanith and Jim Piper. Another strong group arose in Electronics and solid state Physics, especially in the area of satellite photography, used by the news media of New South Wales for weather prediction. Jim Piper led a growing team in the development and use of new gas lasers in optical communications, photo-recording, photo-chemical purification of chemicals and surgery, which would in the 1980s lead to major government funding and the establishment of the Commonwealth Special Research Centre for Lasers and Applications.

Perhaps the most significant indicator of increased research concentration in the School is the rise in numbers of postgraduate students. While starting with apparent strength, the numbers in the 1960s were largely made up of the Special Masters programs in Mathematics and Physics, and so of little research impact. The situation grew worse with the folding of these programs and, by 1972, the School's postgraduate population had fallen into single figures. While this recovered somewhat in the mid-1970s, the great increase in postgraduate numbers, like so much else that is research related, belongs to the period after the School review. In 1981-84, postgraduate numbers, spurred on by new interest in research and the establishment of the BSc, rose to record heights. This, of course, was despite the fact that the largest discipline, Computing, was not able to offer a strong research component, because of the attractions of industry for the brightest and the best. Research had recovered significantly and, by the end of the 1980s, was as vital a part of School life as the undergraduate teaching which had so absorbed it in the early years.

II. Biological Sciences

If the School of Mathematics and Physics developed as a product of the disparate, comet-like energies of the first three professors, Biological Sciences was more like a standard solar system. Even after the foundational first decade, the primal vision of Frank Mercer, built into the scholarly and administrative structures of the School, pulled the efforts of its various members into a semblance of order and interconnection that, due to the maverick energies of academics, has not generally been the norm of Australian university life. Biological Sciences, as many have marvelled, was the one School in an institution devoted to the interdisciplinary ideal which did not divide itself into its constituent disciplines. This is not to say that the tensions were not there — they were. But such tensions went to define the system rather than destroy it, to give it extraordinary energy,
direction and cohesiveness, despite the broad range of interests in teaching and research that under other circumstances would have forced deep divisions between specialist disciplines.

Many of the ideas that came into play at North Ryde had been formed in Mercer's years at the University of Sydney: in many ways, the School of Biological Sciences in its early years can be seen as an inverted or at least refracted image of the older institution. The failure of Sydney's attempt at a School of Biological Sciences in the 1960s taught Mercer much about the problems of uniting pre-existing entities with competing interests into a single unit. With his usual ebullient manner he saw the opportunities offered at the new campus at North Ryde and grabbed them. Macquarie meant a challenge to him, a rethinking of the whole basis of teaching. One contemporary remembers him saying: 'People could do with ease what they were already doing [under the old Department system]. The trick to getting them to do something new lay in devising a new system, rather than attempting (as in some other science Schools) to struggle on with the old divisions of authority and disciplinary articulation.'

It is a measure of the man that Mercerian fables abound amongst his contemporaries. His energy was enormous: if he was not walking unannounced into the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's office to inject some new idea into administrative and policy-making process, he was hustling companies (even giant multinationals like Pancontinental) for research money, government instrumentalities for cooperation, and academic colleagues for donations to support one of his many School development schemes. Victor Ivantsoff remembers him as 'forever snooping around' to seek out ways to promote staff research, or make people feel at home. This he often achieved with a much appreciated gift of humour. Even at the end of a long and debilitating struggle with diabetes and related illnesses, as one colleague noted, he retained a zest for life which was unquenchable.

In establishing the School, Mercer – true to his nature – expressed his program for development in terms of his maximum expectations, something apparent from his 1968 position paper on the future of the School. With the options of a 'major university' or a 'liberal arts and sciences college' model, for instance, Mercer chose the former on which to base his costings and staff estimates. The first decision, and perhaps the most far reaching, was that it would indeed be a 'School of Biological Sciences,' focused academically along the lines of 'levels of biological organisation and approach' (cells, organisms and populations), and without autonomous departments. Clearly, Mercer was going for the best intellectual milieu rather than the best financial option, as he well understood. If the university took the model of the American liberal studies university, there would be the temptation for bodies such as the AUC to fund on the basis of a cheaper teaching formula, which did not take into account the high costs of scientific research. For this reason Mercer went for the 'major university' model in framing his demands of the Macquarie administration.

Mercer quickly went about securing the appropriate curriculum, financial and site resources which would make his maximal program at least conditionally
achievable. In order to teach both descriptive biology of the type that would be needed by Science Education and general Biology students, and the experimental type of Biology needed by students aiming to go into academic and research types of jobs, as early as 1967 Mercer and his staff presented the Council with a list of ‘Land Requirements,’ including a field station and research areas which totalled something like seven per cent of the entire campus. It was a tribute to the tenacity and far-sightedness of Mercer that in fact most of these projects, in one form or another, actually eventuated.

Such claims, of course, had to be substantiated by demonstrated uses — and this the School immediately began to do with the decision to focus research on three particular areas: ‘the way of life in semi arid — arid environments, with particular reference to agricultural and native organisms’; ‘the growth differentiation and development of organisms with particular reference to agricultural and native organisms’; and science education. The stress on the native and Australian here is important — it represented, not just the ‘responsibility to community’ ethic of much post-war science, but also something of a coming of age among Australian universities. All research would start with a consideration of ‘the future needs of Australia’, rather than assuming the superiority of international work, and would progress in research groups which were equal to or greater than what Mercer considered the ‘critical mass’ for scientific creativity (around four to six persons). From the very beginning the School was structured around, and had consciously built in defences of, the ideal of the group, the ‘community’ of scholars working on common problems and in common directions. The huge staff tea-room, where all staff including technical staff, mingled and interacted, allowed a sort of ‘communal politics’ in the School of Biological Sciences whereby matters were canvassed in a less formal atmosphere than at a School committee, where people could make up their minds at leisure, and which tended both to support the group ethic as well as to defuse difficult situations before they arose. Unity of purpose was also promoted by the news sheet MURNA ‘The Messenger’, a chatty little social production. Mercer assigned the day-to-day administration of the School to Ron Oldfield, who also had general oversight and upkeep of the sophisticated light and (eventually) electron microscopes used by the School.

Fred Milthorpe was, in some ways, the reverse side of the coin. While Mercer was a great initiator and ideas man, he was not exceptional on the detailed running of things. This Milthorpe was, and more. ‘Tremendously fair and a real organiser’, Milthorpe came into the professorial position from a position as Foundation Professor of Agricultural Botany at Nottingham University in 1967. His research field, crop physiology, also obviously complemented Mercer’s interests in plant physiology, and in ecology. It was, in fact, Milthorpe who organised the first Biological Sciences offerings in ecology, which he over time developed into the Centre for Environmental Studies. If there was any complaint about him from staff it was due to his meticulous care for resources: as one colleague joked, ‘Fred still expected you to do your research on “a pocket calculator and two bob”’. 
Combining something of Mercer’s dash with Milthorpe’s administrative flair, Geoffrey Sharman came to Macquarie with an already established reputation in marsupial genetics. Appointed in 1970, he quickly set about establishing what was recognised as the ‘finest fauna park for Australian marsupials in any Australian university’, and gathering scholars of like mind around him. Sharman himself had gained something of a reputation as a fearsome infiltrator, but Oldfield found him ‘the kindest guy alive,’ and David Briscoe ‘as soft as butter.’ His colleagues were soon describing Sharman as a ‘Tasmanian rough diamond: definitely Tasmanian, definitely a diamond, but he sure as hell is rough!’. With Mercer and Milthorpe focusing the group of plant physiologists, and Sharman giving thrust to a general group in marsupial biology, this mixture of talent informed by vibrant personality set the tone for the rest of the School, which soon established itself as a leader in teaching and research. Recognition of this in the outside world came not only with ever-increasing amounts of research money, but with the election of Sharman as a Fellow of the Australian Academy in 1980.

The School review was, in many ways, the ringing of the changes for Biological Sciences. Its conclusions were handed down just before the retirements of Frank Mercer in 1981 and Fred Milthorpe in 1982. The review committee, taking cognisance of the ‘unusually high level of morale and a strong sense of unity and commitment among staff at all levels’ defended the basic organisation of the School both positively, by rejecting suggestions that Biological Sciences and the Centre for Environmental Studies should be ‘coalesced’, and negatively by rejecting a submission that would have transferred palaeontology to Biological Sciences from the School of Earth Sciences. On the other hand, its findings also sought to rationalise that organisation. Staff were to be encouraged to move more evenly between 100- and 300-level teaching responsibilities, and imbalances in the study of organisms at population and molecular levels were to be adjusted. The big development was to be in microbiology, an area from which Biological Sciences had been restricted from developing in the early years owing to its expense, and the AUC’s insistence that ‘microbiology should not exist apart from professional [i.e. medical] schools’. These restrictions could be overcome by increased cooperation with the CSIRO units most interested in the area (which Biological Sciences had in fact been doing through renting facilities to the CSIRO’s Plant Physiology Unit), through the increase of appropriate course content at 200- and 300-levels and through appropriate appointments to the next two chairs. The leading role of professors was clearly much stronger in Biological Sciences than in some other Schools.

In the review, all three professors pointed to Des Cooper as ‘a distinguished and able successor’ to a chair. Certainly, Cooper filled the requirements laid down by the review for a chair in the genetic or cellular aspects of developmental biology. He had come to Macquarie at the end of 1972 from La Trobe (after studies in Sweden and the USA) to work with Sharman in his marsupial studies, and quickly generated a significant amount of research based around marsupial genetics, particularly the phenomena of ‘X-inactivation’, sex-determination and
interspecies hybridisation in kangaroos. Generalising his mammalian work into such pressing concerns as the immunogenetics of pregnancy and the toxoaemia of pregnancy in humans provided the bridge by which the earlier marsupial interests broadened and deepened into a 'biomedical sciences' research, which could bring into a single focus the work of such people as the stress physiologists Jack Bassett, Irina Pollard and Keith Cairncross.

With Geoff Sharman's retirement in 1984, the School lost the last of its three foundational professors. The opportunity was there for a significant change in the School's interests, and the university took it with the appointment of Keith Williams, one of the few foreigners ever to achieve a leading research position with the Max Planck Institute in Munich. His Munich experience would not have prepared him for much of the life of Biological Sciences at Macquarie. Funds were so tight that 'staff members would fight over a beaker'. Despite this, he rapidly found it 'the best place I've ever worked' in terms of the mood, whereby 'the curious balance between comfort and discovery' was somehow maintained at a level where people worked hard, but interpersonal frictions did not descend into factionalism and backbiting.

Across the period in which the School review was considering expanding its Microbiology offerings, and Williams was looking for a place to come home to, three 'great revolutions' in molecular biology really began to make an impact upon the scientific world: in the use of recombinant DNA technology, in monoclonal antibody technology and in the instrumentation and computer technology required to utilise these two techniques effectively in industry and science. Williams brought to Macquarie the sort of basic research that could be turned into a product, which in turn could be sold to maintain research. In work with the cellular slime mould Dictyostelium discoideum, and with connections to John Redmond's biochemistry group in the School of Chemistry, the basic research aim was (and is) that grain of molecular biology, the understanding of how cells know how to group, combine and to form a tissue. This aim is reflected in undergraduate teaching in the course BIOL338, the basis of which has been loosely described as 'how to build a multicellular organism,' and in a variety of cooperative projects involving industry. By balancing the demands of entrepreneurial industry with those of scholarship, his group aimed to make the funding of pure research independent of grant-awarding agencies by drawing it out of the revenue created in other areas.

Andrew Beattie's advent in 1987 completed the trio of new professors. Beattie, a BSc (in zoology) and PhD (in botany) from Liverpool, combined from the beginning an unusual range of skills and experience, perhaps destining him from the beginning for a career in an interdisciplinary institution like Macquarie. With interests in plant-animal interactions and population studies, Beattie was neither zoologist nor botanist, and yet both. Once occupying the position, however, he injected the sort of focusing capacity for which Macquarie Biology professors had become known, completing the process of reorienting the School's research begun with the passing of the first professors by developing a 'Bioresources and Biodiversity Unit'. This tied in many of those who had
previously been involved in the marsupial and plant physiology groups, on work which ranged from medical resource work to consulting with the Federal government on the content of the United Nations Charter on biodiversity.

Practical research has taken off in several important directions. Beattie's own work with bull ants, for instance, has produced new possibilities for antibiotics and suggestions of possible cures for such problems as candida. Jim Kohen, another member of the group, is perhaps Australia's best-known ethnobiologist specialising in aboriginal responses to the environment and those particularly Australian problems created by life on the southern continent. By keeping the quantity and quality of research high, the School's second wave of professors ensured that the input into teaching was first rate, and that the levels established by the early staff on that ultimate marker of School success, the employability of its students, were met and exceeded.

The early decisions made by Mercer in planning the School had rapid and long-lasting effects on teaching. As Edwin Webb reminded the members of the School review committee, Biological Sciences 'had followed very seriously the notion of using approaches to teaching other than traditional lectures,' and indeed the commitment to small-group teaching was 'concreted' into the built structure of the School. Further, as Des Cooper was to note, the School was under a number of constraints. It had to cover the same areas covered by up to seven departments in other universities and, therefore, teaching was 'necessarily less comprehensive'. The teaching of 'integrated' Biology meant two things: first, that courses were kept small (each was about one-eighth of the annual undergraduate load), so obliging students to take a broader range of biological
subjects as well as other, related science disciplines; and, secondly, that there was far more interdisciplinary work and cooperation among staff.

When teaching began in 1967, the School offered only one course: 02100 ‘Introduction to Biology’. The School recognised the impact of occupations on the subject choices of students and directed students planning to become ‘professional biologists’ into 100-level Chemistry, Calculus, Mechanics and Experimental Physics. Through the 1970s, 100-level courses variegated to provide courses for specialists, generalists (like the TEP people) and terminating students, and included in BIOL105-6 a revolutionary audio-visual format developed by Mercer with Postlethwaite at Purdue University, which proved particularly good for part-time students. BIOL212 ‘General Biology’ was introduced in 1969 for non-science students, especially student teachers. Through the 1980s the School was forced into rationalising courses and, therefore, the original six first-year courses were reduced to three: BIOL108 ‘Human Biology’ took over the role of a terminating course, Biology 109 and Biology 110 were integrated and became for all intents and purposes, the equivalent of ‘first-year biology’ in other institutions.

With tight finances and low numbers, the tension at 200-level was necessarily between concentration and breadth of choice. A compromise was found by focusing around five main core courses (Biochemistry, Genetics, Ecology, Animal Physiology and Plant Physiology), which were deliberately few in order to ensure that students covered as broad a range of modern Biology as possible. Some specialisation was possible through the additional courses like BIOL213 ‘Molecular Biology’, but full specialisation was postponed until third year.

At 300-level, the key period of growth for courses paralleled the staff growth in the years 1969-71. It is at this level that most students undergo serious specialisation, and so the courses are necessarily advanced, specialised, and greater in number than the lower level, more general courses. By 1980 the School offered eighteen courses at 300-level, with six focusing, generally, on vertebrate zoology, and the physiology courses aiming at the training of scientists with ‘a medical-pharmacological orientation’. Other courses picked up on the individual interests of non-aligned staff such as the biology of fishes (V. Ivantsoff) or biochemistry (J. M. Whalley) or on interests which were fairly central to the School but which had less direct commercial application (eg BIOL333 ‘Ecology’). Cooper was aware that developments in microbiology and molecular biology had been outstripping the School’s ability to teach them, leaving their students exposed in important areas when they entered the job market. The prestigious visiting members on the review committee, Professor P. G. Martin and Dr W. J. Peacock, supported the suggestion for a 200-level course in General Microbiology and a 300-level course in Molecular Biology. This was a thorough-going change, and the new courses which developed through the 1980s reflected the greater range across which the School was to teach and research, and the contributions of new staff.

An extraordinary stability applied both to student numbers and to staff in this School. In staffing, it made up the difference between its establishment and
prove of great public concern in the late 1980s. The stress physiologists Irina Pollard and J. R. Bassett, among others, were behind a movement begun in the late 1980s to introduce a chiropractic institute into the work of the School. Another team, of geneticists including Frankham, Daggard and Hatch Stokes, have been developing and testing patented procedures for the production of novel variegated ornamental plants and animals using genetic engineering techniques. The hazards of such industry-related research were exposed by the Pancontinental Mining episode. Despite some opposition in the School, a large team undertook the environmental impact studies for the company’s application to mine uranium at Jabaluka in Arnhem Land. Though the prospects were good and the project showed the School’s interdisciplinary strengths, the costly effort was largely wasted when mining did not go ahead. The losses of time and intellectual capital were a warning against rushing into the arms of industry.

III. Chemistry
Founded by an individual, yet quickly diverting from the paths initially established, the School of Chemistry shared something of the experience of both Biological Sciences, and Mathematics and Physics. This intermediary status was evident right from the start, when the original School’s planning documents projected the foundation of a School of ‘Chemistry and Biochemistry’. The combination was never to work out — Biochemistry eventually went to Biological Sciences, and Chemistry developed as the only truly single-discipline School in the university. In a way, then, Chemistry was continually hung between the physical science aspect of the Physics discipline and its natural ties to the biochemical work which developed in its larger and nearer neighbour, Biological Sciences. The foundation professor, Gordon Alfred ‘Blue’ Barclay, combined the virtues of being ‘an experienced administrator, X-ray coordination Chemist [and] Educator’. The research interests in chemical education, and the concentration of the School on teaching in early years reflected Barclay’s interest in improving the standard of Chemistry teaching. The tutorial system, whereby lectures were largely done away with in favour of small-group laboratory and class work, was a ‘success’, largely due to the professionalism of the tutors involved and the ‘enthusiasm of [Barclay as] the initial proponent’.

In some ways, Chemistry at Macquarie was unfortunate in the timing of its foundation. Even at the University of New South Wales, there was a collapse in honours enrolments in the late 1960s. Macquarie had already appointed staff to develop its teaching across all the subdisciplines of Chemistry, but quickly found that it could not succeed, where even the metropolitan giant of the area was being squeezed for numbers. Partly, this was industrial in origin. Australia, with a comparatively small industrial base, had only a limited market for chemists — now Sydney had three universities all producing graduates, and saturation was inevitable. There were also dramatic events in the development of Chemistry as a discipline — the challenge of the 1970s was to upgrade equipment in a period of constricting government expenditure, as chemical instrumentation and analytic tools became essential for the new areas of interest. ‘Bench’ Chemistry became
somewhat passé, while hugely expensive NMR and mass spectrometers became essential for Chemistry departments to maintain any sort of standing in the discipline. Not only did this mean more capital expenditure, but chemists (both traditional and otherwise) became more dependent on the recurrent expenditure that was implied by their increased dependence on technicians. The concentration on teaching in early years, and the spread of staff across widely disparate areas of endeavour in turn had the effect of fragmenting research efforts, as reflected in the School’s applications for ARGC funding. Previously popular areas such as nuclear and radiation chemistry and organic crystallography, in which the university had invested by the appointment of staff, ‘now faded’. The very things ‘into which we poured our souls’ proved in some instances to be unsuited to the new and fashionable areas of chemical development. Under these sorts of pressures, the Chemistry staff at Macquarie learned to be resilient and adaptable and ‘made the best of things’, until the tide began to turn in their favour through the mid-1980s. Their achievements in teaching and research, then, must be assessed in terms of a hostile environment externally, and (on occasions) even internally. By this measure, those achievements were considerable.

Like the School of Biological Sciences, Chemistry was designed by its founders to teach right across the spectrum without regard for traditional
flood tide, in 1971 he took up a lucrative offer as manager of a number of mining and exploration companies. On his departure from the post of Head of School, a parting greeted not without complaint from those who had supported him into the position, he left the leadership to the rather more retiring figure of Jim Rose.

To some degree, Rose and Voisey complemented one another. As Voisey said himself, indicating his attraction to the human side of Earth Sciences in which Rose specialised: 'Geology is my wife but Geography is my mistress'. Between the two, the essential structure of the School was tentatively laid down with its major division between Geology and Geography and, within Geography, a dominant specialisation in human geography, which elsewhere was not considered an Earth Science at all. Voisey loved, and Rose developed, the cultural possibilities inherent in human geography, the latter because it was his speciality, and the former not least because it kept the School open to 100-level students of less rigorous training. Rose's chief course in that first year was 04105 'Man and His Environment', which pictured man as an 'active geographical agent' and aimed at providing earth scientists with a cultural and broad-spectrum framework within which to fit their later professionally related studies. Voisey, in his typical bent for mass education, searched out a suitable book (Strahler's *The Earth Sciences*) and taught 04101 'Earth Sciences A' and 04102 'Earth Sciences B' around it, so covering the equivalent of Geology I at a traditional university. Most Schools, sensibly, did not advertise what they would be offering in the future, as student numbers were completely unknowable in January 1967. Earth Sciences, with a schedule of twelve promised 200-level courses, offered students a direction for the future and a virtual promise of being able to fulfil a coherent major. Again, it was indicative of Voisey; while most were waiting for students, he took them as a given.

It could not have been an easy five years for Rose. He differed markedly from Voisey in educational philosophy and, while he did nothing to oppose him, he
general the review committee favoured building on existing strengths, including climatology, physical geography and mining geophysics.

On foundation, the university for some time enjoyed the advantages of a new institution — not having to deal with any old equipment or obsolete plant. The early purchases were of great significance in shaping the directions of research. Stirling Shaw, the first staff appointment and, continuously, the person in charge of much of the key equipment, developed the plant over the years to include an X-ray spectrometer (now the longest running single machine in Australia and, due to upgrades, still one of the most efficient), an electron microprobe, a wet-chemistry lab and a series of computers. This was necessarily a declining advantage and, by the mid-1980s, such resources as the electron-probe microscope were rapidly becoming outdated. By that time, too, the School was up against the university’s overall underfunding for equipment.

Along with the rest of the university community, Earth Sciences joined in the trend towards making their research applied, as well as productive in numbers and quality of journal articles. The advantages of such a balance are nowhere more obvious in Earth Sciences than in the research into plate tectonics by people like Chris Powell and John Vevers. For Voisey’s generation, the world had been dominated by geosyncline theories of earth formation and fieldwork. When the theory of plate tectonics received an important fillip with the evidence emerging from deep dredging operations in the 1960s, that long-held theory quickly worked its way into dominance. The result in Earth Sciences-related departments was the creation of a generational split between ‘older’ and ‘younger’ geologists. Vevers and Powell were part of that younger generation whose research, particularly into Australian tectonic activity and the theories of Gondwanaland and Pangaea, translated the new theory into teachable materials.
Press in Brisbane, who invited Delbridge to act as editor-in-chief. The plan was to use an established dictionary as base (the final choice was Hamlyn’s *Encyclopedic World Dictionary*, which was in its turn related to the *American College Dictionary* and the *Random House Dictionary*) and reshape it to Australian usage. Between 1970 and 1974 Jacaranda spent $180,000 on the project with an academic committee at Macquarie (Delbridge, John Bernard and David Blair, together with W. S. Ramson of ANU), a team of research assistants and a panel of special consultants. In late 1974 the publisher — by then under new ownership — stopped work on the project for financial reasons; the file of cards gathered dust in the Brisbane office and the research assistants were scattered. There followed a long struggle to bring the project to fruition. With Jacaranda’s consent and a grant of $28,000 from the university, Delbridge brought the cards back to Macquarie for final preparation over two years (1976-77). By 1978 the publisher (now Jacaranda Wiley) was in new uncertainty and a search began for partners. There were agreements with the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra and the ANU Press, to which Clouston had gone as Director; a successful appeal was made to the Literature Board of the Australia Council and an unsuccessful one to the Minister for Home Affairs. There was even a frustrating flirtation with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The whole protracted flurry left the project stuck; the prospective partners did not have the resources to float it. A dictionary of this magnitude and complexity — Susan Butler, the day-by-day editor, said — had never been attempted in Australia. Edwin Webb, Macquarie’s Vice-Chancellor, told his counterpart at the ANU in March 1980 that some fresh
disobedience and revolution'. On leave in 1969, Deutscher had observed the maelstrom of American university life at that time. How did Philosophy relate to contemporary conflicts?

Two thoughts struck one. A sense of open involvement in public dispute is not a distraction, but a direct incentive, to intellectual activity. The other is that there is a sense in which thought is determined by action. Our commonsense belief is that we act, if rational, according to how we think. But is it not the case that, in very many areas, what a man can think is determined by what he is prepared to do?

Much later, in his appealing work *Subjecting and Objecting: An Essay in Objectivity*, he argued that objectivity did not depend upon, indeed was not consistent with, indifference or the suppression of personal commitments.
poetry, especially Gottfried Benn; from N. Witton on the old German text *Reynke de Vos*; from E. van der Helder on medieval drama. Marlene Norst, herself (as a child) a migrant from Austria, studied various aspects of the experience of migration. In 1982 she prepared for the Commonwealth a report on ethnic schools.

Edwin Webb, the second Vice-Chancellor, expressed surprise that Macquarie had begun with two European languages and asked the review committee whether they should not be wound down in favour of Asian languages. The French section responded dismissively that ‘French is one of the few major international languages and as such must inevitably occupy a prominent place in any university worthy of its name’, and the committee agreed. In fact, the university had planned for an Asian language almost from the beginning. In its *Submission* for the 1973-75 triennium (prepared in 1970), it sought a chair of Japanese and, in the following *Submission* (prepared in 1973), coupled the proposal with a request for special funding. The AUC rejected the request, considering the offering at Sydney and a new program at Newcastle enough. By
movement was J. B. Rudnyckyj, who was Head of the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Manitoba and who visited Australia a number of times. By the late 1970s the Foundation had settled on Macquarie University, though it had to accept something much less than a chair. The School was reluctant, but two developments sealed the Macquarie connection: the Commonwealth funded Slavonic Studies (the Ukrainian proposal, said Webb, now made 'much more sense') and Ihor Gordijew, senior lecturer in Economics, became chairman of the Foundation and pursued the cause with persistence. The community was generous (remarkably so), though winning its confidence and trust for a particular scheme could be 'an uphill job'.

Agreement was reached by an exchange of letters in 1983. By then the Foundation had raised over half-a-million dollars. The university agreed to establish both a teaching program and a Centre of Ukrainian Studies. The latter was important for the community, since it would establish an identity, as well as promoting research and cultural activity. The former was to be conducted by a lecturer and tutor supported by an annual donation of $70,000 from the Foundation, 1984-86. The university agreed to the nomination by the Foundation of two members of the selection committee. They were, said Gordijew, well aware of the 'University's jealously guarded prerogative' in the appointment of staff, but in an area where 'misunderstanding, prejudices and long-established hostilities run deep, even at the academic level', voices from the community needed to be heard.
Centre: I. K. Waterhouse
staffing 1975-78. The AUC and the government approved $400,000 for a building and special support for staffing in 1974-75 only. But the main point was secured. Macquarie was to be the centre for special education in New South Wales and, with Monash and Queensland, one of three in the Commonwealth.

James Ward, fourth Professor of Education and Director of what from June 1975 was called simply the Special Education Centre, was one of the more original and creative spirits from Macquarie's first twenty-five years. Voluble and articulate in a blunt north country way, emotional but intellectually demanding, he relished academic life of the more enterprising and vigorous kind. Manchester, where he did his graduate work and taught in the 1960s, and American institutions he knew were alive in the way he admired. He had begun as a teacher of handicapped children and welcomed the 'heady opportunity' at Macquarie, just when special education was set to develop rapidly in Australia. He found a staff committed to a humane and optimistic vision, somewhat naive and not particularly strong academically; one ambition for his tenure was to turn the group to serious academic work, and after 1980 there came a strong flow of papers. He moved research away from the operant, behaviourist model dominant when he came and introduced more eclecticism.

The Special Education Centre included a school 'located in a low-scale domestic complex of buildings' at the western end of the campus. In these classrooms handicapped children were instructed individually and intensively. The school, Mitchell decided, would remain independent of the Department of Education for the sake of flexibility in the Centre's research programs. The children were referred from regular schools and in time (usually twelve months)
The Social Sciences

Mathematics workshop (April 1970). At head of table from left: H. W. Philp (with pipe), S. W. Cohen, M. Dunkley

(1970) Macquarie academics provided expert support; the plans for reconstruction were the work of Filipinos themselves. There seems to have been no continuing interest, at least of a research kind, in Philippine education. The so-called Pacific programs, to which Dunkley became more and more committed, were an offshoot of teacher education and, as Dunkley himself said, provided good training for teacher educators in areas like curriculum and evaluation and, of course, a real service to small Pacific states in their educational struggles. They covered the in-service training of teachers and curriculum preparation in or for Western Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu. But the enterprise had no research depth and, surprisingly, as Edwin Webb and Pearse remarked, there was little connection between the Pacific and South-East Asian programs.

Closer to home in every respect was the huge project in early childhood education at Mount Druitt. Once again, Philp showed the capacity to act on a creative idea but, as with the early days of the TEP, the carry-through was far from perfect. In the early 1970s, members of the School were looking to develop an Australian counterpart to overseas programs — like Head Start in the USA — for young disadvantaged children. They attracted the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation in the Hague, interested ‘in supporting experimental action projects with broad social relevance and applicability’ in fields like early childhood and educational disadvantage. In time the Foundation was to provide nearly $1,000,000. A survey by W. Coppel of the School of Education established that, in its level of disadvantage, Mount Druitt, a government housing estate in western Sydney, was the appropriate place for a program whose object was to implement and evaluate five different patterns of preschool education. They represented, said the Field Director, John Braithwaite, ‘differing viewpoints
aid, and painting and drawing. It was a trend which some thought should be taken to an even greater extent, perhaps towards incorporation of the Union as an independent company, or even to the absorption of the Students Council (MUSC). In 1970, President Bob Montgomery rejected both – the university was resisting the former, while the latter would void the Union’s essential role as the club of the University, providing a common meeting place, with appropriate services and activities, for all the members of the University community. In time, of course, it would develop in independence and function away from the central core of the university: if the program of the university was the ‘mind’ of Macquarie, the Union was its stomach. And as the student numbers mounted, the intimacy suggested by the term ‘club’ became virtually impossible to apply to the Union as a whole. The Union had to be satisfied with ameliorating the anonymity intrinsic to a large ‘multiversity’ rather than banishing it.

While the introduction of most students to the Union was probably through its hamburgers or ‘Edge of the Veg’ health food, their introduction to the Students Council was more likely to be through the activities of Orientation Week. Alex Mitchell described this in 1968 as exhibiting ‘something of the variety of university life and to make you feel welcome, not just to an institution but to a community of which you are part’. The Student’s Interim Council, however, had already politicised its representative functions, and the ‘O-week’ screed written for 1968 emphasised that this was a ‘progressive “community of scholars”’.
encouraged the universities to start discussions about forming an eastern zone intervarsity competition, and this was begun in 1971 with the formation of an eastern zone rugby league competition. Notable in that period were Pam Moses, individual gymnastics, trampoline and State women's gymnastics champion; the soccer team, which won the 1970 Kennard Cup; Geoff Pollard, no. 1 in the 1970 CUS team and silver medallist at the international Universiade meet in Turin, Italy; and the rugby team, which won second division, played the UCLA Golden Bears, and had two members chosen for the combined universities team. Some of these, such as Pam Moses, were among the first sportspeople awarded University Blues in 1971, which formalised the attire and patterns of recognition within the university for contributions to Macquarie's external image. Internally, the marking out of the gymnasium space into sporting courts increased its usage dramatically, never more so than in the massive staff/student volleyball competitions that were held across this period.

III. Troubles
On 31 July 1974, a lunch-time meeting in the University Court (called in emulation of the University of Sydney the 'Front Lawn') over three issues then
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The occupation occurred as a spontaneous reaction by the students to news of the Union Board's latest capitulation to the Vice Chancellor's ultimatum to take action to ensure segregation of the Bar area in the Union building. The students were informed of this development at a front lawn meeting held at luncheon yesterday. During the course of the meeting Vice Chancellor and his two deputies walked across the lawn to partake of lunch in the Union board. When the Vice Chancellor was invited to address the meeting he declined, saying that he would not talk to "a mob". He indicated his willingness to meet with a small delegation after he had finished lunch. The "mob" on the lawn, led by the Vice Chancellor's custodian, reportedly asked that it be a small delegation and that the Vice Chancellor's office be opened. Over 100 students entered the occupied office. The door was locked by the amiable John Ford, the university Re-actor, who had a key. STaffers, saying they although some idiots debated their fingers in the resulting stuff they use to stop the oxygen from shifting on the Vice Chancellor's window ledge. A few others balked at the poor old John Ford in a playful sort of way. Ford, for his part, maintained a good sense of humour throughout. The Vice Chancellor arrived and told everyone to get out. No one did. In fact more of the students kept trying to get in - they'd never seen the Vice Chancellor before.

So the Vice Chancellor left. The occupiers began to prepare for a long stay. Provisions were obtained by rope through the Vice Chancellor's window, and physical relief was secured by use of the Vice Chancellor's personal key.

John Ford returned and requested Vice Chancellor's request to vacate the office. He said the Vice Chancellor was prepared to meet with a delegation of not more than eight, after he had left his office. If the of he was a bit more than 8 - isn't that nice, folks? - and left in a huff.

More provisions arrived. Then a student came in with a spectacular announcement. He had noticed the Vice Chancellor leaving the corridor and asked him why he didn't speak to the students. If they spoke to him he was ready to present their case.
In 1971, Gray estimated, ten students a week were seeking medical help. The nursing sister (Marjorie Child) helped as far as she could. By that time, La Trobe had a medical service with one full-time and one part-time physician. When the Council set up a medical service in September 1972, it determined on the title 'Director' for both services and on parity of status and salary between them (despite the use of professorial salaries in the medical service of other universities). The health service was not to replace normal private or community services; it was readily available to encourage students to seek help when otherwise they might not. Gray and the first medical director, Alan Hunter, willingly accepted the close association. Theirs was, they said, 'a close relationship of equals'. Often students' problems could not be compartmentalised. They did all they could to ease transfer between the services. Their housing in 'a separate . . . group of small, even domestic-scale buildings' helped. Despite this cooperation and an 'urgent letter of protest' from the Staff Association, the pressure of medical comparabilities was irresistible, and in May 1978 the Council added a medical loading to Hunter’s salary, bridging the gap to professorial salary.

The medical service had 7263 consultations in 1976, 2903 with men and 4360 with women. In the same period the counsellors were seeing around ten per cent of the full-time undergraduate population. That they saw a disproportionately high number of first-year students indicated that 'students' initial adjustment both academic and personal to university life' was critical. Students came to the counsellors stressed by circumstances, with the problems of adolescent development or emotionally disturbed (very few severely so); but they also came
Railton recalls that Len McGlashan never gave ‘a dull or uninformative lecture’. Clarice Kennedy was in the entering class of 1967 and finished her formal association 24 years later (in her eighties) with her PhD in Biological Sciences. Her most vivid memory is of Alan Voisey’s lecture on the Grand Canyon with slides and Blair Hostetler’s use of those slides and the ‘Grand Canyon Suite’ in a ‘Sight and Sound’ version of the same topic: ‘As the rhythmic beat of the little donkey’s feet filled theatre 1, simultaneously accompanied by the slides of Allan Voisey and Blair’s narration, the journey through the Canyon suddenly sprang to life . . .’ Another recollection is of the hospitality of the Biological Sciences staff towards their postgraduates.

No set of recollections, at least for the 1970s, could be complete without including memories of the two characteristic programs of that time, the TEP and the external science program. Alan Harper entered in 1973 in what seemed the sunniest conditions for trainee teachers; he recalls the E7 courtyard full of trainees receiving their scholarship allowances from Ross Gwilliam or his associates. By his time of graduation in 1976 the best he and his fellows could hope for was placement on the reserve list. He heard from teachers ahead of him the disenchanting proposition that ‘all research was rubbish, and that one survived by one’s wits and creativity’.
but it was important. Webb's intention of greater openness was fulfilled in his first year by instituting a Report from Council, having Council papers more widely circulated and opening University News to correspondence and controversy. On student participation, a sub-committee of Academic Senate chaired by Mansfield recommended that a postgraduate and an undergraduate be added to the membership of Senate by election from colleges of the elected postgraduate and undergraduate members of the Schools.

By 1976 the senior executive of the university was completely changed. Holmwood had left to work with the constitutional convention in 1972 and Barclay became Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration). His association with the University from the beginning made for an essential continuity, despite a very different — a bluffer — personal style. Similarly, as colleagues from 1966 Barclay and the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) worked easily together. The relationship between Webb and Mansfield was crucial for the academic administration of the university. The one brought an air of freshness and new beginnings, although his actual steps were prudent. The other appeared conservative on two counts: he (with Barclay) wanted to maintain as much as possible of the original Macquarie conception; he held as much as possible to established practice, especially in staffing procedures. The almost daily consultation between Mitchell and his deputies was not reproduced, but Webb left large realms to his deputies to manage. Both were active with him in the Committee on Academic Development (CAD), a relatively small group of senior Senate members responsible for policy and the triennial submissions. Mansfield
followed Cohen in striving for a strong sense of collegiality among the Heads of Schools on the Committee to Advise the Vice-Chancellor (CAVC) on staffing, which he chaired. As funding tightened and the industrial climate changed, unavoidable strains tested ‘the good humour and patience of the chairman’ as well as his managerial skills.

On Barclay’s retirement in 1983, the position went to Gareth Roberts. If Holmwood’s home ground was the law and Barclay’s the laboratory, Roberts’ was the architect’s office. He had come to Australia (after education at Liverpool University and practice in England) to work with the National Capital Development Commission. Professor and Dean of Architecture in two universities, Queensland and New South Wales (1968-83), Roberts was a planner by temperament and training and promoted a rethinking of both the physical and administrative shape of the university, including the commissioning of a draft development plan for the site by Conybeare, Morrison & Partners.

Webb presided over an administration whose structures had not changed since the early days. They followed broadly a pattern set at the University of Sydney in 1955. Various parts of the administration were linked by direct reporting or a line of consultation to one or other of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors. The bulk of services were grouped under the Registrar or Bursar. This was a centralised system; what faculty offices did elsewhere was done here in the Registrar’s department. From 1973 two Deputy Registrars shared the work, one (A. W. Findlay) responsible for the Student Centre, the other (I. B. Postle and later B. J. Spencer) for the secretariat. Administration in the Schools
Philosophy, 1952). In the 1960s he was Director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU and one of the founders of Macquarie. He was a member of the AUC, 1970-77, and chaired committees of enquiry into post-secondary education in Western Australia and Victoria. The citation for his honorary doctorate of the ANU recorded his contributions to 'the process of sophistication of Australian universities'; he was 'an archetypal man of intellect', whose whole life expressed the charity and decency of his intellectual discourse. He chaired the Council with 'patience and dignity', but his stamina was often tested.

With his successor, Macquarie returned to the law. Michael Kirby, wrote James Ward, was 'an outstanding figure in Australian contemporary society, possessing that wide range of gifts and interests which so frequently bring him to the notice of the media'. A Judge of the Federal Court, he was, when elected in October 1983, Chairman of the Law Reform Commission; a commentator called him 'one of the heroes of Australian reform'. He was Deputy Chancellor of Newcastle University 1978-83. A year after his election at Macquarie, he became President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. Christian ethics, liberal political philosophy, especially as it touches human rights, a personal sense of giftedness, a natural and cultivated courtesy, together with a hatred of the casual stereotyping that goes on in social life, had formed his personality. In the 1983 Who's Who he entered his recreation as 'work'. Some early interventions made Webb guarded; under Webb's successor, Kirby settled more easily into the Chancellor's encouraging, advising and cautionary role.
strength. Budgeting would be more directive and less historically based; units would be deliberately advanced or held back. The shock of this would be eased by a move to decentralisation, explained by Carrick Martin with the mollifying words: ‘The areas of excellence at Macquarie University have always grown from the efforts of a small group of scholars rather than from the wisdom of large committees or the central administration’.

The tension between the management and collegial (or participatory) styles and that between a liberal (or relatively undirected) education and one directed at meeting national or social needs was not new, or unique to this institution or this administration. These strains had run through Macquarie’s history and were now present in all institutions. Nevertheless, in the new environment created by federal government policy, they were heightened. What strikes an observer is how much of the founding ideology of Macquarie University comes through
and everything to do with financial considerations. Appointments to senior lectureships on the other hand were entirely on merit, and yet fixed-term lecturers were not allowed to apply for these positions. The unfairness of the situation was patent, particularly since it was in such positions that women were concentrated. She bored deeper in every case: fixed-term appointments, for instance, were not only potentially exploitative, but left such staff ill-prepared for other appointments thereafter, and undermined the continuity of programs as staff readily left for tenured positions whenever possible. She contrasted the university’s mission with its practice thus:

Universities demand of their academic staff that they research and they disseminate that research by publishing it. But what poor academics they are as institutions. They do nothing to encourage the simple acquisition of knowledge of the way they work and why, or the spread of that knowledge among their own employees.

At times, the tone of her reporting was sharp, causing undoubted discomfort for those who recognised themselves in her pages. Speaking of school loyalties in committee voting, for instance, Wills noted that:

It is only when an application is so woeful that the academic judgement and integrity of the school members would be suspect if they supported it that they clearly state that they cannot support it. In most cases they rather delicately choose to describe such an application as ‘premature’ which sounds a little odd
1985. Roberts himself prepared the design, in Kirby's words 'quite startling in its beauty'. The Women's Group funded the work, wholly undertaken (once again) in the workshop under Bernie Cisby's direction. At the head was the star Sirius 'represented by a gold dodecahedron' and at the base of the shaft a turned piece of metal, silver plated, in the shape of the Macquarie tower. Inspiration, design, funding and craftsmanship (in Roberts's view of outstanding quality) had come from within the university. Macquarie University had given itself a mace, as, nearly twenty years before, it had given itself its crest, whose main elements the mace now recreated. Ron Tracey, Senior Attendant, carried it in graduation processions until his retirement at the end of the decade.

The mace was ready for the ceremonies where the university's first honorary degrees were conferred on those who had brought the university into being and helped to shape it: Garfield Barwick, Alex Mitchell and John Lincoln. It was a link to the beginnings. Such links were increasingly important, as universities entered a new and possibly more prescriptive era, in which might be sacrificed the founding ideal of offering (as Mitchell's citation put it) 'programs of study suited to the individual needs of students'. In the late 1980s, there were teachers at Macquarie committed still to that ideal. A sign that the institution itself had not abandoned it was the appointment in 1989 of its first Dean of Students, Marie-Louise Claflin, a teacher in Medieval and Children's Literature and long an adviser and nurturer of undergraduates in the devoted spirit of the Clerk of Oxenford.