

## ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

An Aboriginal Education Conference, Beyond School: Increasing Opportunities for Aboriginal People in Post-Secondary Education, was held at the University on October 23rd and 24th, 1986.

The Conference brought together over one hundred Aboriginal delegates, a majority of them Aboriginal, people from throughout New South Wales and the Hunter Valley. Many of them were students, teachers and lecturers from schools, TAFE, universities and colleges of advanced education who came to hear a number of distinguished Aboriginal educationists from other states discuss ways in which they are increasing opportunities for Aboriginal people to enter tertiary education and providing support for Aboriginal students. Resources and organisation were provided by the University, CAE, TAFE, the Awabakal Aboriginal Co-operative and the Commonwealth Department of Education and the New South Wales Department of Education.

Speakers included this year's Boyer lecturer, Professor Eric Willmot, Head of the School of Education at James Cook University, Lillian Holt, Deputy Principal of the Aboriginal Community College, Adelaide, Bob Morgan, President of the N.S.W. Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group and Sonny Flynn, Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Task Force at the South Australian Institute of Technology. Other speakers were Eve Fesl, Director of the Aboriginal Research Centre at Monash University and Isaac Brown, the Director of the Monash Orientation Scheme.

The Conference also provided an excellent chance to hear from Aboriginal people involved at all levels in the education process in this area. A panel of local Aboriginal staff and students from schools and tertiary institutions discussed the educational situation for Aboriginal people in the Hunter Region. Some clearly defined areas which emerged during the Conference provided topics for workshops.

The Conference arose partly as a result of a recommendation from the Committee appointed by Senate to take up matters concerning an Aboriginal Admissions and Support Scheme.

The Conference endorsed some of the recommendations made by the Committee and made a number of others which impinge on equal opportunity in so far as they would increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to qualify for positions both within and outside the University.

It would therefore seem appropriate for ACEO to support both those recommendations emanating from the Committee and from the Conference and to urge the Aboriginal Admission and Support Committee, to approach the Vice Chancellor, the Senate and Council with a view to their early implementation.

Recommendations regarded as of the utmost importance are:

- the establishment of an Aboriginal Admission and Support Scheme
- the development of an Outreach Programme to identify, encourage and support Aboriginal people considering proceeding to University
- the adaptation of the Open Foundation Course to accommodate the special needs of Aboriginal people
- the establishment of an Aboriginal enclave on campus with a nucleus of permanent staff to provide support to Aboriginal students
- liaison with secondary schools and TAFE to encourage Aboriginal students to proceed to University
- co-operation with NCAE in the development of a bridging course

At the same time, the University would explore all available avenues for increasing the numbers of Aboriginal people employed at the University.

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