

UNIWEST BULLETIN

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photo by Doug Wilkinson



The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council (story page 2)

The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council on 23 August 1986: seated (left to right) are Dr Ron Werner, Professor Sir Bruce Williams, Mr Vic Baueris, Ms Nerida Blair, Mr Ern MacDonald, Mr Robert Stead (Executive Officer), the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, the Hon R J Mulock, the Acting President of the Council, Mr Jack Ferguson, the Minister for Education, Mr Rodney Cavalier, the Planning Vice-Chancellor, Dr Ralph Rawlinson, Dr Kevin Sheridan, Mr Bob Lamond, Ms Madi Maclean, Mr Reg Pollock, Ms Zita Antonios and Dr Allan Pattison. Professor Carrick Martin was absent.

COUNCIL ADOPTS BASIC PRINCIPLES

On 3 October 1986 the Advisory Council held a full-day meeting at Hawkesbury Agricultural College. There was an opportunity for members of the Council to become acquainted with the historic Hawkesbury campus. (The origins of the site as a teaching and research institute go back to 1891.) Most of the day, however, was taken up with the Council's first objective, drafting of a set of basic principles for the University of Western Sydney.

The Council met again on 7 November, at Blacktown, and confirmed the adoption of the following principles:

- (1) That the University be an autonomous institution, from the outset, its governance structure being provided through its own legislation.
- (2) That the University declare a basic commitment to academic excellence.
- (3) That in the initial phase co-operative links be established with other universities to ensure the new University's academic standing and integrity.
- (4) That the academic profile of the University be developed to provide courses in the humanities, social sciences, pure sciences and applied sciences.
- (5) That, in developing its academic profile, the University be responsive to local community needs as well as the wider State and national interests: in so doing it will have regard to the offering of other institutions within the area and within the State and Commonwealth generally.
- (6) That in designing courses, the University take steps to ensure that full account be taken of the potential for recognition of studies in other sectors.

- (7) That in regard to participation and equity –
 - (a) the University recognise the need to make special arrangements to facilitate access of disadvantaged groups; and
 - (b) such arrangements be made in collaboration with relevant institutions and community groups.
- (8) That in regard to sites –
 - (a) the University have a clearly defined central campus, which will operate as the core of the University; and
 - (b) in order to maximise physical access, the University be developed on a multi-site basis.

Discussion then followed on the question of the nature of the model for the beginning phase of the University. This question will be discussed further when the Council next meets on 12 December.

INAUGURAL MEETING AN HISTORIC OCCASION

The inaugural meeting of the University of Western Sydney Advisory Council was held at the Kingswood Campus of Nepean College on Saturday, 23 August 1986. An invited audience of some 150 representatives of community, government and educational bodies witnessed this historic occasion.

The meeting was opened by the Minister for Education, Mr Rodney Cavalier, who outlined events since August 1985 which led up to the State's commitment in April 1986 to the establishment of a University in the western suburbs of Sydney. The Minister paid tribute to the members of the Ministerial Committee who had undertaken the initial review of higher education in the west and had recommended the establishment of a university.

Mr Cavalier referred with great regret to the resignation of the late Justice Lionel Murphy. Justice Murphy had sent a message of continuing support for the new University. The Minister expressed his gratitude to the Acting President, Mr Jack Ferguson, for agreeing to this appointment immediately it was confirmed that Lionel Murphy could not continue as President.

Mr Cavalier referred also to the appointment of Dr Ralph Rawlinson as Planning Vice-Chancellor for the new University, a step seen as further evidence of the Government's resolve. He said Dr Rawlinson was uniquely qualified for this position.

The Commonwealth Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, had personally rung Mr Cavalier to apologise for not being able to be present at the inaugural meeting, but promising her strong support.

Speaking in reply to the Minister, Mr Ferguson also paid tribute to Justice Murphy's enthusiasm for the new University and in particular for the establishment of a great library as part of the University. He said this would be one of the most important tasks for the Advisory Council.

Mr Ferguson admonished those who would give the new University a restricted technically oriented profile. He drew applause from supporters with his plea for the University to have a balanced range of disciplines. "We're not drawers of water and hewers of wood in the West!" he said.

The Deputy Premier, Mr Ron Mulock, representing the Premier, thanked the members of the Advisory Council for agreeing to participate in this important project. He said the presence of so many distinguished guests was a sign of the strength of support for the new University.

He called on the Advisory Council to take account of the needs of both the western and south western sectors of the metropolitan area in considering the development of the new university. He said that although there might well be differences of opinion on matters such as the name of the new university and the location of a new campus, the supporters of the university should not be divided on the central aim which was to bring a major new educational facility to the area. No existing institution would have any cause to fear the development of the new university: the Deputy Premier said he was confident that funds would be forthcoming to make good existing shortfalls as well as to establish the new university.

Amongst the many distinguished guests was one of the great figures of Australian universities, Sydney University Chancellor, Sir Hermann Black. Sir Hermann said he was pleased to have had the opportunity to be present at such an historic occasion – the launching of a new University.



The late Mr Justice Lionel Murphy

LIONEL MURPHY: FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

On the morning of 5 August, His Honour Mr Justice Lionel Murphy rang the NSW Minister for Education to say that because of ill-health, he could not continue as President of the Advisory Council. Justice Murphy's appointment as President had taken effect just one month earlier, on 4 July 1986.

Lionel Murphy had committed himself immediately and with flair and enthusiasm to the new university project. He had already been involved in considerable discussion and planning. On 11 July he had met with the Chairman of CTEC, Mr Hugh Hudson, and on 14 July he spoke to the press in Sydney. He spoke of the need for increased expenditure on education and described the funds needed to establish and maintain

the new University as "chicken feed in the life of the nation". He saw the need for the university to be "first-rate", covering not only science and technology but also the arts and humanities. As one of his first tasks he targeted the establishment of a great library without which there could not be a great university.

Planning for the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council proceeded without Lionel Murphy and within 24 hours of his resignation, the Minister had secured the agreement of Mr Jack Ferguson to become Acting President and had appointed Dr Rawlinson to the position of Planning Vice-Chancellor, ensuring the forward momentum.

At the opening of the inaugural meeting, the Minister paid tribute to Lionel Murphy and his creative vision.

"Despite the tragically short time Lionel Murphy was President, before ill-health forced him to resign, his contribution was substantial", the Minister said.

"He had already recognised some of the major difficulties that this project faces. His great ability will be missed on the Council".

Justice Murphy was unable to be present at the opening of the first meeting of the Advisory Council but sent his best wishes and a message of continuing interest and support. His death on 21 October 1986 ended a brief but significant chapter in the development of the new University.

FIRST MEETING CHAired BY FORMER DEPUTY PREMIER

The honour of presiding at the first meeting of the Advisory Council fell to a long-standing colleague and friend of Lionel Murphy, former NSW Deputy Premier Jack Ferguson.

photo by Doug Wilkinson



Deputy Premier Ron Mulock addressing the opening of the inaugural meeting. Seated are the Acting President of the Council, Jack Ferguson (left), and Minister for Education, Rodney Cavalier.

Saddened by Murphy's illness and withdrawal from the University project, Jack Ferguson nevertheless readily accepted the Minister's request on 5 August that he take up the Acting Presidency. Jack Ferguson was elected to the NSW Parliament in 1959, and was a member of cabinet and Deputy Premier from 1976 until his retirement in 1984. A long term resident of western Sydney, Mr Ferguson is one of that group of parliamentarians who have avidly supported the need to improve education in the region.

His direct involvement in the higher education debate came with his appointment in August 1985 as one of the 4 members of the Ministerial Committee to review the structure of higher education in western Sydney (the Parry Committee). His appointment to the Advisory Council provides a valuable link between the Council and the Committee.



Dr Ralph Rawlinson, Planning Vice-Chancellor

PLANNING VICE- CHANCELLOR TO EXPEDITE UNI DEVELOPMENT

On 6 August the Minister for Education, Mr Rodney Cavalier, announced the appointment of Dr Ralph Rawlinson as Planning Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney.

Mr Cavalier said that he was very pleased that Dr Rawlinson was able to accept the position, which he will hold in addition to his current position of Chairman of the Education Commission of NSW.

"Dr Rawlinson is uniquely qualified for this co-ordinating role between the Advisory Council and the existing Sydney Universities and Colleges.

"His broad practical and theoretical understanding of both New South Wales and international education systems, and his wide experience as an education administrator are an excellent basis for his task of establishing the foundations for the academic development of the new university.

"Dr Rawlinson has held the position of Chairman of the Education Commission of New South Wales since its inception in 1980. He is currently a member of the New South Wales Higher Education Board. He was the Principal of the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education - 1974-1980."

Dr Rawlinson expressed the view that the creation of the position of Planning Vice-Chancellor was further evidence of the State Government's resolve to expedite the development of university facilities in western Sydney.

Dr Rawlinson said his immediate task was to develop a constructive dialogue with Commonwealth and State authorities to ensure a coordinated approach to the planning of the University. He said he would also be establishing links with Vice-Chancellors, Principals of Colleges of Advanced Education and community groups who had evidenced a particular interest in the development of the new University.

Dr Rawlinson has had preliminary discussions with the metropolitan universities. "The Council has welcomed the interest being taken by the other metropolitan universities in developments in Western Sydney", he said.

Dr Rawlinson has also addressed the State Conference of College Directors and Principals, the Western Sydney Chapter of the Australian College of Education and the western Sydney branch of the Institute of Engineers.

COMMONWEALTH PROPOSES A UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, have now made statements on the establishment of a university in the west.

While acknowledging "the case for the eventual establishment of a fully autonomous university for Western and South Western Sydney", the position taken by the Commonwealth is that the new institution should begin as a University College in 1990 or 1991. CTEC's position is spelt out in an extensive appendix on Western and South Western Sydney with its recommendations for 1987. Senator Ryan made known her support in a speech at Nepean College of Advanced Education on 6 November.

If the decision were that the University was to begin as a college of an existing university, this would mean that one of the existing metropolitan universities would be responsible for the establishment and control of a satellite college in the west. The establishment of a free standing autonomous University would be unlikely to occur until some five years later in the mid 90's at the earliest.

ADMINISTRATIVE HQ AT PARRAMATTA

An administrative base for the Advisory Council has been set up in central Parramatta. Whilst the Council will continue to meet at different locations throughout western Sydney, office accommodation has been leased in Macquarie Street, Parramatta, for the President, the Planning Vice-Chancellor, the Executive Officer, and support staff.

The Acting President, Mr Jack Ferguson, said that the Parramatta office was an administrative headquarters only and in no way pre-empted the question of location of a new university campus.

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