



MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY UNION

TWELFTH MACQUARIE ADVANCED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

6 February 1986

"SYDNEY'S NEW UNIVERSITY - A BICENTENNIAL INITIATIVE IN EDUCA.

SUMMARY OF SPEECH BY JUSTICE KIRBY

EMBARGO: THURSDAY, 6 FEBRUARY, 1986 6.00 P.M.

SUBJECT: MACQUARIE CHANCELLOR FAVOURS FOURTH UNIVERSITY
KIRBY URGES BICENTENNIAL INITIATIVE ON UNI EDUCATION
KIRBY URGES "BICENTENNIAL UNIVERSITY"

SYDNEY, THURSDAY

The Chancellor of Macquarie University, Justice Michael Kirby, tonight expressed support for the proposal to establish a fourth metropolitan university in Sydney. Justice Kirby was speaking in his capacity as Chancellor of Macquarie University at the opening of the Twelfth Macquarie Advanced Management Program at Macquarie University Union.

Justice Kirby said that there could be no more important and urgent resolution, to start Australia's third century as a modern nation than to step up "dramatically and imaginatively" the national investment in tertiary education. He said that important achievements had been made in recent years to correct the "long years of neglect and wastage". But he said that Australia's economy would continue to fall behind unless we could demonstrate the national will to rapidly increase our educational retention rates. The natural "fishing ground" for the neglected needs of talented but disadvantaged students was in the outlying districts of Sydney and Melbourne - particularly the south western area of Sydney.

"In my opinion this issue is too important for defensive territorial responses. Our aim should not be to defend established institutions but to ask the question - "what new institutional arrangement will rapidly improve the

educational retention of the disadvantaged youth of the south western districts of Sydney." If a new University willl3 the scandalous wastage of talent, so needed by our country, we should support it. If the most speedy and economical solution, in the first instance, is the creation of outrider institutions of the existing universities, they should be promptly created. Cost effectiveness in turning around years of neglect must dictate the choice. The new initiative is clearly needed. Nothing could be more important for the Bicentennial than the injection of national funds and a national resolve into tertiary education."

"Shocking Statistics"

Justice Kirby said that the "shocking statistics" of Australia's educational record was taking its toll in national economic performance, in a time of high technology and rapid change. He mentioned:

- * Educational retention in Australia at 17 years remained little more than 40% compared with more than 80% in USA and Japan.
- * Although CAE attendances have increased in the past five years, university attendances in NSW remain static in aggregate.
- * Chances of tertiary education for the average young person in south western Sydney is about a third of the State average.
- * Thirty thousand applicants for places in universities and CAEs were rejected in 1986.

- * Cut off points on HSC aggregates have risen steadily in recent years, excluding many capable students who would have secured tertiary education a decade ago.
- * A recent OECD report on education in Australia had especially criticised the neglect of the education of women.

Macquarie University "social conscience"

Justice Kirby said Macquarie University was more likely to be concerned about the plight of disadvantaged students than some others:

"If there is a special feature of general application to Macquarie University it is, I believe, a well developed social conscience. We have endeavoured to reach out to students in the western districts of Sydney. But difficulties of public transport limit our availability, in practice, in the south west. What is needed is a campus there - either a new University or branch campuses, if that saves capital costs. What we need are more young people in lecture halls and fewer disillusioned and disappointed young people whose potential has not been fully tapped. When I was at university it was traditional at the welcome for the Chancellor to tell the students to look to left and right, remembering that only one would be present at the same time next year. This week, at the welcome, thirty years after my own first day at university, I told the new students to look to left and right - and to think of the responsibility that derives from the opportunity given to them, but denied to at least 2 others.

Bicentennial initiative

Justice Kirby said that the proposal to open the fourth university in Sydney in 1988 would need careful consideration by Federal and State authorities. He said that the views he expressed were personal views. But he urged all university people in Australia to support initiatives that would improve the quantity and quality of university education. "We must be flexible in university organisation if that is going to extend opportunities to the people presently missing out. Personally, I regard the "State University of Western Sydney" as a uninspired name. If we are to have a fourth university, let it be the "University of the Bicentenary". We should save money on the bread and circuses and invest it in the talent of our young people - especially in scientific and technological disciplines.

NOTE ON SPEECH

The above speech will be delivered at approximately 9.00 p.m. on Thursday, 6 February, 1986 at the University Union Function Room, Macquarie University, North Ryde. For further information contact Bernard Carey, Director, Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University, telephone (02) 888 8000. To contact Justice Kirby's office telephone (02) 230 8202.