

CHANCELLOR'S FOREWORD

It has been a privilege for me in my role as Chancellor to preside over a University whose staff and students have not only been alert to the needs of the wider community but who have been ready to engage with that community in addressing many of those needs.

ACU National identifies itself as a public, new generation, national university, Catholic in character and open to all. Though young in years, ACU National blends the vigour and idealism of youth with the wisdom and experience of a heritage which reaches back to the 1850s in Australia, and which is nourished by almost 2,000 years of Catholic intellectual tradition.



It has been gratifying to see how students, graduates and staff – through their activities of research, teaching and learning, and community service – have committed themselves to realising the Mission of the University in tangible and practical ways.

Through a wide range of forums and public lectures conducted throughout 2006, ACU National has stimulated discussion and encouraged debate on some of the most significant and challenging issues affecting contemporary Australian society. Gifted and prominent speakers have been invited to address issues related to topical matters such as emerging technologies, questions of equity, social justice and human dignity, and the sharing of wealth and privilege. Therapeutic cloning, intelligent design, the role of religion in politics, Australia's new workplace relations laws, and other matters consonant with the Mission of ACU National have been debated and kept on the public agenda.

Throughout 2006, collaborative ventures and achievements have been many and varied. For some years now, ACU National has worked closely with the Jesuit Refugee Service to deliver courses in business to Karen refugees forced to live on the Thai-Burmese border. In 2006, 15 young Karen women and men graduated from ACU National with a Diploma in Business. This year also saw the very first cohort of East Timorese primary school teachers graduate with degrees in education. This was the culmination of years of commitment and dedication by ACU National staff and East Timorese students. It was a commitment entered into shortly after that fledgling nation gained its independence. It remains a commitment that will carry on into the future due largely to the voluntary contributions of many generous ACU National staff, students and friends.

Once again throughout this past year, ACU National maintained its outreach to people in the wider community marginalised through homelessness and other forms of disadvantage. Classes in subjects such as Australian history, philosophy and spirituality have not only given participants opportunity for reflection and lively discussion, but have opened up for them the prospect of alternative futures, thereby allowing them to approach the challenge of life on the edge with a perspective that only education can offer.

All this was achieved through the collaborative expansion of the Clemente/Catalyst Education for Homeless programs. Begun last year in East Sydney with the assistance of the St Vincent de Paul Society, this innovative and exciting program has been extended to other parts of Sydney and to Brisbane's Fortitude Valley through further collaboration with Mission Australia.

During 2006, ACU National's Sudanese Pathways Project, now called Community Futures Australia, continued to serve the tertiary education needs of growing numbers of Sudanese migrants with valued support from Catholic Education Offices, the Independent Education Union, the Catholic Primary Principals' Association and others.

We are indebted to our friends and supporters who, be it formally through donations to the ACU National Foundation or informally through their enthusiasm and involvement, energise and multiply our achievements.

In 2006, I remained impressed by our students, whose achievements were realised well beyond the confines of the lecture rooms and online forums. In the public eye or quietly, our students continued to reach out to others in need.

To give but a few examples, Bachelor of Theology and Social Work student Amy Banson from the Canberra Campus reacted to the tragic death of fellow Canberra student Clea Rose by undertaking a heroic 1,300 kilometre walk from Brisbane to Canberra to raise money for the National Brain Injury Foundation.

On the world stage, ACU National Doctor of Philosophy student Lucy Kiyapi from the Brisbane Campus addressed the United Nations in New York at the International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty, as well as a forum on Aids funded by the Ford Foundation in Washington DC. Lucy has worked with Kenyan children orphaned by HIV and has researched the Psycho-Social Impact of HIV AIDS on Youth in Kenya.

It was pleasing to see students from all our campuses gather at The Big Event at the Brisbane Campus to focus on Awareness, Advocacy and Action.

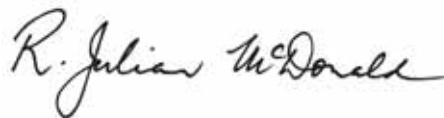
The friendships and shared sense of purpose forged at such events will reap benefits for the wider community long into the future.

As our University and all its operations continue to grow in scope and maturity, so too do our graduates, now numbering some 40,000, and many more from our predecessor colleges. Our graduates are active and highly valued in their communities and professions, in human services, in education, in business, in the health sciences, and the arts.

I am indeed grateful that these people chose our University at which to broaden their education, hone their skills, and intensify their passion for their chosen professions, and that many now choose to remain in touch with us through our new Graduate Association, to share their own skills as mentors of current students, to network with each other, and to stay up to date on the important events we continue to host here at ACU National, at all our many campuses.

My gratitude also must be expressed to the valued staff of ACU National, among them my esteemed colleague Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Sheehan AO who joined the University in 1998 and has announced he will depart the role in January 2008 at the end of his second five-year contract.

May I thank and congratulate all involved with our unique University on the achievements of 2006.



Brother Julian McDonald cfc AO
Chancellor