

# e-news



Department of Education,  
Training and Youth Affairs

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# on higher education

Informing the Higher Education Sector—February 2001

e-news 01

navigating  
e-news 

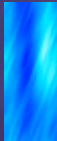
in print 

to exit 

 backing  
Australia's  
ability


 Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

 workplace  
reform

 quality  
audits

 international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

 capital  
development  
pool

 new  
education  
classifications

 2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching



### to exit

Don't have any menus to help you exit?

Select 'Esc' on your keyboard then close the window as per normal.

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The front page of *e-news on higher education* features a set of icons that take you to the articles inside.

These icons are repeated at the bottom of every page, to guide you to other articles.

### printing

Use the keystrokes of 'Ctrl P' to launch a print window. Remember, you can print all of the pages or choose to print current page.

### pages

Articles that run onto the next page have a 'forward' icon at the bottom right hand corner of the page. Select this icon to move forward one page. Subsequent pages will have a 'back' icon that you can use to go back.


forward 

### websites

*e-news on higher education* also has links to relevant websites. To access a website, simply click on the URL when the open hand cursor changes to a pointing hand.

back to  cover

 **backing  
Australia's  
ability**

 **Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

 **workplace  
reform**

 **quality  
audits**

 **international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

 **capital  
development  
pool**

 **new  
education  
classifications**

 **2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# backing Australia's ability for a win

In late January the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, announced a massive injection of \$2.9 billion into innovation, in his policy statement Backing Australia's Ability: An Innovation Action Plan for the Future.

The Education, Training and Youth Affairs portfolio is central to Backing Australia's Ability, with over half the new funds allocated to education measures.

The Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, the Hon. Dr David Kemp MP, welcomed the announcement, saying that 'there will be more opportunities for Australians to acquire the skills needed to work in tomorrow's industries. New funding for research and for state-of-the-art laboratories, libraries and technical support will keep Australia at the leading edge of innovation.'

The Commonwealth Government has provided approximately \$4.5 billion funding for innovation in 2000-2001 alone. This includes a record \$2.7 billion for science, research and

industry innovation programmes, and \$1.8 billion for higher education research and research training. In addition this Government has launched innovation programs targeted at the information and communications technology (ICT) sector with a total value of \$189 million.

Funding increases for research and innovation build on the announcements made by the Government in its recent White Paper Knowledge and Innovation: A Policy Statement on Research and Research Training. The White Paper announced new performance-based block funding arrangements for universities to ensure the provision of a high quality environment for research and research training, and support for the work of outstanding individual researchers and research teams through competitive grants administered by the Australian Research Council.

In Backing Australia's Ability the Government has announced seven funding initiatives in the education portfolio:



forward ►

back to cover ▲

backing  
Australia's  
ability

Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

workplace  
reform

quality  
audits

international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

capital  
development  
pool

new  
education  
classifications

2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching

# backing Australia's ability for a win (continued)

- To support internationally competitive research, the Government will double funding over the next five years for the national competitive research grants administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC). The extra \$736 million over five years will increase the support available under the Discovery and Linkage elements of the grants programme, introduce new 'Federation Fellowships' to attract and retain leading researchers in key positions, double the number of ARC-funded postdoctoral positions and improve the competitiveness of researchers' salaries, to get better parity between the salaries payable to research-only and research-and-teaching academics.
- To provide the infrastructure needed to support project-funded research, the Government will provide more than \$337 million towards increased project-specific infrastructure over the next five years.
  - To upgrade the basic infrastructure of universities, such as scientific and research equipment, libraries and laboratory facilities, \$246 million over the next five years will be provided to fund the best infrastructure proposals from universities.
- To increase the number of graduates in areas where Australia faces shortages, the Government will provide \$151 million over five years for an additional 2 000 university places each year (rising to nearly 5 500 a year as students continue through the system, or 21 000 equivalent full time student places over the five years), with priority given to ICT, mathematics and science.
- To encourage lifelong learning and to help Australians upgrade and acquire new skills, the Government will establish an income-contingent loans scheme for postgraduate fee-paying students. It is expected that the loans provided under this scheme will amount to some \$995 million over the next five years.
- To foster scientific, mathematical and technological skills, develop school-based innovation and build supportive school environments, the Government will provide, in those States where the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) is triggered, an additional \$130 million over four years to government schools.
- To enhance student access to quality learning opportunities and provide experience of ICT as a learning tool, \$34 million over five years will be provided to help develop online curriculum content in schools.

back ◀

back to cover ▶

[www.innovation.gov.au/iap](http://www.innovation.gov.au/iap)

backing  
Australia's  
ability

Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

workplace  
reform

quality  
audits

international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

capital  
development  
pool

new  
education  
classifications

2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching

# the **Neville Bonner** memorial scholarship

Announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, in May 2000 the Neville Bonner Memorial Scholarship has been established in memory of the late Mr Neville Bonner AO who was the first Aboriginal Australian Senator.

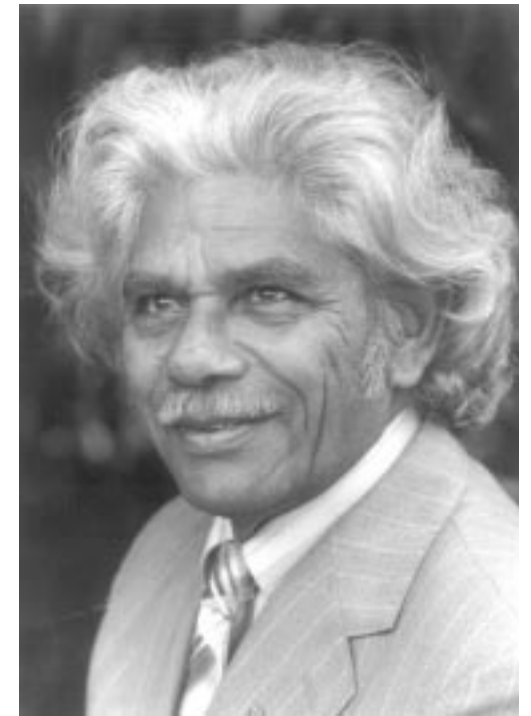
The Scholarship is designed to encourage Indigenous Australians with an interest in politics to undertake their honours year at any recognised Australian university and will be available for study in politics or political science; or related subjects such as government, political geography, political history, political anthropology and political economics.

The value of the scholarship is equivalent to the Australian Postgraduate Award stipend (currently \$17 071 per year) and the cost of HECS fees paid up front.

The scholarship fund was established with \$400 000 allocated from the Education, Training and Youth Affairs portfolio.

Pfizer Pharmaceuticals has also made a commitment of \$30 000 to the fund and it is hoped that additional funds will be raised from the private sector by a committee being appointed by government.

The committee is to be headed up by Dr Brendan Nelson MP, will also advise on scholarship issues and have responsibility for selecting the winning scholar each year. The Australian National University is to manage the fund from within its Endowment of Excellence.



[www.anu.edu.au/scholarships](http://www.anu.edu.au/scholarships)

**back to** ▲  
**cover**

**backing  
Australia's  
ability**

**Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

**workplace  
reform**

**quality  
audits**

**international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

**capital  
development  
pool**

**new  
education  
classifications**

**2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# workplace reform

The Workplace Reform Programme is a major funding initiative which is providing \$259 million in additional salary funding to higher education institutions over three years.

The aim of the programme is to encourage higher education institutions to adopt more flexible and efficient governance and management structures. It will enable institutions to respond to emerging student, employer and community demands. The additional two per cent salary funding the programme provides will help institutions to reward staff through this process.

## *second round guidelines*

The guidelines for the second round of the programme were published on the DETYA Internet site on 11 January 2001. The guidelines, which are designed to assist institutions preparing applications, contain some important information about changes to the programme.

## *first round extension*

First round funding has now been extended to 18 months from the date an institution's successful application is received by DETYA. Applications for second round funding can be made no earlier than both 12 months after an institution was eligible to receive its first round funding and nine months from the certification of the institution's most recently certified agreement.

This means that an institution whose first round funding commenced on 1 January 2000 can apply for the second round from 1 January 2001. However, if the institution has certified a new agreement during this 12-month period, it will have to wait until the agreement has been operating for nine months before it can apply.

To qualify for second round funding, and thus have the funding incorporated into their operating grants, institutions

**forward** 

**back to cover** 

 **backing  
Australia's  
ability**

 **Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

 **workplace  
reform**

 **quality  
audits**

 **international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

 **capital  
development  
pool**

 **new  
education  
classifications**

 **2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

## workplace reform (continued)

will have to demonstrate progress in implementing reforms in workplace relations arrangements, management and administration since the date of their successful first round application.

Institutions will need to pass at least nine of the 14 criteria for second round funding, firstly, by demonstrating that they continue to meet the criteria for first round funding and, secondly, by meeting an additional requirement that they have achieved progress in implementing reforms in relation to some of the criteria. Institutions are required to apply for funding on the basis of their certified agreements for academic and general staff.

### *first round results*

Most institutions have now applied for first round funding and 22 have received funding. A total of approximately \$69 million has been allocated to date. There are several applications which cannot be assessed at present as they are based on agreements which have yet to be certified in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

The successful institutions have demonstrated commitments to wide-ranging workplace reforms. For example, most institutions have used their enterprise agreements to introduce flexible work conditions for staff and to enable some

conditions to be determined at work unit, department or faculty levels. Most institutions have also demonstrated strong achievements in areas such as cost savings, productivity increases and revenue generation, all of which are essential for universities to continue to be competitive.

### *positive developments*

There has also been a strong trend towards building significant links between agreements and institutions' strategic plans. This is a very positive development as it means that institutions are considering people management as an integral part of their overall management strategy which is influencing their operations.


Institutions have also demonstrated significant commitments to, and progress in, reforms in other areas of their operations, such as: simplifying processes and committees; better managing people and resources, including resource sharing; and introducing initiatives to broaden academic expertise and management skills.

[www.detya.gov.au/highered/programmes/workplace\\_reform](http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/programmes/workplace_reform)

back 

back to  
cover 

 **backing  
Australia's  
ability**

 **Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

 **workplace  
reform**

 **quality  
audits**

 **international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

 **capital  
development  
pool**

 **new  
education  
classifications**

 **2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# QA quality audits

The first audits to be conducted by the recently established Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) will take place in Second Semester 2001. The AUQA, a company owned by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Ministers for Education, will conduct five-yearly audits of each publicly funded Australian university and produce a public report based on each audit process.

## *university audits*

The AUQA will provide rigorous and transparent audits of quality processes in Australian universities. Each university audit will include a focus on the internal mechanisms in place to assure high quality standards in the areas of teaching and learning (including online delivery), research and management and general academic standards and the operations of universities overseas.

## *make-up of AUQA*

The Board of Directors of the Agency includes five directors representing the higher education sector, three directors

representing the Commonwealth Government, three directors representing the State and Territory Governments and an Executive Officer nominated by the Board. Professor David Beanland, former Vice-Chancellor, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology has been appointed the inaugural Chair of the Agency Board.

## *time to start*

The State and Territory Ministers will shortly finalise their appointments to the Board. The Board will meet for the first time in March. The Executive Officer's position has also recently been advertised in the national press.

Enquiries to the Agency may be sent to:

Australian Universities Quality Agency  
P.O. Box 177  
Carlton South  
Victoria, 3053

**back to** ▲  
**cover**

**backing  
Australia's  
ability**

**Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

**workplace  
reform**

**quality  
audits**

**international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

**capital  
development  
pool**

**new  
education  
classifications**

**2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# international recognition of qualifications

The internationalisation of Australian higher education is being assisted by DETYA through arrangements for the international recognition of qualifications. Of note is the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This Convention, which has been signed by most of the Council of Europe members, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, provides a framework for the assessment and recognition of higher education qualifications.

DETYA arranged for Australia to sign the Lisbon Recognition Convention in September 2000, following consultations with States and Territories and the AVCC, and it is expected that this will be ratified at the earliest opportunity. The recognition arrangements set out in the Lisbon Recognition Convention will help facilitate the recognition of other parties' academic qualifications in Australia and the recognition of Australian academic qualifications in other parties, thereby providing support for the marketing and internationalisation of Australian education and professional services. The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) in DETYA will act as the national information centre for the purposes of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Australia is also a party to the UNESCO Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. In November 2000, Australia assumed the chair of the Regional Committee for the Implementation of the Convention. One of the Regional Committee's priorities for the coming year will be to facilitate the establishment of a network of information points on recognition matters in the region.

In recent years, NOOSR has assisted staff in many Australian universities with information and advice on overseas education systems to help determine the suitability of overseas-qualified applicants for admission to courses of undergraduate and postgraduate study. In addition, NOOSR has provided training on how to make the best use of its assessment guidelines and to discuss assessment issues of particular relevance to international student programmes. In the coming year, a range of initiatives are planned aimed at helping relevant university staff to evaluate overseas credentials more readily. NOOSR's assessment guidelines are set out in its Country Education Profiles which describe the educational systems of approximately 90 countries.

[www.detya.gov.au/noosr](http://www.detya.gov.au/noosr)

**back to  
cover** ▲

**backing  
Australia's  
ability**

**Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

**workplace  
reform**

**quality  
audits**

**international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

**capital  
development  
pool**

**new  
education  
classifications**

**2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# capital development pool

Details of more than \$40 million in capital grants funding for universities throughout Australia were announced by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, the Hon. Dr David Kemp in the pre-print release of the *Higher Education Report for the 2001 to 2003 Triennium*.

‘While the CDP still funds traditional new campus developments, the emphasis is now on the clever use of information and communications technology to improve service standards and expand access and opportunities,’ Dr Kemp said. ‘The programme is aimed particularly at improving university quality and access in regional Australia.’

‘Institutions have responded with a wide array of projects that demonstrate the dynamic and innovative nature of modern higher education. A particularly commendable element in this year’s round has been the increase in the number of collaborative initiatives which have been developed. Higher education institutions are forming strategic alliances with a range of partners—both within the sector itself and with the TAFE and schools sectors, industry and local communities—with the view to providing flexible and more cost-effective education services.’

The following initiatives are examples of this collaboration.

- The University of New England plans to establish a network of access centres in 10 regional New South Wales towns in conjunction with the New England Institute of TAFE.
- The University of Ballarat is developing a collaborative information technology degree with IBM as a way of enabling students to complete their courses while retaining skilled workers in the region.
- Curtin University of Technology, in association with Edith Cowan University, is planning to develop a Centre for Wine Excellence at Margaret River. This project has attracted strong support from the State government, industry, the local community and the TAFE and school sectors.
- The University of Adelaide’s Elder Conservatorium is merging with the Adelaide Institute of TAFE’s Flinders Street School of Music with support both from the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments.

**back to  
cover** ▲

[www.detya.gov.au/highered/he\\_report/2001\\_2003](http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/he_report/2001_2003)

**backing  
Australia’s  
ability**

**Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

**workplace  
reform**

**quality  
audits**

**international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

**capital  
development  
pool**

**new  
education  
classifications**

**2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# new education classifications

- changes to the course classification system
- new definitions for equity groups

2001 has seen the introduction of a new classification system for courses and disciplines/units in Australian universities.

The Field of Education classification is a component of the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) which was developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in consultation with government departments, training organisations and universities.

ASCED is a comprehensive and consistent national framework for the storage, exchange and dissemination of statistical and administrative data on formal educational activity in Australia.

## new fields

The new Field of Education classification has a three-level hierarchy consisting of 12 Broad Fields (2-digit), 71 Narrow Fields (4-digits) and 346 Detailed Fields (6-digits). This is a substantial increase on the number of codes available in the

Field of Study and Discipline Group classifications, both of which have been replaced by the new classification. The increased number of codes will enable universities to more accurately define the content of individual courses and units.

## from broad to detailed

From 2001 onwards, courses will be coded to the Broad, Narrow or Detailed level, depending upon course content, but units can only be coded to either the Narrow or Detailed level. The Broad level cannot be used for units as HECS banding has been applied at the Narrow level. Universities will be encouraged to code both courses and units to the lowest level of the classification wherever possible.

## changing groupings

The new classification will mean a break of series in DETYA's data collection due to the increased number of codes and

forward ►

back to cover ▲

backing  
Australia's  
ability

Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

workplace  
reform

quality  
audits

international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

capital  
development  
pool

new  
education  
classifications

2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching

# ***new education classifications (continued)***

## changes to the course classification system (continued)

changes to the way some courses and units will be grouped and classified. Concordance tables for mapping between the old and new classifications are being prepared by the ABS but these tables will not be able to provide a definite match for every course and unit.

Reasonable time series will be able to be generated using these mappings for many of the discipline groups and fields of education, provided a suitable level of aggregation is selected.

For additional information on the new classification, please contact either:

(email)       jan.aamodt@detya.gov.au  
                  david.o'brien@detya.gov.au

[www.detya.gov.au/highered/statinfo.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/statinfo.htm)

## ***new definitions for equity groups***

In 1990, *A Fair Go For All*, a paper published by the Commonwealth Government, identified a number of groups of people as being under-represented in higher education, including people from non-English speaking backgrounds, women in non-traditional fields of study, people from rural and remote locations, people from low socio-economic backgrounds and people with disabilities. As result, the Commonwealth put in place a number of measures to improve the participation in higher education of people from these equity groups.

### ***low SES***

Over the years, universities have pointed out difficulties with the current methods of identifying students from equity groups, especially in relation to low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds. While the postcode method is useful for identifying national and State trends in participation by people

**forward** 

**back** 

**back to  
cover** 

**backing  
Australia's  
ability**

**Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

**workplace  
reform**

**quality  
audits**

**international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

**capital  
development  
pool**

**new  
education  
classifications**

**2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# ***new education classifications*** *(continued)*

## new definitions for equity groups (continued)

of low SES, it is less useful at the institutional level and is not valid at an individual level. In 1998, Professor John Western was commissioned by DETYA to review measurement of low SES and to suggest an alternative methodology. He recommended that students should be asked directly about the educational attainment and occupations of their parents. A pilot study in 1999 showed that it was feasible to obtain information on the SES background of students at enrolment time through a student questionnaire. Currently underway is a large-scale trial of a student questionnaire involving 18 universities. A more useful and accurate method of identifying students from low SES backgrounds should result from this work.

### **remoteness**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is considering a new approach to defining remoteness. It is called the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) and enables each place in Australia to be given a remoteness score. DETYA is waiting for the results of the deliberations of the ABS before deciding how to change the current method of using postcodes to identify rural and isolated students.

### **non-English speaking background**

The ABS and DETYA define people from non-English-speaking backgrounds differently. DETYA's definition includes those students who were born overseas, arrived in Australia within the previous ten years and speak a language other than English at home. Consideration is being given to changing DETYA's definition to bring it in line with the ABS and other agencies. This may mean gathering data on the country of birth of students' parents, their main language spoken at home and whether they are Indigenous Australians who speak a language other than English at home.

### **accuracy**

Overall these revisions will provide significantly more accurate information about higher education students from equity groups at the institution level as well as a better base for policy analysis and programme administration.

**back** 

**back to cover** 

**backing  
Australia's  
ability**

**Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship**

**workplace  
reform**

**quality  
audits**

**international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications**

**capital  
development  
pool**

**new  
education  
classifications**

**2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching**

# 2000 Australian awards for university teaching



The Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, the Hon. Dr David Kemp, announced the winners of the prestigious 2000 Australian Awards for University Teaching, at Parliament House in Canberra in December 2000.

Dr Kemp said the award winners had shown the professionalism, drive and commitment that have put Australia at the forefront of university teaching internationally.

*For the first time, the top honour—the Prime Minister's Award for University Teacher of the Year—went to joint winners.*

Now in their fourth year, the Awards recognise and promote quality and excellence in university teaching and learning in Australia. The Awards became the responsibility of the Australian Universities Teaching Committee when it was established last year.

forward ►

back to cover ▲



From left: Professor Rod Weber, Ms Mia Stephens, Professor Claire Woods, the Hon. Dr David Kemp, Ms Ruth Trigg, Dr David Homer, Dr Paul Skrebels.

backing  
Australia's  
ability

Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

workplace  
reform

quality  
audits

international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

capital  
development  
pool

new  
education  
classifications

2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching



# 2000 Australian awards for university teaching (continued)

Winners of the 2000 Australian  
Awards for University Teaching

*Prime Minister's award for university teacher of  
the year*

*individual teacher of the year :*

Professor Ron Weber, The University of Queensland

and

*team of the year:*

Professional Writing and Communication Teaching  
Team—Professor Claire Woods, Mr David Homer, Ms Mia  
Stephens, Dr Paul Skrebels, Ms Ruth Trigg, University of  
South Australia

## *teaching awards*

Biological Sciences, Health and Related Studies

Ms Sally Reagan, The University of Western Australia

Economics, Business and Related Studies

Professor Ron Weber, The University of Queensland

Humanities and the Arts

Professional Writing and Communication Teaching  
Team—Professor Claire Woods, Mr David Homer, Ms Mia  
Stephens, Dr Paul Skrebels, Ms Ruth Trigg, University of  
South Australia

Law and Legal Studies

Associate Professor Michael Adams, University of  
Technology, Sydney

Physical Sciences and Related Studies

Ms Susan Savage, Queensland University of Technology

Social Sciences

Dr Matthew Allen, Curtin University of Technology

forward ►

back ◀

back to  
cover ▲

backing  
Australia's  
ability

Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

workplace  
reform

quality  
audits

international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

capital  
development  
pool

new  
education  
classifications

2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching



# 2000 Australian awards for university teaching (continued)

## *institutional awards*

Innovative and practical approach to the provision of support services that assist the learning of students

**Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology—Services to Deaf Students**

and

**The University of Queensland—AskIT Computing Help and Training for UQ Students**

Innovative and practical approach to the provision of educational services to the local and/or regional community

**Deakin University—Institute of Koorie Education**

Innovative and practical approach to provision of services that enhance the quality of teaching and learning

**University of Technology, Sydney—Effective use of Information and Communication Technologies**

The winners of the six Teaching Awards each receive a grant of \$40 000 while an Institutional Award provides a grant of \$50 000.

The winners of the Prime Minister's Award for University Teacher of the Year received an additional \$35 000.


This year's awards attracted 100 nominations—72 for the Teaching and 28 for the Institutional Awards.

**back** 

**back to cover** 

[www.autc.gov.au](http://www.autc.gov.au)

 **backing Australia's ability**

 **Neville Bonner memorial scholarship**

 **workplace reform**

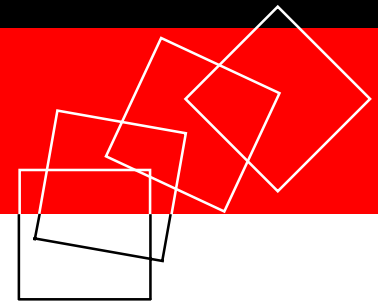
 **quality audits**

 **international recognition of qualifications**

 **capital development pool**

 **new education classifications**

 **2000 Australian awards for uni teaching**



- recent releases
- favourites 
- to grab a copy 
- web updates 
- copyright & contact 

## recent releases

### ***Characteristics and Performance Indicators, 2000: Preliminary Report (Internet only)***

Higher Education Division is updating the publication *The Characteristics and Performance of Higher Education Institutions*. The previous version was published in December 1998 and contained a broad range of indicators concerning students, staff, research, finance and student outcomes (retention and progress rates, employment outcomes, course experience questionnaire outcomes).

A preliminary version containing most of the indicators in the 1998 edition and a series of more detailed indicators on research performance has been published electronically. The final publication contains an article on diversity in the sector and how it has changed over the last five years.

[www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/statistics/characteristics/contents.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/statistics/characteristics/contents.htm)

forward 

### ***Higher Education Report for the 2001 to 2003 Triennium - pre-print (Internet only)***

This report outlines key developments and changes to the operating environment for universities for the coming triennium. It also summarises the achievements of the higher

back to cover 

backing  
Australia's  
ability

Neville  
Bonner  
memorial  
scholarship

workplace  
reform

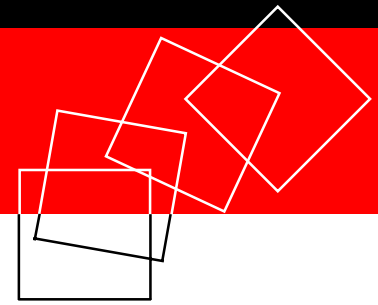
quality  
audits

international  
recognition  
of  
qualifications

capital  
development  
pool

new  
education  
classifications

2000  
Australian  
awards for  
uni teaching



## favourites

education sector in relation to the Government's objectives. The final report will be available in electronic and hard copy from March 2001.

The 2001 to 2003 triennium is expected to see a range of developments in the higher education sector including:

- implementation of the initiatives contained in the recently released innovation action plan, *Backing Australia's Ability*;
- a continuation of growth in university revenues and students numbers;
- more innovative approaches in the design and delivery of programmes to better meet the needs of both students and employers;
- increased attention to the effectiveness of research and research training; and
- a much sharper focus on quality.

[www.detya.gov.au/highered/he\\_report/2001\\_2003/](http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/he_report/2001_2003/)

- **Guidelines for the Application of Best Practice in Australian University Libraries** (Anne Wilson et al)  
[www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00\\_11/execsum.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00_11/execsum.htm)
- **Best Practice Handbook for Australian University Libraries** (Anne Wilson et al)  
[www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00\\_10/execsum.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00_10/execsum.htm)
- **Views and Influences: Tertiary education, secondary students and their advisers** (Adrian Harvey-Beavis et al)  
[www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00\\_8/execsum.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00_8/execsum.htm)
- **Multi-Partner Campuses: The future of Australian education?** (Adam Shoemaker et al)  
[www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00\\_13/execsum.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00_13/execsum.htm)
- **Australia**—3rd edition (Country Education Profiles—NOOSR)

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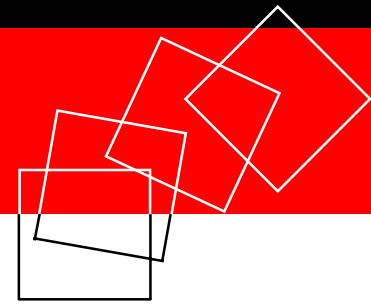
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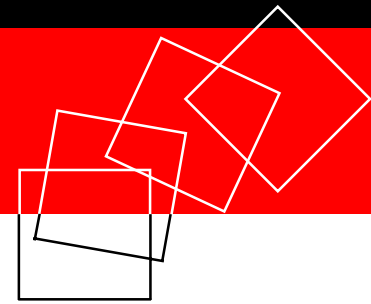
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