



Twenty five years of CAPA
– the fight is far from over

A commemorative history by
the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations

Published by the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA)
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See also the artist’s note on the story behind her artwork on page 39.



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Preface

In the last 25 years CAPA has been involved in many battles over postgraduate student issues. Some of these are ongoing, such as transport concessions for all postgraduate students nationally, tax exemptions for part-time scholarships and ever increasing postgraduate coursework fees. However, CAPA has been involved in many campaigns that have won significant gains for postgraduate students in its 25 years. These include the establishment of supervision guidelines at most universities, leave entitlements for scholarship holders, and wages and working conditions for postgraduate students engaged as tutors, demonstrators and research assistants. Research higher degrees remain as the only degrees that are generally free to domestic students (we are still fighting the issue of international student fees). The attempt to impose commercial interest rates on PELS loans in 2003 was thwarted through the lobbying work of CAPA.

The issue of VSU has continued to haunt student organisations, but all attempts by Coalition Federal Governments to introduce this legislation nationally have failed through campaigns and lobbying by CAPA and our allies in the higher education sector. Despite years of attempts to destroy student organisations through VSU, we have survived!

We should be proud to celebrate 25 years of CAPA, and of the victories we have achieved throughout this period. However, in celebrating we should not lose sight of the fact that we still have much ground to win back, and that the fight is far from over!

Stephen Horton

CAPA President, 2004

1979 – 1981

Beginnings

In August 1978 the Federal Government announced that taxation would be levied on the Commonwealth Postgraduate Award – the primary national postgraduate research scholarship, supporting about 40 per cent of fulltime research students. Postgraduate associations, which had been forming on university campuses throughout the 70s, banded together in response. The taxation of the award was seen as a final straw, the real value of the award having deteriorated steadily from about 85 per cent of a Research Assistant's salary (the original comparator when the scheme was introduced in 1959) to only 40 per cent.

Postgraduate students protested at Parliament House on 12 September 1978, with seven associations meeting with the Minister for Education, Senator Carrick, who encouraged a joint submission for the 1979 budget.

In Sydney, on 21 March and 1 April 1979, ten postgraduate associations held an Inaugural General Meeting, founding the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations as the group to be responsible for the submission, *Remuneration under the Commonwealth Postgraduate Award Scheme: A Submission by CAPA to the Federal Government* (from which the information above is drawn). These were the postgraduate associations and committees of:

- Australian National University
- Flinders University
- Griffith University
- James Cook University
- Macquarie University
- Monash University
- University of New South Wales
- University of Queensland
- University of Sydney
- University of Western Australia

CAPA's founding Chairman, Andrew Pik, observed how the installation of a 'vindictive' government had fused the will of the students:

In the relatively well-off period for P.Gs (1959-1973), little activity took place. MPGA [Monash Postgraduate Association], for instance, was not formed until the late 1960s and SUPRA [Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association] was not formed until 1972. An attempt at forming a national organisation (FAPA) was not made until about 1975-76. Clearly, without a vindictive government, P.Gs were not motivated to initiate organisation and/or action. Since August 1978 this situation has radically changed. A survey in October 1978 revealed that by then there existed some 16 P.G. organisations and seven of these met with Senator Carrick in September to protest the taxation of CPAs [Commonwealth Postgraduate Awards]. Out of that meeting CAPA emerged in April 1979.

Andrew Pik, Founding CAPA Chairperson, Record of the first Postgraduates' National Conference and CAPA Annual General Meeting, January 1980.

The image of the bespectacled recluse rising to arms was reinforced in an article by Geoff Maslen reporting on the first national postgraduate conference, organised by CAPA and the Monash Association of Graduate Students (MAGS) in early 1980:

Normally the most reticent of boffins – they've nurtured their image of white-coated scholarly mice for years – postgraduates have suddenly taken to the hustings.

In advertisements and Press releases they proclaim themselves caught in a poverty spiral that is threatening to destroy basic research in Australia.

Geoff Maslen, "Uni research students fight back," *The Age*, January 22, 1980.

The advertisement Maslen referred to (see page 7) was an attempt to rouse public outrage at the plight of postgraduates. Despite a strong campaign, taxation was not removed from full-time postgraduate research scholarships until 1990, and taxation on part-time scholarships remains.

From early 1980, CAPA was supported by funding provided by the Australian

Union of Students (AUS), a predecessor of today's National Union of Students (NUS). The AUS paid half the wage of CAPA's Researcher/Organiser and provided office and secretarial assistance, totalling about \$5000 in support. CAPA's affiliate organisations paid \$50 per year (if they could), and the organisation ran on a proverbial shoe-string.

In November 1980, when it was a year and a half old, CAPA's first Postgraduate Researcher/Organiser, Helen Ferguson, reported on the key political concerns for postgraduates, and the opportunity for the new national postgraduate body to use its special position as a bridge between undergraduates and academic staff to bring about change. While coursework postgraduates were then a rare breed, and the sector has since changed almost beyond recognition, Helen's lament rings true of many of CAPA's concerns today:

It is the very multiplicity of the postgraduate experience which provides opportunities for change within the university system. There had been a growing realisation and acceptance by postgraduates of their status as students, especially over the last few years when they have been particularly disadvantaged by funding cut backs. Stipends have

ADVERTISEMENT

WARNING RESEARCHERS CAUGHT IN POVERTY SPIRAL

Commonwealth Postgraduate Research Awards are now being offered to successful graduates for research projects at Australian Universities. But can we expect our top Australian graduates to survive on mere breadline handouts? Look at the facts and decide for yourself.

1. Postgraduate research is A FULL-TIME, 50+ hours per week activity, which contributes in total about HALF OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH OUTPUT. Postgraduates are junior researchers, and no longer students in the narrow sense.
2. Their pay is ONLY \$80 PER WEEK despite the professional skills they possess. University research assistants are paid about three times that amount to perform similar work (\$230-\$254 per week).
3. A four-year PhD research programme will cost postgraduates \$25,000-\$36,000 IN LOST EARNINGS. According to the Careers and Appointments Service (University of Sydney), this amount will never be recovered. In fact, in total income earned they may never catch up with their contemporaries who are deciding to go straight into outside employment.
4. Their remuneration is taxable but with NO cost-of-living adjustment, NO annual leave loading and NO paid sick leave. They are NOT entitled to undergraduate term vacations.
5. ANY MONEY EARNED FROM PART-TIME TUTORING WILL BE HEAVILY TAXED. POSTGRADUATES ON OTHER AWARDS ARE NOT TAXED. (TREASURER HOWARD EXPLAINS THIS AS JUST ANOTHER TAX ANOMALY.)
6. In the past, university estimates of potential earnings from tutoring have often been OVER-OPTIMISTIC.
7. Postgraduates on the award from 1977-1980 will have suffered A LOSS OF 36% in the real value of their remuneration over this period.
8. This Award Scheme has been subject to AD HOC CHANGES that make it impossible to determine the financial viability of a 4-year PhD research programme. The sudden imposition of taxation in 1978 was a prime example.
9. NO INDICATION HAS BEEN GIVEN OF ANY LIKELY IMPROVEMENTS FOR 1980. The Government's attitude can only be described as callous and indifferent.

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH IS THREATENED

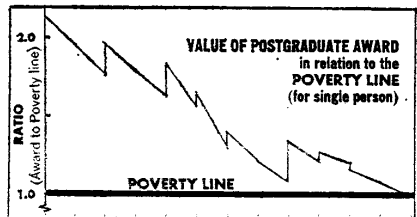
The effect of the present Government's SHORT-SIGHTED POLICY is to:

- (A) Lower the morale of Australia's postgraduate researchers and hence reduce the quality of their work.
- (B) Deter many outstanding graduates from undertaking the research that Australia needs for its FUTURE TECHNOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.
- (C) Discourage graduates in the workforce from contributing their special work experience as postgraduates in university research.

ACTION NEEDED NOW

- PROTESTS from concerned members of the public should be sent to the Prime Minister, Parliament House, Canberra, 2600.
- QUERIES FROM INTENDING POSTGRADUATES and offers of support for this campaign should be sent to: Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, R.S.A. Inc, A.N.U.L. P.O. Box 4, Canberra, 2600 or, the Postgraduate Association at any University.

AUTHORISED BY: A.L.P.I.C. (P.O. Box 4 CANBERRA 2600)



CAPA newspaper advertisement, from 1979 or 1980, highlighting the effect of taxation on research scholarships. See also detail on page 8.

continued to decline in value, research funding is being directed towards academic staff and universities are taking advantage of the postgraduate's financial plight by employing them as 'cheap' part-time teaching staff, thus saving money and maintaining teaching loads.

...The combination of postgraduates' growing consciousness as students plus their role as teachers provides a unique opportunity for students to push for change...

The 'difference' between postgraduates and undergraduates provides the bridge between the bulk of the student population and the university's academic staff. Postgraduates and undergraduates are not the same but you need not be on opposite sides of the fence...

Helen Ferguson, Research Officer's Report, mid-1980

With the fight for tax-free scholarships apparently lost, it was time for CAPA to embrace a broader vision, and become more than a single issue lobby-group.

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AUTHORISED BY: A. J. PIK CJ - P.O. Box 4 CANBERRA 2600

Detail from the 1979/80 CAPA newspaper advertisement (page 7) opposing taxes on scholarships.

1981 – 1982

Broadening CAPA's vision and fighting the Razor Gang

In late 1980, Helen Ferguson was documenting a shift in CAPA's sights away from the taxation of CPAs to encompass a broader vision of postgraduate representation:

What's changed in the last year? The foundation members of most associations have withdrawn from active participation or have finished their degrees, and the new participants do not particularly want to spend time on what they see as a 'no win' issue – CPA's. Instead they are turning their attention to local issues such as part-time teaching, international postgraduate awards, transport concessions and the organisational weaknesses of their own associations...

Helen Ferguson, Research Officer's Report, late-1980

While wins and losses over the years have changed the details of these grievances, the casualisation of teaching positions, international students' issues and transport concessions remain high on the list of CAPA's concerns.

But if CAPA thought these were big issues for postgraduate students, the machinations of the Fraser government's Razor Gang really set a cat among the pigeons (or indeed the 'white-coated scholarly mice'). The Review of Commonwealth Functions

"The Minister must not delay announcing whether the government will now abandon its attempt to re-impose some tertiary fees. I remind the Minister that this attempt broke an election promise."

John Dawkins, later the architect of HECS fees, then Shadow Minister for Education, in a press Statement, 12 November 1981.

sub-committee of the Fraser Cabinet, known as the ‘Razor Gang,’ started looking for ways to reign in the ballooning federal budget, and began to question the ethos of free tertiary education and universal membership of student organisations – this would be the start of a battle that continues today.

The re-introduction of university fees was unpopular with voters, and the coalition government began a method of undermining free education which has proved popular with both Labor and Liberal governments ever since – using postgraduate students as the thin end of the fees-for-education wedge. In 1982 the government decided to try for the imposition of fees on second and higher degrees.

In an added attack, a bill was put proposing a loans scheme to subsidise income for postgraduate students – for full-time postgraduates deemed by a bank to be a “good risk” and carrying an interest rate of 9.5 per cent!

Students won both of these fights, and with the defeat of the Fraser government on 11 March 1983, postgraduates must have believed, however briefly, that the repeated attacks on free education would cease.

1983 – 1987

A new government, but the fees fight continues

The newly elected Hawke government may at first have seemed like a dream come true to CAPA representatives, but by 1985 the honeymoon was well and truly over as the government attempted to introduce fees.

Education Minister Senator Ryan pitted herself against Finance Minister Senator Walsh in a vitriolic and public fees dispute in early 1985. Ryan argued that free tertiary education was a key Labor policy platform – Walsh argued that free education subsidised the rich (Amanda Buckley, “Ministers split on tertiary fees,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 February 1985). Ryan won the first round, with Senator Walsh following his Liberal predecessor down the “thin end of the wedge” path with another attempt to introduce fees for second and higher degrees.

Failing to negotiate fees for second and higher degrees through cabinet, in July of 1986 another soft target for fees was found – international students. This time Ryan acquiesced:

The Government has... decided that institutions may offer courses to ...overseas students willing to pay the full cost of a place...

Such arrangements will...encourage an entrepreneurial spirit amongst institutions...

Susan Ryan, Minister for Education, press release, 5 July 1985.

Fees will force many postgraduates to abandon their studies. If Australia is not going to run the risk of slipping into a third world economy it needs to put money into research.

“For dubious short term economic gain, the Hawke government is prepared to sacrifice Australia's long terms economic development,” [CAPA President] Ms Cuthbert said.

CAPA Press release, May 20, 1985.

The plight of international students was made a priority by CAPA Council as early as 1980. In early submissions and articles CAPA argued that entry to Australian universities should be a matter of intellectual merit and not ability to pay – this sentiment embracing both Australian and overseas students.

The National Conference of Postgraduate Students believes that the right for a person to study anywhere in the world is fundamental and should not be restricted. Accordingly, this Conference strongly opposes the introduction of any form of fees for overseas students...

Resolution of First National Postgraduate Conference and CAPA AGM, January 1980.

But despite CAPA's long standing commitment, and widespread opposition amongst many in parliament, fees for international students became a reality in 1986. Worse, Senator Ryan announced that the 'Overseas Student Visa Charge' for government-subsidised places (the majority of places for international students) would be raised from \$3500 for postgraduate students to 45 per cent of the real cost of the course, blighting Australia's record on international education aid.

Mr. Hawke may have backed down for the moment from his support for fees for second and higher degrees, BUT THE FEES FIGHT IS FAR FROM OVER!! He remains committed to this appalling idea and hopes to be able to persuade his ALP colleagues to support it at the next ALP National Conference to be held in 1986.

CAPA Newsletter 27 May 1985

By late 1985 it looked like the fight was over, with international students the only losers. A prominent MP writing to CAPA suggested that:

...On the tertiary fees issue, the situation seems to have cooled considerably. I feel confident that little further energy needs to be expended on this.

Correspondence to CAPA from a federal MP, October 1985.

This optimism was misplaced. Two years later, in 1987, the Hawke government introduced the \$250 Higher

“Two Federal Labor MPs yesterday renewed their opposition to proposals to reintroduce tertiary fees and called on university students to strengthen their campaign against fees.

...Mr Peter Staples, the member for Diamond Valley, said that any university fees proposal “has to be kicked to death.”

...Referring to the fees proposal for overseas students, Mr Hand [member for Melbourne] warned: “You are in danger of being overrun. The issue could become youth versus the aged and the poor. It would not be proper to penalise students as they go through the education system.”

...Mr Staples said: “Despite the loving care shown at pop concerts on the weekend, you need to realise that the majority of people in the community couldn't care less about overseas students.””

‘MPs urge students to fight fees proposal,’ The Age, 18 July 1985.



Cartoon on the Hawke Government and tertiary fees used in student campaigns, circa 1985. Artist unknown.

Education Administration Charge for all students. An anti-fees flier of the time made the prescient comment that:

...it is abundantly clear that the 'low' charge of \$250 is being introduced to broaden public acceptance of the demise of free education and allow far higher fees to be levied in later years. In the current climate of 'slash or be damned' there can be no doubt that significantly higher fees are in the offing.

"Fees by degrees," flier, 1986.

The hated HEAC was defeated in 1988 – only to be replaced by HECS in 1989 as Dawkins set about unravelling then re-weaving the very fabric of Australian higher education.



Cartoon used in anti-fees campaigns, circa 1985 – 1988.
Artist: Reeves

1988

Dawkins and HECS

CAPA's then Researcher, Fran Ferrier, tried to describe the turmoil of the HECS fight in her report to CAPA Council in 1988:

How can I encapsulate in two pages what has been the busiest, most burdensome and bloodiest year for higher education, bar none?

Much of what has happened this year has occurred not because changes were either desirable or necessary (although some were overdue), but because a new Minister sought to imprint his personal style onto his area of responsibility so that he would be remembered by future generations as the architect of the bold new creation... But for organisations of very limited resources, like CAPA, Dawkins' dastardly deeds have stretched finances and personnel to the limit.

Fran Ferrier, Research Officer's Report, CPA ACM, 1988.

The new higher education landscape was beginning to be eroded into the shape we see today. Fees for international students; HECS: it remained only to deregulate postgraduate coursework to ensure that almost every student would be paying for their education. Today, in part due to CAPA's hard work, only research education remains free to (most, domestic) students.

Wins and losses

The recommendations of the Wran Committee in 1988, while paving the way for HECS, also represented an important victory for CAPA. Finally, the tax on full time scholarships – the fight for which CAPA was founded – had been won. In a briefing paper on the Wran Committee's report, CAPA's Researcher Fran Ferrier celebrated the victory, but immediately warned of the new threat to postgraduate coursework:

Although the Wran committee report spells the end of free tertiary education, and for that reason alone should be soundly condemned, nevertheless the find-

ing that postgraduate researchers should, in effect, be exempt from tax, should be cause for celebration by CAPA and postgraduate associations around Australia.

...Since its inception CAPA has devoted much energy and resources into countering [the notion that postgraduates are ‘eternal students’], and spreading the view that postgraduates are performing valuable and vital research work...

“THE rapid rise in the number and cost of full-fee post-graduate courses has pushed further university study well beyond the reach of the average Australian student, a new [CAPA] survey has found...

*...The [government review] committee could not do better than start by reading the CAPA report. Ironically titled *Goodbye Rhyme and Reason*, the report demonstrates overwhelmingly that access and equity have been seriously compromised by the advent of postgraduate fees.*

Geoff Maslen, Campus Review, "Postgrad fees reap \$150m wind-fall," November 10-16, 1994

The report by the Wran committee proves that, finally, CAPA has been successful...

On the other hand, postgraduate courseworkers continue to be undervalued...

CAPA must now face the difficult task of improving conditions for, and status of, postgraduate courseworkers.

Fran Ferrier, "The Wran Committee," 1988.

The Dawkins period was also notable for ‘unifying’ Australia’s tertiary education sectors, creating new challenges for CAPA in its representation of postgraduates – especially coursework postgraduates. Teresa Tjia, President in both 1991 and 1992 recalls some of the radical changes:

Following the “universification” and “massification” of the higher education sector, all the new and

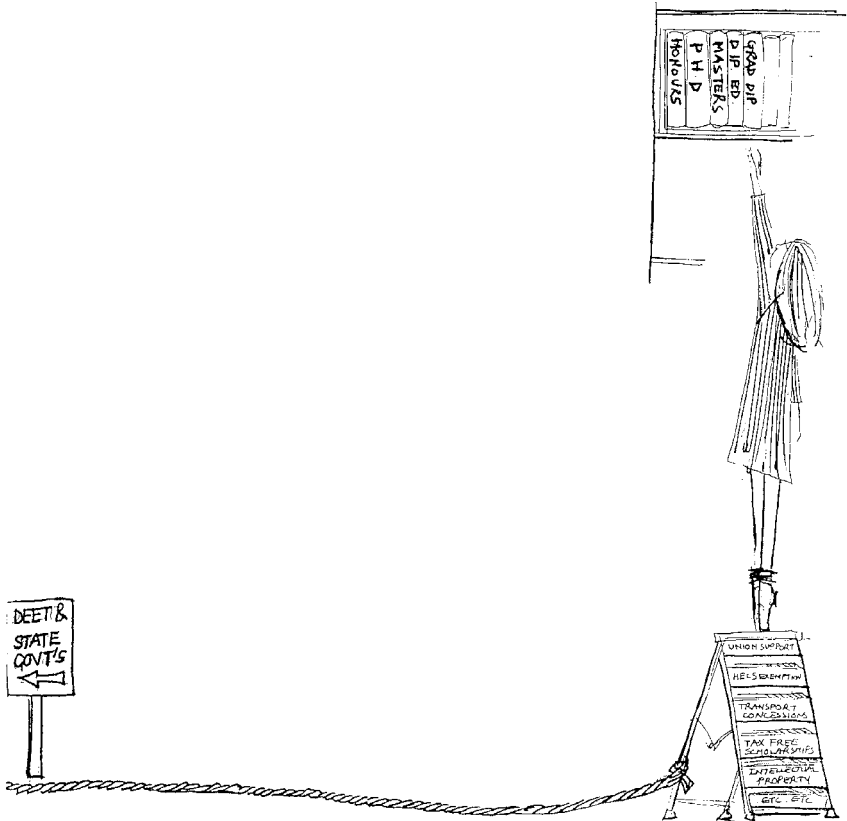
super universities including former and merged institutes of technologies and CAEs (colleges of advanced education) started to offer postgraduate education for the masses. In management parlance this was a time of change for the sector and hence CAPA, and there were growing pains for both.

Teresa Tjia, 1991 & 1992 President, private correspondence.

In the early 1990's CAPA produced a series of research reports into the plight of coursework students, the "Goodbye Rhyme and Reason" series. These reports were well received (see side bar, page 16), and went some way towards slowing the attack on coursework. Despite these attempts, up-front HECS fees were applied to an increasing number of coursework degrees, and the number of full-fee courses began to grow. When a new government took power in 1996, the battle against postgraduate coursework fees was comprehensively lost.



Anti-fees cartoon,
circa 1988. Artist:
Reeves



Cartoon from the newsletter *CAPA News*, April 1994. Artist unknown.

1992 and NIPAAC's Creation...

CAPA has maintained a special interest in improving access to postgraduate education for groups which experience educational disadvantage. Specifically CAPA has been particularly active in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postgraduate student issues, largely through its support for the development of the National Indigenous Postgraduate Association Aboriginal Corporation (NIPAAC).

In 1992 delegates at the CAPA ACM supported the funding of a research project on Indigenous postgraduate issues. Funding of the project was part of CAPA's contribution to the 1993 International Year of the World's Indigenous People (IYWIP).

Additional funding for the project was sought by an Aboriginal postgraduate member, Judy Ah Wong (later Judy Mundine, and the artist of the painting used on this publication's front cover) and, towards the end of 1993, CAPA received a \$100,000 grant from the Department of Education, Employment and Training. At around the same time, at the CAPA ACM, Council voted unanimously for the creation of an Indigenous People's Officer (IPO) position on the CAPA Executive. The Indigenous project members were also granted the right to vote with their own voting placards at Council meetings, as all other affiliated Postgraduate Associations have. When the project was over they retained this right and it remains current practice for NIPAAC members to have their own vote.

The research project was launched in 1994. It culminated some four years later as one of the first comprehensive qualitative reports on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postgraduate student experiences, titled *Indigenous postgraduate education: A project into the barriers which Indigenous students must overcome in undertaking postgraduate studies*.

During the course of the project, CAPA elected its first Aboriginal President, Bronwyn Fredericks, who was also the first known Aboriginal President of a National Education Peak Body/Organisation that was not Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander specific. Indigenous members perceived a strong cultural shift in CAPA during her term and Bronwyn later reflected:

I remember thinking of those constituents who were opposed to my election as Vice-President. Some of their fears would be burning, but I knew that our ancestors had made this all happen for a reason and there were now lessons for all to be learned.

CAPA responded to the Indigenous Postgraduate Education report upon its conclusion by making 21 recommendations in support of the findings to higher education peak bodies such as the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs and the Aboriginal Higher Education Network.

NIPAAAC members Judy Mundine, Bronwyn Fredericks and Pamela Croft recall the launch of the research report on 26 May in Canberra on the grass near the Aboriginal Tent Embassy:



Cartoon used in anti-fees leaflet, 1980. Artist: Reeves

The launch event marked five years almost to the day that the Indigenous Project began at Humpty Doo. The 26th May 1998 was additionally National Sorry Day and the Project Team wanted to offer something positive, this was Pamela's idea. As the IPO and as a member of the Stolen Generations she very clearly articulated that this day was chosen specifically to provide Australians with an opportunity to say 'Sorry' with a practical action.... Help – by working with us to implement the Recommendations from the report. This could provide a healing journey towards Reconciliation ...

Many Postgraduate Associations with their university campuses launched the report on Sorry Day and at other times. The CAPA office and the IPO received many congratulations from around the country praising the report.

The National Indigenous Postgraduate Association (NIPA) – later to become NIPAAC – was formed to respond to, and extend on, the findings of the Indigenous Postgraduate Education report in October 1998. It was incorporated, becoming NIPAAC, in November 1999. The formation of an Indigenous organisation within CAPA acknowledged the importance for Indigenous students to have their specific needs addressed and supported by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander post-graduate students.

Judy Mundine, Pamela Croft and Bronwyn Fredericks:

In conclusion, It's fair to say that CAPA over the last seven years has maintained its initial commitment to the Indigenous project, and that the Project team members and IPOs have remained strong in ensuring this commitment did not slip. The achievements for CAPA have been the publication of important research documents on Indigenous Education; the successful showcasing of an Aboriginal Presidential style of a main stream peak body; the establishment of a national incorporated Aboriginal education association; and enormous future publishing possibilities of Indigenous academic papers on the CAPA and ION [Indigenous On-line Network] Websites.

The contact with Indigenous students that had been forged by CAPA's former IPO Pamela Croft formed a basis for NIPAAC's initial membership. Membership on NIPAAC's email list has since grown to over 100 Indigenous postgraduate students and NIPAAC has established a basis as an organisation with strong networks in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postgraduate community. Those networks have been integral to NIPAAC's emergence as a pastoral, advocacy and research organisation that has developed a respected national profile.

In 2002 the CAPA Council and Executive provided additional seed funding for NIPAAC to employ a part-time Research Officer dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postgraduate student issues. All policy-based functions of NIPAAC

continue to be directed by its Indigenous membership and coordinated by an elected governing committee, the NIPAAAC Executive.

Source: Judy Mundine, Bronwyn Fredericks and Pamela Croft, 2000, *The CAPA Indigenous Project: "Indigenous Postgraduate Education – A Project into the Barriers which Indigenous students must overcome in Postgraduate Studies", A Short History, 1993-2000*, Published for the Second Indigenous Researchers' Forum, University of South Australia, Adelaide.



Cartoon commenting on commercialisation in Australia's universities. Artist: Reeves

1996:

A change of government

In 1996 a new Minister for Education, Amanda Vanstone, put the recently incumbent Liberal government's stamp on higher education by dramatically reducing university funding, introducing differential HECS at higher rates, and reducing the income level at which HECS debts must be repaid.

For postgraduates, the Vanstone changes were disastrous. While the Hawke and Keating Labor governments had been increasing the up-front liabilities of postgraduate coursework students, primarily through expanding 'up-front HECS' places, Vanstone set about almost totally deregulating postgraduate coursework. While some teaching and nursing places were protected, most coursework students found themselves faced with up-front fees. CAPA's 1996 President, Danielle Brown, was in Canberra as the Vanstone 'vision' was unveiled:

The Federal Budget that year was in mid-August. However, Vanstone decided to announce the higher education budget a week earlier. I received a personal phone call from her in the office late one afternoon, and she invited me to attend what she called an "announcement" on higher education in Canberra the next morning. I flew up that night, and presented myself at her office at 9 the next day. Amanda wasn't quite ready for the announcement, and I had the interesting experience of being greeted by a Federal Minister for Education in her stocking feet while she was putting on her "warpaint." That was fun!

I believe that as the '96 budget announced substantial additional funding for research, the Minister believed that CAPA would give a metaphoric thumbs up in our media responses. Of course, this was also the budget when they announced that the 6 per cent cut in operating grants funding would be targeted at postgraduate coursework. They giveth, and they taketh away. I did a scathing press release that day, wandering the halls of the press gallery...

A few days later, I received another personal phone call from the Minister... Amanda got totally stuck into me, berating me for a good ten minutes about how ungrateful and disrespectful I was for putting out such an unsupportive press release ... and that we wouldn't be getting any more favours from her. I started having a go back, and things got really heated there for a while.

Having said all this, I actually quite liked Amanda Vanstone. I thought she'd been given a really tough job by Howard, and while her personal manner was often abrasive, at least you could get access to her, she was willing to talk to you, and you knew where you stood with her.

Danielle Brown, 1996 President, private correspondence.

In response to the deregulation of postgraduate coursework, universities began creating new courses and degrees as fast as possible. The changes allowed universities to use coursework postgraduates as they had been using international students – as cash cows.

1999:

Research ‘Training’

1999 saw CAPA fighting a new battle, on two fronts: with a so-called ‘Voluntary Student Unionism’ bill introduced to the House in March, and Education Minister Kemp’s controversial ‘Green Paper’ on research education issued in June. It was also a year in which CAPA, and its comrades the National Tertiary Education Union and the National Union of Students, saw some significant victories.

On 22 December 1999, Minister Kemp released the ‘Research White Paper’ – the policy outcome of Green Paper debates. Gone from the White Paper was the Green Paper’s proposal for ‘voucher-style’ funding for research postgraduates. CAPA had consistently argued that voucher funding, which is tied to the student rather than the institution (supposedly allowing the student to ‘shop around’) would lead to teaching-only universities and certain death for many departments. CAPA saw the move to implement voucher funding for postgraduate research as a Trojan Horse intended to simplify extension of voucher funding to the broader student community.

Despite the win on vouchers, other outcomes of the White Paper policy package emplaced during 2000 reduced the funding for PhDs from

Did anybody at last year's ACM predict that the campaign around VSU would start so quickly? Did anybody believe that the Research Green Paper would be against all the policy directions CAPA stands most fundamentally for? Did anybody expect that places for post-graduate coursework and undergraduate vouchers would follow research higher degree vouchers so quickly?

Indeed, 1999 will be remembered as a year of great surprises.

Tom Clark, 1999 CAPA President, ACM Report.

five to four years, and for Masters from three to two years (EFT). These are changes CAPA is still fighting – a fight which becomes more difficult as the changes become status quo.

And VSU? Popular legend has it that the VSU bill was left on the table in exchange for the Democrats' support on the GST. However, 1999 President Tom Clark remembers how important the support of independent Senators was to the campaign:

...the real drama was focused on how [Senators] Harradine and Colston would vote. If they supported the Government, VSU would get up no matter what the Dems did. As it happened, it seems the Howard/Abetz insistence on WA-style VSU – against John Tierney's private advice to the PM – was what lost it for them. Perhaps combined with the effects of our campaign, but who can be sure...

Tom Clark, 1999 CAPA president, private correspondence.

“It should also be admitted that this Committee's scrutiny of the (VSU) bill has been hasty and superficial. No bill previously dealt with by this Committee has aroused so much controversy, or such opposition. In the few short weeks leading to the public hearing the Committee received over 400 submissions and more than 1800 form letters. The larger universities sent multiple submissions, representing the range of functions within these institutions which stand to be effected by this legislation. Yet, despite calls from Opposition senators for hearings to take place on a number of days and in a number of regions, the Committee devoted only one day for a public hearing. The proceedings of that single public hearing generated more heat than light.”

Minority Report of the Higher Education Legislation Amendment Bill (VSU) 1999

2001 – 2004

A sector in disarray – reviews, revisions and inquiries

The university system that Australia needs is a cherished national investment, not a cost or a revenue opportunity. It is a key element in forging a thriving future for all Australians, whether or not they participate directly. It offers opportunities for all who are able to make a contribution, and will not deny itself access to talented individuals on the basis of wealth, language, geography or social origins.

...The government that Australia needs has the courage to expose the electoral virago of tax cuts as code for the massive reduction of investment in public institutions and public benefit. It recognises that the decline in community investment results in the growth of private wealth for the few amid public squalor. It insists that high income earners and industry – as major beneficiaries of a thriving education system – must make their fair contributions.

John Byron, 2001 CAPA President, "QED Manifesto," 2001.

These words were written by CAPA President John Byron at the beginning of 2001, a year which saw an extensive Senate Inquiry into the state of Australian higher education, involving 364 submissions and 14 days of hearings. The findings of the Inquiry agreed largely with Byron's sentiments – the Inquiry report's title said it all: *Universities in Crisis*. Years of funding cuts by successive governments had resulted in overcrowded classrooms, a lack of basic infrastructure, poor remuneration for staff and limited teacher/student contact hours.

Yet the report had little impact. The following year, the new Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson, began the show again. But the federal government had learnt much from the partial failure of 1999's Research Green Paper. 2002's *crossroads* review of higher education was, perhaps more than ever before, a secretive process

veiled by a sideshow of public and sector ‘conversation.’ Streams of glossy discussion papers preceded the announcement of a policy package which appeared to draw little from sector input or the previous inquiry. There was to be no talk of a crisis. Rather, students should begin shouldering even more of the burden through increases in fees and the imposition of commercial rates of interest on undergraduate and postgraduate fee loans. Student organisations should go, and staff should have their relationship with their union severely curtailed.

While anti-union elements of the resulting legislation were effectively scrapped, the HECS increases were pushed through: universities are raising HECS fees up to 25 per cent even as this publication goes to print. CAPA had a significant win in defeating interest on postgraduate fees loans (PELS, or Fee-HELP), but the victory has been hollow to many in the face of the broader impact of the new regime, called, apparently without irony, *Backing Australia’s Future*.

At the time of printing CAPA awaits the outcome of yet another inquiry, this time into David Kemp’s *Knowledge and Innovation* policy package, incorporating the Research Training Scheme. With an election on the horizon and the opposition Labor party promising to repeal large planks of *Backing Australia’s Future* if elected to office, the future of Australian higher education remains amorphous. CAPA will continue its fight.

CAPA Today

Today CAPA represents over 226,000 postgraduate students through its 37 member associations, including the National Indigenous Postgraduate Aboriginal Association Corporation (NIPAAAC), at universities across Australia. Over 44,000 Australian postgraduates are undertaking a research degree while 182,000 are pursuing coursework or combined coursework and research programmes.

CAPA's President today is a full-time representative, who in most years is based at the CAPA office in Trades Hall, Melbourne. The nine member Executive, elected from the Council of CAPA's constituent organisations, meets regularly to progress the aims of the Council.

From a fledgling organisation in 1980, employing only a half-time Researcher/Organiser, CAPA now needs a fulltime General Manager, full-time Research Officer, part-time Administrative and Research Officer, as well as an Indigenous Research Officer employed for NIPAAAC, to cope with its representation activities.

As well as briefing parliamentarians on issues of concern to postgraduates at an informal level, CAPA makes submissions to government inquiries, presents at conferences and fora, liaises with national media, and produces research on a wide range of issues each year. In 2004, for example, CAPA will produce a submission to an inquiry into student income support, fight what is likely to be an aggressive campaign on research funding and research education, keep both sides of politics on their toes throughout the coming Federal election, and produce research papers on international students' rights, childcare, grievance procedures and university equity plans. CAPA will also work with the National Tertiary Education Union on a project exploring entry to the academic profession for recent research graduates.

CAPA enjoys association with, and support from, other sector groups such as the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies, the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee, the Group of Eight, the academies, and of course its comrades the

National Tertiary Education Union and the National Union of Students.

CAPA relies on the dedication and passion of the postgraduate students who comprise its Council, its volunteer Executive, and ever-travelling President. A list of those who have served as CAPA office-bearers and staff are included in the following pages – without the hard work of these individuals CAPA would not have grown to be the strong and representative organisation it is today.

In 2004, the postgraduate representative groups affiliated to CAPA are:

Canberra University

Central Queensland University Postgraduate Student Organisation

Charles Darwin University Postgraduate Student Association

Charles Sturt University Postgraduate Association

Curtin University Postgraduate Student Association

Deakin University Student Association

Edith Cowan University Postgraduate Student Association

Flinders Postgraduate Students' Association

Griffith University Postgraduate Students' Association

James Cook University Postgraduate Student Association

LaTrobe University Postgraduate Association

Macquarie University Postgraduate Representative Association

Monash Postgraduate Association

Murdoch University Postgraduate Student Association

National Indigenous Postgraduate Association Aboriginal Corporation

Newcastle University Postgraduate Student Association

Postgraduate and Research Students' Association (Australian National University)

Postgraduate Association University of Western Sydney

Queensland University of Technology Postgraduate Students Association

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Postgraduate Association

Southern Cross University Postgraduate Students
Swinburne University Postgraduate Association
Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association
Tasmania University Postgraduate Association
University of Adelaide Postgraduate Students' Association
University of Ballarat Student Association
University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association
University of New England Postgraduate Association
University of New South Whales Postgraduate Board
University of Queensland Union
University of South Australia Student Association
University of the Sunshine Coast Postgraduate Representative Association
University of Tasmania Launceston Postgraduate Association
University of Technology Sydney Students Association
University of Western Australia Postgraduate Students' Association
Victoria University Postgraduate Association
Wollongong University Postgraduate Association

CAPA's Executive members and support staff

1979

Chairman

Andrew Pik

Administrative Officer

Hugh Barkley

Office

Sydney

1980

Chairman

Robert Biggins

Secretary

Geoff Prince

Organiser

Helen Ferguson

ACM held

Adelaide

1981

Chairman

Sue Hatherly

Vice-Chairman

Russel Jacobs

Secretary

Paul Wormell

Assistant Secretary

Margaret Moon

Treasurer

Tim Dabbs

Researcher/Organiser

Rina Reiss

Office

207 Lygon Street,

Carlton

ACM held

Sydney

1982

President

Russel Jacobs

Vice-President

Mike Lawson

National Secretary

Catherine Foley

Treasurer

Ken Straham

General Executive Member

Marian Zaunbrecher

Researcher/Organiser

Margaret Powles

Office

207 Lygon Street,

Carlton

ACM held

University of Melbourne

1983

President

Russel Jacobs

Vice-President

Hal Swerrissen

National Secretary

Rita Hermus

Treasurer

Ken Strahan

General Executive Member

Linda Barwick

Women's Executive Member

Katherine Ingram

Research Officer

Margaret Powles and
Christine Cunningham

Office

207 Lygon Street,

Carlton

ACM held

Sydney

1984

President

Hal Swerrissen

Vice-President

Katherine Ingram

Secretary

Harold Thornton

Treasurer

Elizabeth Kerr

Women's Executive Member

Catherine Cuthbert

Regional Executive Member

Jan Macintrye

Researcher/Organiser

Christine Cunningham

Office

207 Lygon Street,

Carlton

ACM held

Adelaide

1985

President

Catherine Cuthbert

Vice-President

Gary Baker

Secretary

Brenda Biggs

Treasurer

Elizabeth Kerr

Women's Executive Member

Anne Seitz

Researcher/Organiser

Christine Cunningham

Office

207 Lygon Street,
Carlton

1986

President

Anne Seitz

Vice-President

William Renfrew

Secretaries

Paul Lewis

Rick Moore

Treasurer

John Frame

Women's Executive Member

Jane Cousin

Researcher/Organiser

Christine Cunningham

ACM held

La Trobe

There has been some discussion at the Executive level of the future of the [President's position]. I believe that some of the discussion has been misguided and based on the assumption that the position is glamorous and exciting. I would like to dispel that myth unless some delegates believe that sleeping on floors, or in a sleeping bag on a mattress, sampling the horrendous cat food around the country, spending hours delayed at airports, getting up at 5.00am to catch 7.00am flights... and being impoverished, as it is far more expensive living on the road than living in a student house in Melbourne [is glamorous and exciting].

*Russel Jacobs, CAPA
President, President's ACM
report, December 1983.*

1987*President*

Anne Seitz

Vice-President

William Renfrew

Secretary

Steven Harvey

Treasurer

John Frame

Women's Executive Member

Devleena Ghosh

Researcher

Fran Ferrier

Organiser

Christine Cunningham

*Office*87 King William Street,
Fitzroy*ACM held*

Sydney

1988*President*

Tony Ryan

Vice-President

Adele Milne until

26/8/88

John Frame from 3/10/88

Secretary

David Albrecht

*Treasurer*Timothy Littlejohn until
3/10/88*Women's Executive Member*

Sue Turnbull

Researcher

Fran Ferrier

Organiser

Many Pascoe -until

30/9/88

Margaret Heagney from

3/10/88

Office

Blackburn, Victoria

ACM held

Adelaide

1989*President*

Monica Carroll until

11/8/89

Kate Le Strange from

5/10/89

Vice-President

Kate Le Strange until

5/10/89

Tracey Cross from

5/10/89

Secretary

Lorraine M. Elliot

Treasurer

Jane Murfett

Women's Executive Member

Jan Chandler until

11/8/89

Researcher

Fran Ferrier

Organiser

Margaret Heagney

Office

Blackburn, Victoria

ACM held

Monash

1990*President*

Paul Dworjanyan

Secretary

Sue Weston

Treasurer

Brian Jardine

Women's Executive Member

Helen Rossenberg

Researcher

Fran Ferrier

Organiser

Margaret Heagney

Office

Blackburn, Victoria

ACM held

ANU

1991*President*

Teresa Tjia

Secretary

Barbara Murray

Treasurer

David Smith

Researcher

Fran Ferrier

Organiser

Margaret Heagney

Office

Blackburn, Victoria

ACM held

University of Queensland

1992*President*

Teresa Tjia

National Secretary

Barbara Murray

Treasurer

David Smith

Women's Executive Member

Nicole Matthews

Researcher

Fran Ferrier

Organiser

Margaret Heagney

Administrative Officer

Annabelle Wingrove

Office

Blackburn Victoria

*ACM held*University of Western
Australia**1993***President*

Shane Ostenfield

Vice-President

Oliver Simmonson

National Secretary

Christine Beveridge

Treasurer

David Smith

Women's Executive Member

Lucy Zinkiewicz

*Indigenous Peoples'**Project Officer*Rebecca Bear-Winfield
from September 1993*Researcher*

Kate White

Organiser

Margaret Heagney

Administration Officer

Annabelle Wingrove

*Office*Clarendon Street, South
Melbourne*ACM held*

UWS-Nepean

1994*President*

Oliver Simmonson

Vice-President

Ramona Mitussis

National Secretary

Craig Meer

Treasurer

Richard Matejic

Women's Executive Member

Mary Stead

*Indigenous Peoples'**Project Officers*

Barry Judd

Researcher

Kate White

Organiser

Margaret Heagney

Administration Officer

Annabelle Wingrove

*Office*120 Clarendon Street,
South Melbourne*ACM held*

University of New England

1995*President*

Simon Vanderaa

Vice-President

Danielle Brown

National Secretary

Jane Fischer

Treasurer

Ken Taylor

Women's Officer

Shance Caucau

*Indigenous Peoples'**Officer*

Barry Judd

Organiser

Mary Stead

Researcher

Kate White

*Executive and Research**Officer*

Mark Frankland

Administrative Officer

Annabelle Wingrove

*Office*120 Clarendon Street,
South Melbourne*ACM held*

Melbourne

1996*President*

Danielle Brown

Vice-Presidents

Joe Brennan

Phil Reid

National Secretary

Paul Vince

Treasurer
 Andrew Grienke
Women's Officer
 Julie Fredericks
Indigenous Peoples' Officer
 Bronwyn Fredericks
Executive and Research Officer
 Mark Frankland
Administrative Officer
 Annabelle Wingrove
Office
 120 Clarendon Street,
 South Melbourne
ACM held
 Adelaide

1997

President
 Danielle Brown until
 March 1997
 Bronwyn Fredericks
 from March 1997
Vice-President
 Bronwyn Fredericks
 until March 1997
 Sali Bache from May
 1997
National Secretary
 Steve Warren
Treasurer
 Andrew Grienke
Women's Officer
 Meredith Murray
Indigenous Peoples' Officer
 Pamela Croft

International Students' Officer
 Aileen Ho
Access & Equity Officer
 Tony Williams
Information Technology Officer
 Daniel Giffney
Executive and Research Officer
 Mark Frankland
Administrative Officer
 Helen Budd
Office
 120 Clarendon Street,
 South Melbourne
ACM held
 HAPS

1998

President
 Robert Jansen until
 28/5/98
 Jill Thorpe from 28/5/98
Vice-President
 Jill Thorpe until 28/5/98
 Tom Clark from 28/7/98
National Secretary
 Steve Warren
Treasurer
 Andrew Woolf
Women's Officer
 Edith Taylor
Indigenous Peoples' Officer
 Pamela Croft
International Students' Officer
 Abdul Razak Mohamed

Access & Equity Officer
 Noel Walsh
Information Technology Officer
 Daniel Giffney
Executive and Research Officer
 Mark Frankland
Administrative Officer
 Helen Budd
Office
 120 Clarendon Street,
 South Melbourne
ACM held
 La Trobe University

1999

President
 Tom Clark
Vice-President
 Steve Warren
National Secretary
 Alana Chinn
Treasurer
 Rod Jarman
Women's Officer
 Gwen Nettlefold until
 21/4/99
Indigenous Peoples' Liaison Officer
 Rhonda Kelly until
 19/7/99
 Judy Mundine from
 August 1999
International Students' Officer
 Nadine Wills

Access & Equity Officer

Tony Williams

Information Technology Officer

Daniel Giffney

Executive and Research Officer

Mark Frankland

Administrative Officer

Helen Budd

Karen Mann

Office

120 Clarendon Street,

South Melbourne

ACM held

Perth

2000

President

Bradly Smith

Vice-President

Harriet Baillie

National Secretary

Alanna Clohesy

Treasurer

Rod Jarman until 29/5/00

Women's Officer

Helen Kavanagh

Indigenous Peoples'

Liaison Officer

Judy Mundine

until 16/4/00

International Students'

Officer

Ghazala Sadiq

Access & Equity Officer

Tony Williams

Information Technology Officer

Alister Air

Executive and Research Officer

Mark Frankland

Administrative Officer

Karen Mann

Office

120 Clarendon Street,

South Melbourne

ACM held

University of New

England

2001

President

John Byron

Vice-President

Angela Pratt

National Secretary

Alister Air

Treasurer

Dave Coffman

Women's Officer

Wendy Hillman

Indigenous Peoples'

Liaison Officer

Beryl Mickeljohn

Judy Mundine

International Students'

Officer

Ghazala Sadiq

Access & Equity Officer

Josephine Sailor

Executive and Research Officers

Mark Frankland, Karen

Mann, Hilary Pearse

Administrative Officer

Kavaro Lelesi-Ward

Office

Trades Hall, Melbourne

ACM held

University of Queensland

2002

President

Leisa Ridges

Vice-President

Jasmina Brankovich until

14/10/02

National Secretary

James Taylor

Treasurer

Dave Coffman until

19/4/02

Women's Officer

Penny McFarlane

Indigenous Peoples'

Liaison Officer

Judy Mundine

Douglas Morgan

International Students'

Officer

Arturo Bravo Nuevo

Chair of Equity Forum

Steve Warren

Queer Officer

Leila Baretto

General Manager

Steve Carroll

Research Officers
Hilary Pearse, Emmaline
Bexley
NIPAAC Research Officer
Meryan Tozer
Administrative Officer
Kavaro Lelesi-Ward
Office
Trades Hall, Melbourne
ACM held
University of Melbourne

2003

President
Benjamin McKay
Vice-President
Svetla Petkova
National Secretary
Gavin Hazel
Treasurer
Prem Legha
Women's Officer
Vicki-Ann Speechly
Golden until May
Indigenous Peoples'
Liaison Officer
Douglas Morgan
International Students'
Officer
Ingrid Tufvesson
Chair of Equity Forum
Vicki-Ann Speechley-
Golden, Hema Raina

Queer Officer
Leila Baretto
General Manager
Steve Carroll
Research Officers
Hilary Pearse, Emmaline
Bexley
NIPAAC Research Officer
Meryan Tozer
Administrative and
Research Officers
Emmaline Bexley, Carol
Chenko
Office
Trades Hall, Melbourne
ACM held
University of the
Sunshine Coast

2004

President
Stephen Horton
Vice-President
Benjamin McKay
National Secretary
Gavin Hazel
Treasurer
Kristen Thuy Hunyh
until 28/3/04
Indigenous Peoples'
Liaison Officer
Terry Wright
International Students'
Officer
Rajat Dhawan
Chair of Equity Forum
Colin LaFlamme
Queer Officer
Loretta Kelly
General Manager
Steve Carroll
Research Officer
Emmaline Bexley
NIPAAC Research Officer
Meryan Tozer
Administrative and
Research Officer
Carol Chenco
Office
Trades Hall, Melbourne

Thanks go to Daniel Giffney, 1998 CAPA IT Officer, for assembling much of the information above in 1998. We apologise to anyone left off this list, and for any other inaccuracies.

Artist's note on the painting used on the front cover

The Work and Influence of CAPA

by Judy Mundine, 2000

This design was inspired by a request from 1999 CAPA President Tom Clark to the outgoing 1999 Executive and the incoming 2000 Executive at the January 2000 hand over meeting at the Melbourne office.

The central section represents the work of the National CAPA Office. The central dot represents the President's representative lobby function, and the white lines represent the communication with Federal, State and Territory Governments as well as industry and other peak bodies, which are depicted as the large green circles. The dotted central circle represents the research and administrative staff of CAPA. The red circles bordering the central section represents the CAPA Executive members.

The yellow circles represent the universities in Australia who have CAPA affiliates attached to them. The dark blue circles are the respective Postgraduate Associations. The pink lines represent the communication between CAPA affiliates primarily through the CAPA listserver. The National Indigenous Postgraduate Association is not attached to a university because it is unique in that it draws members from any university in Australia.

The grey background circles represent both the existence of and research conducted into Australia's social issues and other challenges. The darker blue background circles represent global issues. The white circles represent the particular research work and study of Australia's postgraduates.

The dotted patterning used within the symbolic circles of the CAPA office and the postgraduate associations represents the particular research efforts into issues of Australian postgraduate education.

The turtle shell patterning within the symbolic circles representing the universities and the peak bodies depicts that these old and established institutions are highly protected and slow moving in terms of change.

I am a Bungalung woman born in the Northern Rivers town of Casino, NSW, and at the time of painting this design I have been privileged to have been associated with CAPA for a period of eight years. I served parts of both 1999 and 2000 as the CAPA Indigenous People's Liaison Officer. This design is my interpretation of the structure of CAPA and the way in which it operates. I hope it can be used as a corporate operation diagram to help newcomers to CAPA readily understand its work and influence.

Judy Mundine
16.11.00