

**Media Release from Mr John Cassidy, as Chancellor of the University of New England, 11 August 2004**

On Monday, 9 August 2004, the Council of the University of New England held its fifth meeting for the year at the UNE Sydney Centre.

That evening, members of Council hosted a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner since obtaining autonomy for the University in 1954. That dinner was well attended by over 70 Alumni, friends, past and present senior members of staff, a past Chancellor (Dr Pat O'Shane), a past Vice-Chancellor (Professor Bruce Thom) and a past Principal (Emeritus Professor Peter Drake) and very active members of the University of New England Foundation.

At its Council meeting, the confidential agenda included discussion on the advertisement placed in the *Armidale Express* on 23 July 2004 and in the *Northern Daily Leader* on Saturday, 24 July 2004.

As Chairman of that meeting and in my capacity as Chancellor of the University, I was requested to review the background and circumstances which led to the placement of that advertisement.

I have carried out that review and would like to report on my findings as follows:-

1. The advertisement was in no way meant to endorse a National Party candidate for the Federal Seat of New England, or, for that matter, any other political candidate.
2. A breach of University protocol was committed, unintentionally and procedures have been reinforced to ensure that the University's integrity and reputation for political neutrality is never compromised.
3. The advertisement placed in those papers was meant to be a way of publicly thanking the Federal Government for funding the establishment of the "National Centre of Science, Information and communication Technology, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia" at the University, a Centre which parents, teachers and students have been crying out for in New England. The Centre was, incidentally, officially opened by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services.
4. The University looks forward to working with all levels of government of all political persuasions, including the Local, State and Federal Members.

