

## *EDITORIAL*

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Once again we can claim a successful year: no fear of floccinaucinihilipilification. The lectures given have ranged in subject matter from the practical and ethical management of flood disaster in eighteenth-century China (and comparison with New Orleans in 2005) to the practical and non-ethical management of present day ecological problems. Membership of the Association has remained steady, although we would like numbers to increase: if every member brought in one new member ...

The year has brought some important changes in government of the university. These will, no doubt, affect the Faculty of Arts. The Honourable Kim Santow has resigned as Chancellor after a decade in office. He is succeeded by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales, who has already served the university generously in several roles. At her inauguration Professor Bashir acknowledged the successes of the past but recognised present challenges from the competitive environment of to-day's universities. She offered vigilance in defending the autonomy of this university, concern for the wellbeing of its students, support for the striving for excellence of its staff, and awareness of university involvement in the wider community. All of these concern the Faculty.

The university community learned also of the retirement of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gavin Brown, after twelve years in office. He will be succeeded in 2008 by Dr Michael Spence, who in the 1980s graduated in Arts with first class honours in both English and Italian, and also in Law with first class honours. Dr Spence gained his doctorate and a diploma in theology in Oxford, where he presently leads the social sciences division and has been prominent in leading research centres. He is 45 (to answer the next question, he is not the youngest chief executive officer: when appointed in 1851, Sir Charles

Nicholson was 43).

We welcome Professor Bashir and Dr Spence, and modestly seek their attention to the Faculty's needs. We welcome also Professor Robert Dixon, another Arts graduate, who follows Professor Elizabeth Webby in the chair of Australian Literature. His inaugural lecture will be delivered in 2008.

Sadly, we record the passing of one of the Faculty's most liked and respected teachers. Dr Noel Rowe died in July 2007 after a long battle with cancer. He was an established poet who taught Creative Writing and Australian Literature, and was joint editor of our sister journal *Southerly*.

*G.L.L.*