

Australia not part of Asia, but 'a partner'

By MIKE HEDGE

PERTH: Australia should not consider itself as a part of Asia — but as an interdependent, indispensable partner in the region's future, a prominent Asian academic said yesterday.

Professor Wang Gungwu, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong and a naturalised Australian, told a conference in Perth that Australians would gain greater respect for their frank and friendly comments if they made this point clear.

Speaking at the conference on *Outside Images of Australia*, organised by Perth's Curtin University, Professor Wang said Australians had done more than most other European cultures to study and understand Asia.

"There are Australians who are now better prepared to understand the complex variety in Asian societies and have already begun to make significant contributions to Western perceptions of Asia," Professor Wang said.

"I believe that Australians should show that they stand by this development of Asian awareness and commitment as one of the central pillars in Australian national policy, not to be part of Asia, but to be interdependent as an indispensable partner in the region's future."

Professor Wang is one of some 70 speakers at the four-day conference which will deliver papers on topics ranging from the British media's practice of "kitchen-sinking" to Asian perceptions of the "White Australia policy" and the role of the car as an icon in Australian culture.

The conference will also include addresses by Indonesia's

Ambassador to Australia, Sam Siang, the Malaysian Trade and Industry Minister, Dato Seri Rafidah Aziz, and Australian Professor Donald Horne and Professor Ross Garnaut.

Professor Wang told the conference that Australia's recent quest for self-knowledge could also begin to play a larger part in their relations with Asia.

High among such self-knowledge was an acknowledgment of Australia's grim record in the treatment of Aborigines, although this was an aspect likely to go unnoticed in Asia.

"I believe what is taking place now in Australia [in Aboriginal reconciliation] is something that their Asian neighbours might well understand if they could see what they have not been helped to see," Professor Wang said.

The professor also said that because many aspects of Australian culture went unseen, many Asians were unlikely to be sympathetic toward Australian Aboriginal claims for special rights.

"Where most Asians are concerned, the survival of Aboriginal peoples and cultures has never had any priority," he said.

In another address the conference also heard that Australians should be less noisy about Asian human-rights issues.

Former Australian Ambassador to China and Professor of Economics at ANU, Ross Garnaut said an opinion of Australia as an international busybody existed in South-East Asia.

"It is a view that constrains our effectiveness in pursuing our objectives... in matters directly important to Australia's interests as well as our influence on the Pacific community," — AAP

Squatters 'probable' cause of woolstore fire

SYDNEY: Squatters are suspected of starting the fire that engulfed an 83-year-old mercantile woolstore in inner Sydney on Monday, creating the biggest fire in the city in almost 25 years, fire investigators said yesterday.

However, investigators are yet to determine the exact cause of the fire which stopped traffic and attracted huge crowds to the Darling Harbour area.

The upper floors of the north-east and south-east corners of the severely damaged building were being demolished yesterday.

A fire brigade spokesman said pulling down

that part of the woolstore would stabilise it and allow firefighters to get inside to extinguish fires still burning.

"It's coming down to a level at which the danger is significantly reduced, which makes it safer for everybody," regional commander Noel Newson said.

The partial demolition would also allow investigators to determine the exact cause of the fire.

They believed squatters might have started the fire, which began in the upper floors of the seven-storey building about midday.

"That's the probable cause at this particular time," Mr Newson said.

"The hotel on the corner and this building have been subjected to small fires from time to time."

Police said yesterday that the AML and F building had been used by homeless men for shelter until they were moved out three weeks ago.

The historic brick and timber building was quickly consumed by the fire, fuelled by wool grease embedded in the floors after years of wool storage.

Within half an hour of firefighters arriving, the roof had fallen in and flames were leaping 50m into the air through the thick yellow and white smoke.

Soon afterward, a large section of the eastern wall fell to the road below, crushing a number of cars and crashing close to the monorail.

Another three sections of the wall fell on to Pyrmont Road in the next two hours.

Up to 100 fire fighters from 20 stations attended and fire brigade officers expected to remain at the site for at least another day or two.

Tobacco lobby tells states to reject ban on sponsorships

SYDNEY: The Tobacco Institute of Australia has called on state and territory governments to reject federal proposals for banning tobacco sponsorship of sport and the arts.

The institute said yesterday that accepting the ban would not only hurt sport and the arts, but would mean surrendering "even more" power to the Federal Government.

The Federal Government has decided to let existing sponsorship contracts run their course or remain in effect until December 31, 1995, whichever date comes first.

"Some of the states already have legislation which governs this issue," the institute said in a statement. "The states will, by supporting the [Government proposals] do themselves and the people of their state a disservice."

"Not only will the states be handing themselves to retrospective legislation and manipulation by the Federal Government, [but] the cost of doubling up on legislation will have to be borne, as usual, by the states' taxpayers."

The Federal Government's ruling applies to any organisation that held tobacco sponsorship on April 1. The only exception is cricket, which will be allowed to receive tobacco sponsorship for the 1995-96 season.

Queensland police vote on Newnham's integrity

BRISBANE: The Queensland Police Minister, New Warburton, has insisted that there is nothing wrong with the morale of the state's 6000 police.

Mr Warburton's declaration yesterday came as Queensland Police Union members voted in secret ballot on whether they had confidence in Police Commissioner Noel Newnham.

Talk of low morale was "irresponsible nonsense", probably being perpetrated by his political opponents, Mr Warburton said.

Mr Newnham has announced moves to lift force morale and regain the support of the union, which has organised the unprecedented state-wide ballot.

"The vote of confidence is no good for morale, but they're entitled to do it," Mr Newnham said yesterday.

A ballot paper sent to union members on Friday asks if they had confidence in Mr Newnham as police commissioner, and if they had confidence in his personal integrity.

Mr Newnham was reinstated recently after the Supreme Court overruled a Misconduct Tribunal recommendation that he be sacked for his handling of travel expenses.

Mr Newnham and Mr Warburton attended a function to open a new Brisbane police station yesterday.

Mr Newnham was reluctant to speak to journalists, after accusations last week by the Premier, Wayne Goss, that he had been



Noel Newnham



New Warburton

waging a public campaign to have his tenure extended.

"The Premier has made it plain I shouldn't speak to the Press too much, and I plan to follow his advice," he said.

Mr Newnham announced yesterday the setting up of three working parties, including representatives of the police union and the Criminal Justice Commission, to try to improve police morale.

He said the working parties would aim to improve public confidence in the police service, lift the morale and confidence of officers, and review the relationship between the police force and the CJC to improve methods of dealing with complaints.

Mr Warburton said there was nothing wrong with morale in the Queensland police service.

Legal costs should not be paid: poll

HOBART: Sixty-seven per cent of Tasmanians are opposed to the State Government's decision to pay the legal costs of key witnesses at last year's political bribery royal commission.

A statewide telephone poll, which surveyed 200 people in each of Tasmania's five electorates, was conducted by the University of Tasmania's political science department.

It also revealed 85 per cent of those polled believed the State Government should not pay the costs of the failed Supreme Court challenge by former Liberal Premier Robin Gray and the managing director of ENT Ltd David McQuestin.

In the southern electorate of Denison, 94 per cent opposed payments for the Supreme Court action.

The government has already sent out cheques totalling almost \$360,000 to witnesses who appeared before the inquiry, including Mr Gray, Mr McQuestin and the disgraced former ENT chairman Edmund Rouse who attempted

to bribe a Labor MP in June 1989. The payouts have caused anger across the state, particularly the payment to Rouse, a millionaire who was released from jail in November last year after serving half of a three-year sentence for offering the bribe.

Mr Gray and Mr McQuestin, who were subjects of adverse findings from the Carter royal commission, each received \$117,500, while Rouse was given almost \$53,000.

A furor erupted a fortnight ago when the Attorney-General, Ron Cornish, revealed Jim Cox, the bribe target who blew the whistle and exposed Mr Rouse's plan, would receive no compensation.

The government was later forced into an embarrassing back-down and said Mr Cox would be paid \$2000.

Premier Ray Groom said the total costs of the royal commission and legal payouts would be more than \$1.5 million.

Adelaide man took Jews away: witness

ADELAIDE: Alleged war criminal Mikolay Berzowsky and two SS soldiers had escorted a Jewish woman and two children from a house on the day that more than 100 Jews were executed near the village of Gniwan in Ukraine, the Adelaide Magistrates Court was told yesterday.

Ukrainian witness Kazimir Lipinski, 77, said he had lived on the same street as Berzowsky in Gniwan during World War II and the accused had worn "a sort of coat of arms" on the front of a black cap which indicated he was head of the local police unit.

Early one morning in 1942, the three Jews were led out of their house by "Berzowsky and two SS men", Mr Lipinski told the war crimes hearing.

He said he saw the incident from his own yard at "maybe six o'clock" and was told by others in the village that the Jews of Gniwan had been executed at a mass burial pit later that day.

But the court heard that in 1991 Mr Lipinski failed to identify Berzowsky's photograph from a group of 12 different photographs taken from immigration records about the time Berzowsky came to Australia in 1949.

Mr Lipinski also told the court that in 1944 he saw Berzowsky and another Ukrainian policeman leaving Gniwan on a horse and cart just before the village was liberated.

The prosecution has alleged that Berzowsky was the head of the local police unit at Gniwan, recruited by the Nazis to keep order in the Ukrainian village after it was occupied in 1941.

Mr Lipinski is the last of the overseas eyewitnesses called to give evidence and his cross-examination will continue today.

Berezowsky, a 78-year-old Adelaide pensioner, is charged with being involved in the murder of 102 Jews in Gniwan between March and July 1942.

Uni heads challenge TAFE for extra funds

Universities should be allowed to compete for extra TAFE funding, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has told the Government.

In a submission to the National Board of Employment, Education and Training, the vice-chancellors said it would be more logical for extra funding for vocational and technical training to be awarded to the institution most able to provide the services needed.

It said the board should look closely at the assumption that growth should be diverted from higher education to TAFE.

This was "apparently predicated on the basis that Australia's greater need for the foreseeable future is for vocational and para-professional skills, rather than service and value-added industries."

"This, itself, is based on an unproven assumption that Australia's economic future will depend on an expanding manufacturing sector," the committee said.

The needs of future industry would require integrated delivery of education, training and research.

"The need for personnel with generic skills, flexibility and openness to continual learning suggest that such education might be better undertaken in suitable universities," the committee said.

It also said the board needed to consider two types of demand — student and employer demand.

While there was a demonstrated strong demand for university education, "there is little convincing evidence of an equivalent demand for TAFE, other than as a stepping stone to university or in the fields of tourism and hospitality."

There was also little evidence that demand for university places translated into demand for TAFE.

"Approximately 70 per cent of the unsuccessful applicants for places in higher education left the education system without considering entry to TAFE as an alternative," the committee said.

Up to 50,000 people missed out on a university place this year.

Casino odds now 12-1 and shortening

MELBOURNE: Twelve consortiums are on the short list to run Victoria's first casino, due to open in August, 1994, the Victorian Casino Control Authority has announced.

The list would be shortened to three or four as early as December this year, and final selection in June next year, authority chairman John Richards said in a statement.

Of a total of 23 bidders, only 12 had fulfilled requirements, he said.

Bidders had nominated a number of possible sites within 3km of Melbourne's central GPO, including sites in the city's docklands area.

When the final selection was made, a temporary licence would allow the consortium to begin operations by August, 1994, Mr Richards said.

The temporary licence would give the chosen group cash flow before it opened the casino permanently by late 1995.

Ambitious project approved

MELBOURNE: The Victorian Government has approved an ambitious \$150 million housing and inland harbour development on the Mornington Peninsula, south of Melbourne.

The Minister for Planning, Andrew McCutcheon, said the project would include 700 homes, a shopping centre, a motel, recreation reserves and moorings and dry storage for more than 800 boats.

An artificial waterway linked to Port Phillip Bay will form the centrepiece of the 97ha Martha Cove project at Safety Beach, near Mount Martha.

The development would be funded by the private sector and would create

work for 450 people, Mr McCutcheon said.

The Government approved on Monday planning scheme changes necessary for the development.

The consortium of local property developers behind the project said they expected building to begin next year.

But it was not expected to be completed for another 10 years.

Consortium chairman Alan Maw said the project's concept and design was world-class.

But, he said, it had taken almost five years for the project to reach the go-ahead stage.

Damages to ex-prison officer

SYDNEY: A former prison officer was awarded almost \$240,000 damages yesterday for psychological problems she suffered as a result of being in charge of a unit dealing with difficult prisoners.

Justice McInerney found in the NSW Supreme Court that the Corrective Services Commission was negligent in failing to train her adequately for the position.

He said Terry Josephine Parry, 38, had been appointed in February 1982 as officer in charge of a special-care unit at the Murrumbidgee women's detention centre at Silverwater.

The unit was experimental, involving face-to-face confrontations

between selected prisoners and prison officers.

"It involved a totally new concept from the idea of the duties of a prison officer, and I accept required considerable adjustment by the officers, including the plaintiff, from the role of a purely custodial officer," Justice McInerney said.

The unit was staffed by comparatively inexperienced officers, including Ms Parry, who did not have any professional training or any real professional help in running the unit.

He said that despite many promises, Ms Parry was never given the training she needed.

Another cause of stress was the

lack of a reliable alarm system in the unit, which was relatively isolated from the rest of the prison complex, he said.

Ms Parry, who is divorced with a six-year-old daughter, left work on sick leave in April 1983, and has not worked since.

She sued the commission, claiming she was totally incapacitated for any type of work.

Justice McInerney accepted that she had a work-related anxiety-depressive reaction, but found that she was capable of alternative employment after 1986.

He awarded her damages of \$239,619.

Preparing for possible losses 'had begun'

ADELAIDE: South Australia's Government Financing Authority had begun preparing for possible losses within its State Bank late in 1990 despite assurances from the Premier, John Bannon, of the bank's health, the Jacobs Royal Commission heard yesterday.

The under-treasurer, Peter Emery, said that in the latter part of 1990, the authority had liquidated assets because it was worried the bank might have liquidity problems which might become public.

But Mr Bannon told Parliament in December 1990 that he retained full confidence in the SBSA's board and management to ensure the bank remained successful.

In February last year, the State Bank announced a shock \$970 million loss which stood at \$2.2 billion by July 1991.

Mr Emery said South Australia's Crown Solicitor had been consulted on how money could be delivered to the bank if any problems became public.

He said it had become evident in the second half of 1990 that there was a possibility some action would be necessary.

Mr Emery said that later in that period the Treasury had decided to take internal precautionary action.

"We were getting our finance authority liquid because we were worried in a broad sense about what was happening here, and the possibility of negatives becoming public and a problem of liquidity arising," he said.

"So we did ensure that our finances were already liquid in case those sort of problems arose."

Mr Emery said the action was

only precautionary because Treasury had no idea then of the extent of the bank's problems.

In his written statement to the inquiry, Mr Emery said in August-September 1990 Treasury had decided "some form of external involvement" would probably be needed to break through the bank's problems.

He said at that time there were obviously great problems within the bank in making an adequate assessment of the extent of its financial problems.

Mr Emery said he felt these were caused by factors including management incompetence, the State Bank's information systems and a reluctance in some quarters to face up to the problems.

The inquiry is continuing.

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