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THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITYABORIGINAL STUDIESANNUAL REPORT 1978FACULTY OF ARTS

This course continues to attract student interest. There is a current trend towards Aboriginal Studies at Colleges of Advanced Education and some other universities. It may be claimed that the qualifications of those teaching the Australian National University courses are unrivalled, both for their academic research experience in that area, and for their involvement in aspects of Aboriginal cultural affairs.

During this year the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology took over the teaching of the unit previously taught by the Department of Sociology. Retitled Anthropology B17, the course attracted a large enrolment. That for Anthropology B5 (Australian Anthropology) was the largest for any advanced year unit taught in the department, while Prehistory B4 (Australian Prehistory) attracted the second largest enrolment.

There was discussion during the year with the Department of History concerning its long-term intentions with the Aboriginal History unit. The decision to advertise a post for 1979 is welcome. However, as it is for a year only, the future of the subject must be discussed further next year. Given the student demand, it will prove unfortunate if a full major cannot be completed because of the lack of a History semester unit.

One welcome development is that the Department of Linguistics intends to introduce a new unit in 1980 (Linguistics A16), which could be available to students lacking the normal Linguistics prerequisites, provided that they undertake additional work.

There have been some veiled hints by School colleagues, that Aboriginal Studies is seen by some of them as a 'soft option'. This is unfortunate, because it represents an important contribution by this university to a major Australian community problem. The inference that increased enrolment in a unit at a time of decreased student numbers, reflects a 'soft' approach, overlooks entirely two major factors. The first is undergraduate motivation. The current student generation sees the state of Aboriginal society as one of the greatest challenges facing the Australian sense of justice, and they wish to learn about that society objectively. Secondly, the evidence is largely new, as are the appraisals of its significance. There is a sense of intellectual stimulation about any significant new subject, particularly one with an interdisciplinary approach.



Student Enrolment:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Sat</u>
History 2/3N	36	32
Anthropology B5	98	94
Anthropology B17	65	62
Prehistory B4	81	64
<u>Total</u>	<u>280</u>	<u>252</u>

This compares with a total of 191 in 1977, when Linguistics A12 was available in addition.

Just what the component of Aboriginal Studies Major constituted in these totals is uncertain. In Prehistory B4, it must have been at least 25%.

During 1978 Dr. N. Peterson was on leave and his place as Convenor was taken by Professor D.J. Mulvaney. Dr. Peterson will resume upon his return early in 1979.

D.J. Mulvaney