Statement on Miss Victoria Lee's application to transfer to The University of Sydney

March 20, 1970

First Year of any degree course in The University of Sydney.

It is clear from the wording of the regulation which was approved by Senate on 8th August, 1967, that this does not confer a right on any student but simply gives the Professorial Board discretion. Power. When the Senate approved the amendement to the by-law in August, 1967, it had before it the Board's comment that—

"The purpose of this amendment is to allow the Admissions Committee to grant matriculation status to a person who has been approved as a provisional or adult matriculant in another university, and has subsequently been approved First Year courses required for the First Year of any degree in that university."

(8) The Registrar, on behalf of the Admissions Committee, replied to Miss Lee on 2nd February, 1970, that her application was not approved. It was explained that the decision was made in accordance with the normal policy embodied in a Professorial Board instruction passed when the By-law was amended that the Board would not grant approval for a student to be admitted as a matriculated student where the examination at which he was qualified for matriculation in another University is one of the examination in terms of which ordinary matriculation requirements of The University of Sydney are met.

(9) Miss Lee then wrote to the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts on 3rd February, asking for permission to re-enrol as an irregular student, should her attempt to transfer to Sydney fail. On 9th February the Registrar wrote to Macquarie University, with a copy to the Registrar here to say that Miss Lee had been given permission to seek enrolment as an irregular student at The University of Sydney in Archaeology II Honours, for credit towards her degree at Macquarie University.

Macquarie University subsequently informed The University of Sydney that Miss Lee had completed English II at Macquarie University and Anthropology I and Sociology I at Sydney University. She had obtained a credit in Anthropology I and Fine Arts at Macquarie University. On 2nd March, 1970, Miss Lee wrote to this Department to say that she had been given permission to enrol in the First Year of any degree course in The University of Sydney.

The University of Sydney statement on Miss Victoria Lee's application to transfer to The University of Sydney.

The Vice-Chancellor or false statements published in "Honi Soit" and in various broadsheets.

Each year many students who would have liked to come here in the first place, apply for a transfer from another University to The University of Sydney.

It may help to explain the methods of entry to The University of Sydney, as background to the consideration of Miss Lee's case.

There are four ways of becoming a student of The University of Sydney:

(i) By qualifying for University of Sydney matriculation at the Higher School Certificate or Matriculation Examination and gaining sufficient marks to be selected in the First Year quota. Approximately 15% of undergraduate students enter the University in this way.

(ii) By qualifying for University of Sydney matriculation at the Higher Certificate or Matriculation Examination, and after successfully completing courses at another University, getting permission to transfer to The University of Sydney. Many students apply for such a transfer, but very few are given permission. In general, transfers are only allowed if their matriculation marks would have qualified them for selection in the first place.

(iii) By qualifying for a Bachelor's degree at another University and by receiving matriculation status at this University by special decision of the Professorial Board, after passing approved units at Macquarie University in another University. Entry by this route is very rare, and I think there has been only one case.

Because of our quota system which was introduced to prevent a further deterioration in student-teacher ratios, working conditions, many very good students fail to obtain a place in the University or in the Faculty of their choice. For instance, this year very many Commonwealth Scholars failed to get a place in our Faculties of Medicine, Architecture, and Veterinary Science. It is, therefore, important, to prevent injustice between people, to establish procedures for the careful consideration of all students who apply for entry other than through the quota.

Miss Lee's case

(1) Miss Lee sat for the Higher School Certificate in 1968 at Hornsby Girls' High School and obtained the following results:

- English—first level
- Modern History—first level
- French—second level
- Latin—second level

Miss Lee did not qualify her for matriculation at The University of Sydney as she had not taken a subject from Group C of Section XX.

(2) Miss Lee wrote to the Registrar in January, 1969, asking that special consideration be given to her case. She wrote that she was told by a teacher at Hornsby Girls' High School that her choice of subjects would not enable her to matriculate to Sydney University, and added: "I at once went to see the School Counsellor to find out if this were true. My intention at that stage was to continue with Maths, if I was unable to matriculate to Sydney University without it. However, the School Counsellor assured me that he would not be difficult for me to gain admittance to Sydney University, and the fact that my pass was a good one combined with the fact that I wanted to study Archaeology and Anthropology, two subjects not offered at any other University, would persuade the University to admit me." Miss Lee's case would appear to relate the School Counsellor's advice to a time after Miss Lee had taken the Higher School Certificate Examination. (In letters to the Professorial Board and the Senate to which reference will be made below, Miss Lee states that the School Counsellor did advise her at an earlier stage that her subjects would qualify for University of Sydney's matriculation. When the School Counsellor concerned was asked about this, she said that she had a clear recollection of informing Miss Lee at the earlier stage that her subjects would not make it possible for her to qualify at Sydney.)

The Registrar replied that she had not qualified to matriculate in any Faculty at The University of Sydney and could not therefore be accepted.

(3) Miss Lee matriculated at Macquarie University in 1969 on the basis of the passes gained at the Higher School Certificate, and was selected in its quota. As part of her degree course at Macquarie University she was given permission to take Archaeology I, Archaeology II and Fine Arts at The University of Sydney.

(4) The University of Sydney gave her permission to take these courses as an irregular student. When this permission was granted she was informed of "a course completed as an irregular student may not be counted towards a degree at this University at any time".

(5) The Dean of the Faculty of Arts at The University of Sydney subsequently wrote on 11th March, 1969, to the Registrar at Macquarie University saying that, although he had approved Miss Lee's application to enrol as a non-matriculated student in three subjects, she was not happy about it. "While the three Metropolitan Universitys have agreed to co-operate by allowing students to take irregular courses not available at their own University, there, should surely be a limit upon the number of courses allowed. My own view is that normally the greater part of the year's work should be done in the University in which the student is enrolled, and that only courses which are essential (not merely desirable) should be taken at another University. I would be grateful, therefore, if Macquarie University would review the decision to allow Miss Lee to take all three courses here."

As the result of this letter Macquarie revised its decision, and Miss Lee withdrew from Fine Arts at Sydney.

(6) At the end of 1969 Miss Lee completed English II at Macquarie University, and Anthropology I and Archaeology I at Sydney University. She obtained a credit in Anthropology I and Fine Arts at The University of Sydney.

(7) In January, 1970, Miss Lee wrote to the Registrar seeking permission to transfer to The University of Sydney if she could be granted equivalent matriculation status under "admission ad eundem statum—Regulation 18". This Regulation states that "The Professorial Board may admit as a matriculated student in any Faculty with such status as the Board thinks proper in the circumstances", if such a person has matriculated at another University. Miss Lee then wrote to the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts on 3rd February, asking for permission to re-enrol as an irregular student, should her attempt to transfer to Sydney fail. On 9th February the Registrar wrote to the Registrar at Macquarie University, with a copy to the Registrar here to say that Miss Lee had been given permission to seek enrolment as an irregular student at The University of Sydney in Archaeology II Honours, for credit towards her degree at Macquarie University.

Macquarie University subsequently informed The University of Sydney that Miss Lee has completed her enrolment in the First Year of any degree course in The University of Sydney, and that her programme of study has been approved. Included in this programme of study is Elementary German, a course in Early English and two courses in Anthropology, and Arabic at Macquarie University. Miss Lee, who is a student of Sydney University, provided The University of Sydney accepts her as an irregular student, Macquarie University...
Examples of false and misleading statements

REFERENCE was made earlier to misleading statements published in "Honi Soit" and the Professorial Board resolutions circulated in the University.

Here are some examples of false or misleading statements appearing in "Honi Soit" (11)

(1) "Initially both (the Registrar) and the Vice-Chancellor referred back to Victoria about her case at all" (p. 3).

Miss Lee asked to see the Vice-Chancellor on 23rd February. She advised that the Registrar knew far more about the regulations, and an interview with the Registrar was arranged for the following day. The Registrar saw Miss Lee then, and on several subsequent occasions.

(ii) "After some S.R.C. prompting, McCredie put her case before the Professorial Board." (p. 3).

This is false. The Registrar took Miss Lee's case to the Professorial Board without any prompting from the S.R.C. Miss Lee's case was referred to the Professorial Board at the Agenda of the first available meeting of the Professorial Board.

After the second occasion on which the Board discussed Miss Lee's case, an unsigned paper was circulated in the University.

(3) "Admitted permission for an appeal having been granted for Miss Lee's case." (p. 6).

This is incorrect. The Professorial Board did not admit Miss Lee to the University of Sydney.

(iii) "McCredie reluctantly granted permission for an appeal to the Senate . . . ." (p. 3).

This is untrue. The Registrar does not grant or withhold permission for appeals. He informed Miss Lee when the matter was first put before him that he would ascertain if this was possible. As soon as he was informed that her application could be put to the Board, he informed Miss Lee and asked her to let him have a statement.

(iv) "The Senate voted against even hearing the appeal" (p. 3).

False. The Senate did hear the appeal (see v immediately below).

(v) "Evidently there were forty minutes of heated debate on the issue, during which opinion was evenly divided" (p. 6).

This is wrong. The debate was not heated. Senate was informed that Miss Lee's case was not a good matter and that it would be quite unfair in practice to have well established rules determined by the relevant academic committees, and that it would be quite unfair in practice to grant admission to all those who have influential or very persistent friends, it is necessary to have well established rules determined by the relevant academic committees, and that it would be quite unfair in practice to prevent the sort of overcrowding and poor teaching arrangements which exist in many West European Universities, it is necessary to limit the number of students. The University of Sydney, if that is to be granted permission by Macquarie to take Archaeology II at the University of Sydney and count it towards her degree.

(vi) "Under the by-laws of the University of Sydney (as published in The University Calendar) Miss Lee was eligible to come to the University" (p. 6).

This is incorrect. There are only one statement in "Honi Soit", which is that some concern was expressed as to the legality of the Professorial Board's decision (p. 8).

Miss Lee applied for appeals to the Senate, who have the responsibility for decision, and these rules for fear or favour. Our established rules and procedures have been applied in Miss Lee's case. To ignore them now, because Miss Lee's case has been reported in "Honi Soit", and used for Front law resolutions, would be wrong in principle and unworkable in practice.

Entry to the University should be determined by calm and fair discussion and not by pressure group politics.

I regret the need to issue this statement. The Board and the Senate, who have the responsibility for decision, have both given the case fair consideration and the decision that Miss Lee would not be granted matriculation status in the University was made on the basis that Miss Lee was not a genuine student who has genuinely attempted to comply with the by-laws, and therefore unjust to deny her admission. In the meantime Miss Lee had applied to the Senate.

The Registrar, after taking legal advice, replied to Miss Lee's solicitor on 12th March to the effect that the by-law does not confer any right on an applicant but only a possibility of admission, and that both the Board and the Senate reached this decision on the individual application of Miss Lee.

(13) On Friday, 13th March, 1970, Miss Lee submitted another letter dated 13th March, 1970, addressed to the Registrar, saying that she had "been advised to resubmit her application, and that she so wished. The Registrar explained that in his view the Board should be informed of Miss Lee's further application at its regular meeting on Monday, 16th March, 1970. Included in the Registrar's minute on the Agenda was a statement that the Senate had heard Miss Lee's case and that she had not admitted her as a matriculated student.

The Chairman informed the Board of Miss Lee's letter of 13th March and the Board decided to take no further action.

(14) The Professorial Board at the same meeting on 16th March, 1970, agreed to refer to the Matriculation Committee for consideration, and report whether there is a general problem arising out of applications from persons who are not qualified to matriculate in The University of Sydney but who have successfully completed courses at other Universities and who apply for admission on a calmer standard, and whether in the 18th of Chapter XX of the "By-laws or in the Professorial Board resolutions relating to this Section there should be any alterations affecting admission to the University in 1971 and subsequent years.

(15) There are many students who have made inquiries on grounds similar to those raised by Miss Lee. Miss Lee, and members of the Board thought that its Matriculation Committee should examine the issues again to see if there was a case for change.

The University of Sydney, if that is to be granted permission by Macquarie to take Archaeology II at the University of Sydney and count it towards her degree.