So far as is known this is the first time that radio operators in New South Wales have used the moon's surface as a passive reflector to provide a means of communication at microwave radio frequencies.

The communication was carried out at a frequency of 1296 Megahertz and lasted for approximately ten minutes.

The University's radio telescope, which has a parabolic reflector (dish) type antenna of 9.14 metres in diameter was originally located at West Dapto, where it was used by the same group to communicate via the moon at the ultra-high frequency of 432 Megahertz between 1973 and 1978 before operations had to cease because of severe damage caused by vandals.

The university transferred the facility to its present site in mid-1982 and construction and rehabilitation of equipment has been carried out by the Moonbounce Group from the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society. They then went on to communicate with an amateur radio station in Harare, capital of Zimbabwe, by bouncing radio signals off the surface of the moon.

A REPORT on the study of counselling for ill or injured patients who are hospitalised was presented to the Commonwealth Department of Health in the first week of October by Associate Professor Linda L. Viney.

Associate Professor Viney is chairman of the Department of Psychology at The University of Wollongong and, together with her colleagues Professor Alex M. Clarke, Dr Terry Bunn and Mr Hai Yap Teoh, she received a government grant of $123,000 to establish and evaluate a counselling service at the Bulli District Hospital.

The counselling service was developed over a three-year period by a team of trained counsellors. Many beneficial effects were identified.

Findings revealed that counselling helped patients to deal more effectively with the distress caused by illness and hospitalisation while they were still in hospital.

Many of the positive effects were still apparent a year later when these people were dealing with sources of stress other than illness.

There was evidence, too, that many people who had had access to the counselling service were physically more healthy in the long term, so that the cost of their health care was reduced.
Research into Metallic Glasses — a new range of engineering materials

IN June 1959 a group of researchers at the California Institute of Technology developed, as part of a study of phase equilibria in alloys, a technique for freezing liquid metals at very high rate. Almost by accident they discovered that in one of their alloys the cooling rate was sufficiently high to suppress the crystallisation processes that normally occur during solidification: the result was a small sliver of a gold-silicon alloy that was completely amorphous with a structure almost identical to that of a liquid. They had produced, for the first time, a metallic glass by direct quenching from the liquid. It was quickly found that other alloys, including many based on iron, could also be produced in the glassy state.

Despite the cumbersome and difficult techniques that were necessary and the small size of the sample they produced — about the size of a postage stamp — the research was pursued because of the extraordinary and potentially attractive properties the glassy alloys displayed compared with the equivalent crystalline material.

In the early days the glassy alloys were little more than laboratory curiosities but in the early 1970s a series of techniques were developed that opened up the way for commercial exploitation.

In essence, it was found that the necessary cooling rates — in excess of one million degrees per second — were achievable by injecting a molten stream of alloy on to the surface of a copper drum rotating at high speed: if the operating conditions are closely controlled the melt forms a stable puddle and a solid ribbon is ejected from the drum surface.

These new processes are simple, relatively inexpensive to operate and produce ribbon strip in continuous form with close dimensional tolerance and high surface quality. Commercial developments in the technology of melt spinning, particularly in the USA, West Germany and Japan, have now reached the stage where strip up to 250 mm wide and many kilometres long is possible. Research into the properties of the alloys has kept pace with the technological aspects of production and there is now a whole new range of materials available, very different from the conventional crystalline alloys currently in service and developed over many years. In almost every case the glassy alloys have superior properties. Depending on composition they are harder, stronger, more corrosion resistant or have better magnetic and electrical properties and there is little doubt that many conventional materials will become obsolete when the new glassy alloys are fully developed and exploited.

There are, of course, disadvantages. The high cooling rates necessary restrict the thickness of the strip to about 25-30 microns and it is extremely unlikely that this restriction can be overcome. Composite structures are however easily manufactured. In addition, the glasses are essentially supercooled liquids and so are metastable; they crystallise on heating to modest temperatures.

The fundamental interest in studying nucleation and growth phenomena in highly under-cooled liquids, together with the practical problems of stability in service, makes this an area of great importance.

A melt spinner, constructed in the department workshop, has been used to prepare alloys of various composition which are then examined using differential scanning calorimetry backed up by structural investigation in the transmission electron microscope and by X-ray diffraction.

In co-operation with groups at the Australian National University and the CSIRO it is hoped to develop this program and extend the studies to include Mössbauer emission spectroscopy and magnetic properties evaluation.

Writer in Residence for European Languages

SUCCESSFUL Sydney-based author Rosa Cappiello arrived in August to become Writer in Residence with the Department of European Languages.

The Writer in Residence program, funded partly by the University and partly by the Literature Board of the Australian Council, is the first ever to host an Australian author who writes in a language other than English.

Rosa Cappiello, whose second novel Paese fortunato, published by Feltrinelli, won the prestigious Calabria Prize in 1981, is holding a series of seminars for students taking the Department’s Italian Australian Studies course.
THE UNIVERSITY ENGULFED
Highly successful Open Weekend

The Open Day — Open Weekend, in fact — held on October 22 and 23, provided yet another link in the chain being forged to increase community awareness of, and interest in, Wollongong's university. This year, thanks in large measure to Radio 2WL sponsorship and the numerous commercial displays forming part of the station's 80's Lifestyle Expo, the numbers of visitors exceeded even the most optimistic predictions.

On both days the sun shone, and the 2WL blimp rode benignly on the end of its moorings, etched against a near-cloudless sky. On Sunday afternoon, when the crowds were thickest, traffic into and out of the car parks was slowed to a crawl.

Among the highlights were the click of leather on willow — and the occasional call to an umpire — from the Town versus Gown cricket match on the Sunday, a display of vintage cars by the enthusiasts of the Illawarra Vintage Car Club, train rides for the children and, among the commercial displays, a graffiti sprayer's dream — a large-capacity gun with independent pump unit, capable of an apparently unparalleled degree of accuracy!

But while the commercial exhibits were crowded-out the level of interest in the displays laid on by many University departments was also high: one could look through a microscope, see a working display of robots, find out about careers in computing, listen to a lecture, 'An Introduction to Psychology,' or a range of lectures on Humanities topics.

Yes, on the whole, an excellent weekend all round.

Department of Physics display — a telescope for observing sun spots

Below: Display and sale of ceramics and paintings in the University Pentagon by local exhibitors

In the School of Education: examples of work in Visual Arts completed by trainee teachers

Below: Demonstration by Rhee Tae Kwon Do Academy

Pictures on this page by Barry Daniel
Coal spiral concentrator

The environmental stress in the Illawarra area has increased the need to clean and reduce disposal of unwanted coal rejects. In the coming years the coal industry will be forced to produce a reject that is more environmentally acceptable.

One device which has application in cleaning fine coal and hence reduce environmental stress caused by coal preparation plants is the spiral concentrator.

The spiral concentrator was developed in the USA during the Second World War to separate and concentrate gold-bearing ores. However, I. B. Humphreys, the inventor, first used it to concentrate chromite bearing sands. The spiral was applied to fine coal cleaning shortly thereafter and showed promising results.

The full potential of the spiral was first realised in Australia where, during the 1940s and 50s, east-coast sand mining was fast becoming a boom industry. The spiral proved most effective and was developed extensively with new materials (fibreglass and plastic) and by modifications to spiral pitch and trough cross-section.

The spiral donated to the University of Wollongong for research purposes by F. Wright, 'Cyclone Sluice' of Terranora, NSW, is a product of experience gained through sand mining and was specifically designed for the cleaning of fine coal. The spiral is made of fibreglass with a p.v.c. tube centre shaft; it has a rubber-based lining to reduce wear. The spiral has six turns of a modified semi-circular cross-section with 'splitters', to take off rejects, located along the turns. The spiral finally gives three products, a reject, a middling which can be reprocessed and a clean coal product.

Spiral concentrators operate by gravity and centrifugal forces acting on a particle in an open liquid suspension. This can be likened to the sedimentation of sand on the inner radius of river bends but at a much higher stream velocity. At present there is no theory to explain accurately the liquid flow, let alone the movement of the particles in the flow.

The testing conducted at The University of Wollongong has been undertaken to identify some of the parameters which determine the performance of spiral concentrator fine coal beneficition, namely, the rate of flow of the solids and the solids/liquids ratio with the aim of examining how these affect the performance of spirals and whether optimum conditions may be identified.

Samples of thickened coal tailings underflow used in all tests conducted to date were kindly supplied by Jim Hickey of the Huntley Coal Mine Washery. The samples were of high ash content (40-50 per cent) and had a size range of 0 to minus 2mm (95 per cent > 75 μm).

The tests were conducted on a range of solids throughput of 0.5 (15 per cent solids) to 2 (40 per cent solids) tonne per hour in the rig illustrated. The clean coal product was consistently reduced in ash content by 50 per cent and more (for lower solids/liquids ratios). The rejects were 65-80 per cent ash. Results at this point are incomplete but certain trends have become evident; these are:

1. The spiral should be used at full capacity (with a full trough) to give the best results.
2. The solids/liquids ratio provides a good control on ash reduction and the combustible recovery.
3. The particle size and distribution influences the efficiency.
4. Higher solids/liquids ratios (30-40 per cent) give more consistent results, higher collection efficiency but lower selection efficiency.

In short, the tests to date have shown that the coal spiral concentrator is a cost effective coal cleaning device that needs recognition to gain its rightful place in the coal preparation industry.

Animal Experimentation Ethics

The University has set up an Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee, chaired by Professor Alex Clarke, Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Other members are Mr Colin Denley, lawyer and member of Council; Professor Ron Johnston, Chairman of the Research Grants Committee; and Dr Colin Pinney, a veterinarian in practice at Wollongong.

The committee held its first meeting, in August, inspected the University's facilities for animals in the Biology Department and the Animal House, and discussed relevant matters with academic and other staff concerned with experimentation on and management of animals.

The committee was set up to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council. The whole question of control of the use of animals in research is an issue of wide public interest. The state government is actively considering proposals for legislation.
University makes cover story
With fly ash disposal by pneumatic pipe

Phase 2 of the fly ash pneumatic disposal rig at the university. Standing by the control unit is Dr P. C. Arnold.

THE study into pneumatic conveying equipment, being undertaken by the Department of Mechanical Engineering in the University — and described in the University Gazette Vol. 1, no. 2 — was featured in a 'cover story' in the September 16 issue of Engineers Australia.

The article updates that published in the Gazette with the news of equipment being installed at the Callide B power station in Queensland. The equipment forms part of a contract worth $10 million for an ash and dust-handling plant, which will carry up to 100 tonnes of fly ash for 1.5 km in pneumatic pipes of 200-250 mm diameter in what is believed to be the first long-distance pneumatic installation of its type in Australia.

Callide B is to be commissioned in 1987. Fly ash collected from 40 individual hoppers will be discharged into dense-phase pneumatic vessels which will take the ash to storage containers.

The contract for the installation has been awarded to NEI John Thompson (Australia) — the organisation that commissioned what is believed to be Australia's largest and most sophisticated test rig in this area. This of course is the rig built at The University of Wollongong and being used to test conveying characteristics of the Callide B fly ash and other materials suitable for long-distance conveying.

News of the $10.5 million contract means of course that the tempo of the university's research (which was started in 1979) will have to be intensified in view of the 1987 deadline — encouraging news for those involved in the project: Dr P. C. Arnold, Dr A. G. McLean, Mr P. Wypych and Mr D. M. Cook of the Bulk Solids Handling Research Group.

Chinese academics visit Wollongong

A DELEGATION of Chinese academics from some of the leading technological universities in China visited Wollongong at the end of October. Their itinerary took in the university and a tour of heavy industry.

The Chinese delegation expressed interest in examining the training conditions in Australia in tertiary education, especially in the field of engineering. They were also interested in studying the relationship between higher education and the economy as a whole.

While here the visitors saw a number of Departments, especially in the Faculty of Engineering. They also held discussions with senior university staff.

It is likely they will be considering the possibility of exchanges of academic staff between China and Australia.

During their visit the Chinese academics presented Dr Ken McKinnon Vice-Chancellor of The University of Wollongong, with a superbly crafted tapestry of the Great Wall of China. Here at the presentation are, from the left: Liang Songfang, President of Shandong Engineering Institute; Chen Keqian, Vice President of Suzhou University; Dr Ken McKinnon, Vice Chancellor; Prof. Alex Clarke, Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Huang Renjie (Leader of the Delegation), Vice President of Chengdu University of Science and Technology; Zhang Zelin, Vice Chairman of Civil Engineering Dept. of Fuzhou University; Xia Guangshi, Interpreter of group; Liu Jiamu, Vice President of Jianghan University (illawarra Mercury picture).
Though the new constitution still defines the orchestra as ‘amateur’, the budget has increased since 1981 from some $3,000 per annum to nearly $20,000. Fund-raising drives have received considerable private and public support, with commitments from many sources for continuing funding. This enabled the orchestra to inaugurate a four-concert main annual subscription series for 1982; and plans for future additional concerts include a chamber-orchestra series and a ‘cabaret-concert’ series which, it is hoped, will be floated in 1985 and 1986, as well as educational visits by players to schools in the area.

Close links between the orchestra and the Arts School will, it is hoped, remain and indeed strengthen; instrumental major students in the current Associate Diploma must belong to the orchestra, while the same requirement will be made of similar students in the new Bachelor of Creative Arts course beginning in 1984. The orchestra rehearses at the Music Centre and its library and equipment are based there.

The close association between the university and the orchestra will, it is expected, benefit both parties, with the orchestra continuing to provide the opportunity for outstanding young players to gain orchestral experience, and the orchestra having a base, as it were, for its operations.

The orchestra has now released its 1984 season brochure. Highlights of the season, which celebrates the 150th anniversary of Wollongong, include a performance of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony at the final concert in November. The year 1985 will bring several performances of Bach and Handel — in the tri-centenary year of the birth of both composers.

Publication dates

Next issue of the Gazette will appear on March 22. That will be followed by issues on June 22, October 22 and December 10 respectively. Deadline for material in the March issue will be February 20.
Nursing education in a tertiary setting

THE Illawarra School of Nursing is situated with the Institute of Advanced Education at The University of Wollongong. It is the first school established in a college of advanced education in New South Wales to offer a three-year certificate course in general nursing. Since its inception — on 4 February 1980 — it is the only nursing school recruiting student nurses in the Illawarra Region and replaces the hospital-based schools situated in Wollongong, Port Kembla District, Bulli District and the Bowral and District Hospitals.

Although the School’s official inception took place in February 1980 the Illawarra Regional Council of Nurse Education, under the chairmanship of Miss N. Reynolds, had developed integrative linkages with the Institute of Education in June 1979. Through this mechanism, the committees appointed by the Illawarra Regional Council of Nurse Education were established, and working parties started the implementation of policies and guidelines.

Co-operation and communication are perhaps the key words in a project of this nature and the School was fortunate to have the assistance of both nursing and college administrative and educational staff. This not only ensured an optimum input of expertise but encouraged a closer liaison between the education and health sectors. It is fair to say that both parties benefited by the exchange of ideas and certainly each gained a clearer perspective of the other’s requirements. Many college faculty members have found teaching a vocational course a challenge. Others have been bemused and horrified to learn of the responsibilities nurses have been forced to assume — a fact long known by the profession but not always appreciated by others. Students have benefited from the experience of lecturers accustomed to teaching at tertiary levels.

Owing to the School being situated on a campus which offers a diversity of courses, the Council had the opportunity to implement a philosophy often expressed in nursing and educational circles. Nurses for too long have been the recipients of a narrow and restricted education. In addition to the traditional and necessary foundation studies, such as practice of nursing, behavioural and social issues, medicine and surgery, a small but important liberal studies strand was included in the curriculum. Students are therefore provided with an opportunity to study an area not necessarily directly related to nursing practice, but simply to enhance their personal development. Courses offered range from physical education to music, art, literature and computer studies. Benefits such as a wider range of audio-visual facilities and other resource material are also available. Similarly, library facilities at colleges and universities exceed most hospital library resources.

Author of this article is Pamela Bell, Deputy Head of School/Course Co-ordinator of the Illawarra School of Nursing

It would be foolish to pretend that the transference of nursing education into a tertiary setting is not without its problems. Most of these have been a direct result of having nursing students as paid members of the workforce on campus with a genuine student body. This perhaps has been one of the most annoying areas for staff and students to deal with. Integration of the two groups is difficult when the nursing section of the population is constantly disappearing due to the need to return to the hospitals for service needs. The problems of administering a course for ‘student employees’ within a tertiary setting, while not insurmountable, are certainly time consuming. Teaching of nursing students does not come to an abrupt halt on public holidays. It is essential that administrative matters are well organised and a close liaison with all members of the tertiary sector is essential, ranging from administrators, lecturers and even security personnel.

Nurse educators, accustomed to equipped classrooms, have adjustments to make when they are required to provide all the necessary equipment for lectures. Last-minute changes to room allocations can cause chaos to a system which uses external lecturers. A sense of diplomacy is vitally important when visiting a medical practitioner, unused to being hurried, is running over the allotted lecture time, while outside a class of college students, complete with an irate lecturer, are impatiently waiting to gain admission.

Having dealt with some of the unsuspected administrative problems, what are the advantages of being a regional school located within a tertiary campus?

The nursing profession, supported by innumerable committees of enquiry, has been tenacious in its determination to upgrade all nursing education to tertiary level. When this becomes a reality, nursing personnel in the Illawarra Region will be fortunate in that they will have had an interim period in which to adjust to the realities of the tertiary sector. Nursing from its very inception has encountered more problems than most professions. Its lack of power is inextricably linked to political and feminist issues and to the need for an acceptable role definition. These and other problems can, in part, be linked to its inadequate education system.

The need for change in nursing education in NSW has been the subject of several reports in recent years, the most recent being the Sax Committee Report in 1977/78. Rapidly changing health needs require a system of health care that is less institutionalised, more community based, less hierarchical and more technologically complex. In turn this demands a nurse education system designed to prepare nurses for more diversified roles in the community, less institutionalised in emphasis, more democratic in ethos, and giving primacy to educational needs.

Transference of nursing education into the tertiary sector may not be the ‘cure all’ for the problems which beset the profession. There is still a long path to travel before some of these can be resolved. It would, however, be reasonable to assume from the experience thus far, that a co-operative educational venture is capable of success and therefore to be encouraged rather than discouraged.
National migrant heritage centre for the Illawarra

GIVEN the major role that migrants have played in the history of the Illawarra, the proposal for the development of a Migrant Heritage Centre for the region is more than welcome. It is fitting that such a centre should be located in the Wollongong area. The proposal is that it be located on the University of Wollongong campus, on its Northfields Avenue boundary, close to the entrance to the Botanic Gardens.

Envisaged for the centre will be:
- Museum and interpretive display areas highlighting the history of immigration and the contribution of migrants to Australia's history.
- Studio and exhibition space for migrant arts, crafts and traditional skills.
- Entertainment and performing space for dance, music and drama activities related to migrant cultures.
- Social and catering facilities.

The centre will meet many regional and, indeed, many national needs, and for many reasons. Immigration has contributed greatly to Australia's history. There is a growing public awareness and interest in heritage and ethnic matters. No centre of this kind exists in Australia, although similar centres have been established in other countries having strong migrant traditions. The US is only one example — but an important one.

Regionally and nationally Wollongong is clearly the most appropriate site, and there will be benefits for the city.

It will encourage tourism in the region.

It will provide a focus for research and cultural activities.

Through its focus on art, craft and traditional ethnic skills it could create a renaissance in the region, thus creating a base for possible development of small-scale industries and co-operatives.

It will provide, or should provide, an important educational resource for the area. It should generate employment even, in the design and building of the centre, in the preparation of display material and in publications; general staffing will be required and so on.

As to location, there are clear benefits from the use of a university site and a university affiliation. The centre will become, for example, an added attraction to Wollongong's western tourist complex — Mt Keira, Gleniffer Brae, Botanic Gardens, university campus and proposed planetarium.

There will be, too, a relationship in support services within the university — the new Centre for Multicultural Studies, the Library, the School of Creative Arts and the Department of History. The site, moreover, is already serviced with essential amenities such as car parks, roads and catering. Even in the design stage there will be available the skills of the University Civil Engineering Department and Technical College.

An outline of the concept proposal has been developed by the University Union, Friends of the University and the Centre for Multicultural Studies. The suggestion now is that a National Migrant Centre Trust be established with representatives from additional groups including those from local ethnic communities, the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Environmental Heritage Committee, Wollongong City Council, South Coast Labour Council, the Leisure Coast Tourist Association and other interested parties.

In this initial development phase the university is prepared to supply administrative and clerical support to the trust.
THE Friends of The University of Wollongong have created a bequest-and-benefactions committee chaired by Mr Harold Hanson, and a program has been devised to attract bequests and gifts.

A low-key advertising campaign has been adopted, together with a message from the Chancellor, The Hon Justice R. M. Hope, CMG. The Chancellor’s message is as follows:

Universities have traditionally been the beneficiaries of people who want to make a lasting gift to their city or to civilisation generally. Universities are given perpetual succession by the government, and therefore a gift to a university is guaranteed with a long life of usefulness to the community.

People who remember universities in their wills are usually people who wish to benefit that part of civilisation that strives for knowledge, understanding and the preservation of the best in our history, our ideas and ideals. Universities represent all this. They are vitally concerned with creating new knowledge and preserving the old. They are also concerned with passing this on to each generation of young people and mature-age students that come on to the campuses of Australia.

The old universities of Australia have over the years received substantial help from bequests. Examples include:

- The Challis Bequest to the University of Sydney which include the Challis Professors of Law and Medicine and Challis House in Martin Place, Sydney.
- The Hackett Bequest to the University of Western Australia which made it possible to offer free University education to generations of Western Australians at a time when the rest of Australia was paying lecturing fees.
- The Bonython Bequest to the University of Adelaide that made it possible to build that University’s Great Hall, The Bonython Hall is one of Australia’s most striking buildings.

The University of Wollongong serves the South Coast and Southern Highlands of New South Wales. It was created by the local people who in 1960-61 raised $400,000 to create the Wollongong University College. The college was then affiliated to the University of New South Wales. The site bought by the NSW Government was previously a dairy farm on 16 hectares immediately east of Mt Keira.

On 1 January 1975 the University College was granted its independence and became The University of Wollongong. In 1982 the University merged with the neighbouring Institute of Advanced Education, thereby considerably broadening its range of courses and facilities.

In 1983 the University had grown to a size where it had 4,000 students and an annual budget of $25 million; and it is one of the major economic influences on the prosperity of the region. It contains the largest library on the South Coast, one of the most efficient computer installations and a total plant valued at over $80 million.

It is making a marked impact on the performing arts, fine arts, music and culture generally in the region. Through the office of Uniadvice we provide expert guidance to people in the region who need technical, scientific or other advice on a wide range of matters. The Friends of the University include all the members of the community who have a special interest in the University and we hope that you will join them.

The University of Wollongong is an institution of which I am very proud and I am sure that you share this pride with me. It is deserving of your support, and it needs your support in order for it to grow and flourish as the older universities in Australia have done.

To give you an idea of what can be done with a benefaction or a bequest the following rough guides are included:

- A book in the Library ............. $30
- A shelf of books in the Library .... $3,000
- A piece of equipment — microscopes, microcomputers, tape recorders, pianos, x-ray machines ....... $5,000-$30,000
- A building .............. $2,080 per square metre
- An endowed scholarship ........ $5,000 per student
- An endowed lectureship ........ $80,000
- An endowed professorship .... $1,500,000

It is possible for a donor or bequestor to remain anonymous, but the university would prefer to name buildings, professorships and scholarships after the benefactor and similar acknowledgements can be made in library books and items of equipment.

There are many things we need to make The University of Wollongong a leader. They include books, art works, musical instruments, microscopes, laboratory equipment, houses and flats for visiting academics and much more.

The goodwill of the local people created the University of Wollongong and their trust has been amply rewarded. They put Wollongong first and they will continue to do that in the future.

Please think about making a lasting gift to the region by supporting the university, which will be continuing its important work forever.

Community access courses in microcomputing

THE School of Industrial and Administrative Studies in The University of Wollongong has introduced a series of short courses relating to computer programming and involving the use of the microcomputer.

The range of courses covers introductory and advanced aspects of programming and includes courses designed specifically for adults and school children respectively. The courses are generally presented over four weeks, involving six hours each week with evening courses available for working adults and school vacation day courses for children.

Community response has been overwhelming and clearly indicates the extent to which the microcomputer is penetrating the workplace, the home and the classroom.

The School is planning to extend the range of courses beyond those planned through to the end of January 1984 with a particular view to the specialised applications of microcomputers in business and industry in the Illawarra.

Inquiries regarding these courses are welcome. The School recognises the need to tailor courses to the needs of a community experiencing the microcomputer revolution both in the workplace and the home.
THE fostering and development of leisure skills in disabled people give rise to proficiency in areas such as, for example, language, motor skills and personal development. Thus, to investigate leisure activities for such people in the Illawarra, a survey was conducted by Dr Lyn Gow of the School of Education in The University of Wollongong in March of last year. The survey was supported by funds from the School of Education in the Wollongong Institute of Advanced Education. Groups surveyed were handicapped people and their parents, church groups, ex-student groups, the local council, and specialists in the field from the University, Special schools, Youth and Community Services, Sport and Recreation, Community Health, a local Leisure Centre, Sheltered workshops and group homes.

It was established that the provision of leisure facilities for disabled people was limited and fragmented, and that two separate programs were needed: one for the over 18s and one for the under 18s.

One program evolved catered for all disabled people in the over-18 category from the Illawarra area. A regional committee was set up, with representatives from the workshops and activity centres as well as from the organisations involved with the disabled.

One aim was to have the disabled people involved ultimately conducting the meetings — and the ensuing festivities. As a next step the Leisure Committee organised a range of inexpensive weekend activities. Among the pursuits were a bush walk, sports and games day. Buses were borrowed from a local special school and Rotaract provided the drivers. In addition, workshop employees were taught how to make use of the ‘disabled taxi’ service. The committee also organised teams to participate in the special Olympics Aquatic Carnival at North-Sydney Olympic Pool and the Hunter Valley regional Special Olympics. Participants thus encountered new people, new places, learned to develop independent living skills and how, simply, to enjoy themselves.

Forum for information

Leisure Committee meetings have become a forum for sharing information and ideas. The committee has written to the Premier and the Minister for Youth and Community Services to call for investigations into working conditions for handicapped people in sheltered workshops and to indicate support for an investigation being carried out by the National Advisory Council for the Mentally Handicapped. Proposals were written for the development of several independent living-skills training programs: budgeting, travelling, meeting procedures, and newsletter production. Submissions were also made for a Drop-in Centre — a church hall with a large kitchen and indoor games in Wollongong — to operate during the Christmas break when many of the employees of the sheltered workshops found themselves bored away from work, and for a Buddy Scheme whereby the non-disabled peers of the disabled initiated joint participation in leisure activities. These proposals were successful in attracting funding from the Illawarra Handicapped Persons’ Trust to pay for co-ordinators, equipment and travel.

It will be seen therefore that the Illawarra Region Leisure Committee has served to unite groups involved with the disabled. One result is that an inter-agency group, consisting of representatives of professional and para-professional groups from Sydney and Illawarra Region, has been formed to co-ordinate services. Some of the planned activities of this group include development of a volunteer training program in conjunction with the Sydney volunteer organisation, investigation of the feasibility of a parent training program for this region under the guidance of the Sydney Parent Education group; an Awareness Week involving open days at all sheltered workshops and a Disabled Achiever Award; the development of a training program for the staff of sheltered workshops; an Illawarra Region Special Olympics, with representatives of groups for the disabled from throughout the state to be invited; production of employee screening and evaluation instruments. This inter-agency group is now one of the Standing Committees of the Illawarra Handicapped Person’s Trust.

The Leisure Committee has continued to meet this year and, with the success of the meeting procedure training program, meetings are totally organised and conducted by the disabled — and the goal of encouraging the participants to organise their own leisure time independently has thus been achieved.

Priorities for future development of programs for adults are for a broadening of their scope, to allow them to cater for more disabled population and to focus on encouraging more of them to mix with as wide a cross-section of the community as possible.

The Youngsters

The Leisure Program of 1981 was designed originally to benefit disabled children. It aimed at developing socialising and communication skills for the handicapped and their siblings. It was started because it was felt there were few weekend activities held for handicapped children; and very few which gave handicapped children a chance to play and interact with normal children.

The committee of University and Wollongong Institute students therefore began a program to learn how to handle the different problems they might encounter. Schools of the district were asked to participate — especially the Special Schools such as Parameadows, Greencraes, Peterborough Towara, Cram House and Baringa.

The program was highly successful last year and a regular roll-up of at least 30 children took part. The times eventually agreed upon were from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. every Saturday fortnight.