

Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

February 1999 – Vol 8 No 1

HSC for the New Millennium

An article by Professor Gordon Stanley, on the reforms of the Higher School Certificate, appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald in January 1999. The following is an edited version of the text. While there are some who are asking if there is enough time to put in place the changes to the Higher School Certificate, those who recognise the benefits of the new system are asking, how can we even consider delaying?

This is the first opportunity in 30 years that the community has had the chance to look at the big picture and make sure it is still in focus.

Overwhelmingly, the community has said it is time for change. While the HSC is still doing its job, over the past 30 years its job has changed dramatically. When the HSC was introduced in 1967 just over 18,000 students sat the examinations in 28 subjects. The retention rate for Years 11 and 12 was approximately 20 per cent. Today, more than 65,000 students (a retention rate of

around 70 per cent) sit examinations in over 70 subjects.

The new HSC will raise the standard of courses, challenge all students and expand opportunities for students to undertake accredited vocational education and training while at school.

***This is the first
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Can the Board of Studies meet the timeline to give NSW a new HSC for the next millennium?

Last year we successfully introduced

the new School Certificate. Many predicted that such significant changes to the Year 10 School Certificate could not be achieved in the timeframe. However, the Board met its timeline and, importantly, delivered a significantly improved School Certificate to the students of NSW.

I believe we will be able to do the same for the HSC. Already the Board has undertaken extensive consultation and will continue to consult with schools in preparation for the changes. Given our objective that the reforms make for a better, fairer HSC, the timeline has been developed to ensure students will benefit from the improvements as soon as possible.

In the past, syllabus development generally occurred in a piecemeal fashion and was at times an inefficient process. The present changes are designed to achieve a whole of curriculum perspective

continued page 7




PDHPE K-6 Update

The PDHPE K-6 project team has been putting the final touches to the syllabus and support documents over the recent holiday period. These documents are scheduled for release in Term 2.

Improvements to the draft syllabus have been made following valuable feedback from various groups, including schools involved in the collection of work samples, teachers involved in the analysis of the outcomes and members of the PDHPE K-6 Board Curriculum Committee.

The PDHPE syllabus package follows the model established for English K-6 and HSIE K-6. The

package includes the syllabus, a support document of modules (incorporating a set of student work samples), a principal's package and support material for parents. Consistency in the development of K-6 syllabuses and support documents is a key principle in the Board's K-6 curriculum development agenda. Apart from recognising minimal change to the 1992 draft syllabus (a document that most schools use as the mandatory document for PDHPE), teachers will find the design, layout, organisation and language in the syllabus and modules to be highly consistent with the English K-6 and HSIE K-6 documents. 

HSC and SC Important Dates

Year 10

- 1 Mar School-designed Board Endorsed Courses 2000: Guidelines and Applications Booklet sent to schools
- 5 Mar School Certificate entry forms and schedules of Board Endorsed and Board Developed Courses sent to schools
- 12 Mar Presiding Officers' nominations for SC/HSC sent to schools

Year 11

- 1 Mar School-designed Board Endorsed Courses 2000: Guidelines and Applications Booklet sent to schools
- 19 Mar Preliminary entry forms sent to schools

Year 12

- 15 Feb HSC entry forms and printouts of Board Endorsed and Board Developed Courses sent to schools
- 19 Feb Preliminary advice re dates and submissions details for practical examinations in Term 3 sent to schools
- 26 Feb Oral/Aural Languages Timetable Examination Period 21 August – 18 September sent to schools
- 1 Mar School-designed Board Endorsed Courses 2000: Guidelines and Applications Booklet sent to schools
- 8 Mar HSC entry forms due at Board
- 12 Mar Presiding Officers' nominations for SC/HSC sent to schools
- 19 Mar HSC practical option collection forms sent to schools

Contents

HSC for the new millennium	1
PDHPE K–6 update	1
President's Message	3
Thousands of HSC students get in early	3
The Minister's Young Designers Awards	3
Primary Matters.....	4
HSC for students with special education needs	6
<i>Official Notices centre liftout</i>	
John Cook named in Honours List.....	8
Talent takes centre stage at OnSTAGE 98.....	8
On Board student newspaper	9
Product News	11
Designing the future – HSC students lead the way.....	12
ARTEXPRESS.....	12

ARTEXPRESS on display (see back page for details)



Katherine Bestic
Galactic playgirl
St Leo's College,
Wahroonga



David Marshall
Walking with Jayd
Macquarie Boys
Technology High School

The *Board Bulletin* is a regular publication by the Board of Studies NSW. Principals are requested to circulate it among teachers and members of the School Council, P & C and parents. One copy should be filed for reference. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome.

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President's Message



The Board has started the year with the celebration of the work of HSC students represented in exhibitions and performances – ARTEXPRESS, OnSTAGE, Encore and DesignTech. These events allow the public to see the creative outcomes from students, teachers and schools, and certainly showcase remarkable talent.

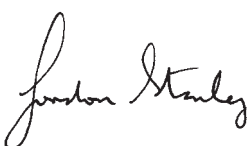
The Creative Arts K–6 Draft Syllabus and support documents are in schools now for consultation. As always, we appreciate additional feedback from classroom experience at this penultimate stage of development. The Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Syllabus and support documents have been printed and are being made available to schools. They are attractively presented and initial reactions are extremely positive. These materials represent further steps in the Board's commitment to producing high-quality, user-friendly new material for our primary schools.

Over the past couple of months the HSC syllabus revision process, involving hundreds of teachers and professional consultants, has been productive and working towards the timelines set by the Board to ensure materials are available for a smooth introduction of the new HSC.

Assessment and reporting of the 1998 School Certificate has given useful experience of the standards-referencing approach that will characterise the new HSC. Preparation of professional development packages is well underway to assist teachers with these changes.

I am sure the education community in NSW is pleased to see recognition given to John Cook in the Australia Day Honours List. At the Board we are delighted to see the broader acknowledgement of his immense contribution to public examinations.

The beginning of a new school year always has its special challenges. May I take this opportunity to wish you a successful and professionally satisfying year.




(Professor) Gordon Stanley

Thousands of HSC students get in early

Over 30,000 students accessed their HSC results over the Internet this year and 45,000 chose to contact the HSC results phone service.

The introduction of the Internet service this year is one more way students can receive their results early, giving them more time to make decisions about future study or work options.


As with the phone service, students accessed their results on the Internet using their student number and a Personal Identification Number. This ensured the site was secure and maintained the confidentiality of students' results.

Both the phone and Internet service will be available again later this year, with students to receive their HSC results before Christmas. 

The Minister's Young Designers Awards

Information about the 1999 Minister's Young Designers Awards will be forwarded to all secondary schools early in Term 1. Last year 4000 entries were received for this program from around the state, with winning projects displayed in the Sydney Visitor Centre at The Rocks from November 1998 to January 1999.

The program encourages students to develop a design project based on a clearly defined need. All students who enter receive a certificate from the Minister for Education and Training and there are special prizes, including cash, presented to students who receive state awards.

During Term 1, Design and Technology teachers will receive an information kit and posters for display in schools. Expressions of interest forms, which can be found in the kit, need to be at the Office of the Board of Studies early in Term 2. Further information can be obtained by contacting Teresa Renneberg, Exhibitions Coordinator, on (02) 9367 8309. 

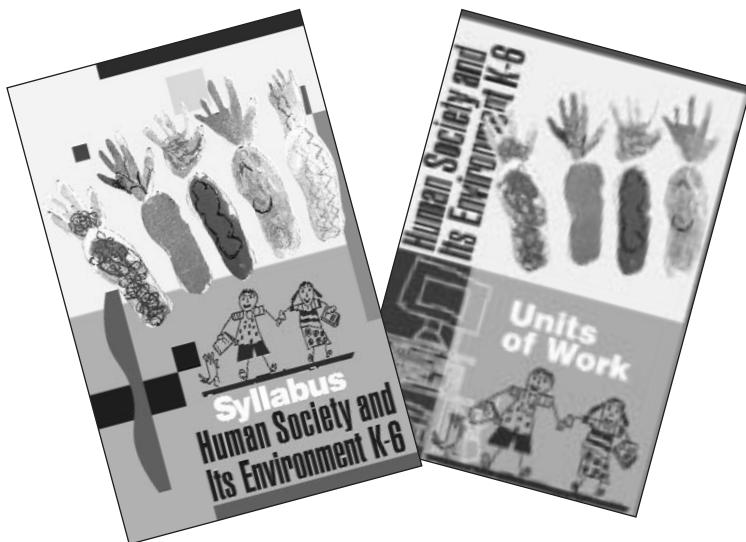




Primary Matters

The *Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Syllabus* and support documents have now been made available to schools. The syllabus package includes:

- the *Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Syllabus*;
- the *Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Units of Work* support document (incorporating student work samples and teaching strategies and practices);
- the *Principal's Package* for school leaders;
- a support document for parents, *Introducing the HSIE K-6 Syllabus to Parents and School Community Members*; and
- a parent flyer, *Human Society and Its Environment K-6: Information for Parents*.



A support document for students with special education needs in Human Society and Its Environment K-6 and a CD-ROM of the syllabus and support documents are scheduled for release in the near future.

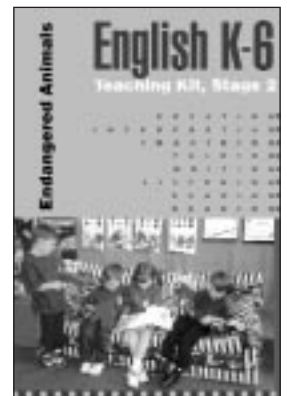
In endorsing the syllabus the Board shared the sentiments of the HSIE K-6 Board Curriculum Committee in congratulating all who contributed to its development, particularly those who were involved over the last few months of the project. The contribution of the late Meg Sharkey was also acknowledged. Meg's work as a member of committees involved in the development of the syllabus was invaluable.

English K-6

A new set of English K-6 teaching kit titles was made available to schools at the end of last year. These books, which are based on the 1998 *English K-6 Syllabus*, are:

- *Fables* (Stage 1) – this uses narratives from ancient and modern cultures to introduce students in Stage 1 to the structure, features and moral purpose of fables;
- *Procedures* (Stage 1) – recipes, instructions and directions are the basis for the activities in this book;
- *Poetry* (Stage 2) – the activities in this book encourage Stage 2 students to enjoy poetry by exploring the themes of selected poems;
- *Traditional Tales* (Stage 2) – this book introduces Stage 2 students to the connections between literature and art and the ways that a culture is embedded in its literature; and
- *Endangered Animals* (Stage 2) – animal rights and animals in danger of extinction are the subject of texts used in this book.

Two forthcoming publications are *Teaching about Texts* and *A Resource of Classroom Practices*.



Creative Arts K-6 Draft Syllabus and Support Documents

Schools were sent a set of draft Creative Arts K-6 documents at the end of 1998. These documents have been made available for consultation during 1999. The consultation for the draft Creative Arts K-6 documents will include a survey (to be sent to schools at the beginning of Term 2), focus group meetings in five locations (including metropolitan, country and regional centres), and written submissions. In addition to this consultation, a randomly selected sample of 30 NSW schools will trial the documents. These schools will provide the Board with specific feedback on the quality and usefulness of the draft syllabus and units of work.

Primary Matters

continued from previous page

K-6 Documents on the Web

The K-6 Documents page on the Board of Studies website contains a number of documents and information pages. If you haven't visited the site lately, this is a brief overview of some of the items on the menu.

Linkages: a curriculum integration information page including research reports and an overview of the Linkages project.

The Primary Curriculum Overview: a document that provides a summary of the key learning areas and definitions for common syllabus terms found in primary syllabuses.

Primary Matters: a collection of previous *Board Bulletin* 'Primary Matters' pages dating back to September 1995.

English K-6: includes the *English K-6 Syllabus* and support documents released in 1998 as well as the *Literacy* and *Communication* special education support documents.

Human Society and Its Environment K-6: includes the *Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Syllabus* and support documents, the HSIE K-6 Resource List and Resource File (which include recommended texts, websites and e-mail listings, current exhibitions and some visual texts linked to the units of work). A

collection of pro formas for planning, programming, assessing and reporting can also be located here.


Mathematics K-6 Outcomes and Indicators: a document that includes the outcomes, indicators and stage statements for the *Mathematics K-6 Syllabus*.

Science and Technology K-6: this section includes 'Science and Technology in Action', a series of pages that enable the viewer to follow the work and deliberations of a Year 5/6 class over a number of weeks. The 1991 syllabus and support documents and the 1996 report on the limited evaluation of the syllabus are also located here.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education K-6: includes a copy of the 1992 *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Draft Syllabus*.

Those who wish to go directly to syllabus documents can select 'Syllabuses' from the menu and then the 'K-6 Syllabuses' option.

The 'K-6 Documents' and 'Syllabuses' menu items can be found at the Board's website: <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

For further information regarding these items or K-6 curriculum matters in general, contact Phil Lambert, Inspector, Primary Education, ph (02) 9367 8199 or fax (02) 9367 8476. 



HSC for students with special education needs

As of the 2001 HSC, students with special education needs following a Special Program of Study will be awarded the Higher School Certificate.

The decision to extend HSC curriculum and reporting arrangements to students with special education needs was based on:

- the Government's clear commitment in the White Paper, *Securing Their Future*, 'to cater for the needs of students with intellectual disabilities in the senior years of schooling' through extending 'special curriculum and reporting arrangements that were established for the School Certificate';
- providing a logical extension to the Special Program of Study for the School Certificate for students with special education needs;
- the development of eligibility criteria to ensure that the Special Program of Study will not result in any reduction of standards or be seen as a 'soft option' by students who do not have special education needs.

Given the study requirements for the HSC and the arrangements that exist for the School Certificate, it will be possible to develop a number of Board Developed Life Skills Courses, including one for English, to enable targeted students to meet study requirements for the HSC. However, it should also be noted that:

- students undertaking a Life Skills course in English would need to complete other courses from either Board Developed Life Skills Courses or from regular syllabuses on the basis of their individual needs in order to meet the full requirements for the HSC;
- remaining courses may be selected from Board Developed Syllabuses, Board Developed Life Skills Courses, general or vocational Content Endorsed Courses or School-designed Board Endorsed Courses;
- successful completion of Life Skills courses may best be determined by school assessment rather than by external examination.

In order to ensure that the Special Program of Study is effectively targeted to appropriate students, a set of criteria for access is proposed. The criteria are designed to ensure that the purpose and standards of these courses are clearly defined within the context of the White Paper determination, and are not perceived to be open to the full range of students.

The criteria are:


- i) that in general, only students who have completed at least four Generic Life Skills courses within a Special Program of Study in Stage 5 be eligible to undertake Life Skills courses for the HSC.
- ii) that principals of schools recommending students for a Special Program of Study for the HSC be required to indicate that such a pathway has been determined following face-to-face discussions with the student, parents/carers and other personnel as appropriate, within the context of an individual education/transition planning process.

Special Notes

- i) It is anticipated that the proposed Board Developed Life Skills Courses for the HSC will not contribute to calculation of the UAI.
- ii) To ensure that the agreed principles for eligibility are adhered to, it is proposed that a Special Considerations Panel may need to be established centrally to review requests for access to Stage 6 Life Skills courses in those cases where students have not completed at least four Life Skills courses in Stage 5. It is envisaged that this review process may apply to:
 - new students from other states and countries;
 - students who have deteriorating disabilities; and
 - students who have attempted regular syllabuses for the School Certificate but who have experienced significant difficulties.

Where to from here?

Writing briefs for the proposed Life Skills courses will be prepared by a project team and will then be distributed for consultation with schools, relevant educational organisations and peak bodies.

Preparation of the draft syllabuses will follow, with further consultation to determine the extent to which the draft syllabuses meet the specifications of the writing briefs. Expressions of interest have been called to form a register of curriculum writers. This register will be used to select writers to undertake the task of preparing the syllabuses for the Stage 6 Life Skills courses. 

For further advice in relation to issuing the HSC to students who have met alternative requirements through a Special Program of Study, contact David Harvey, Senior Project Officer (Special Education), on (02) 9367 8291.

HSC for the New Millennium

continued from page 1

where all disciplines are brought up to best contemporary practice at the same time.

The overall reforms are significant, but we are not starting completely anew. As indicated in the consultation reports published early last year, most HSC courses do not require major changes to meet the needs of the new HSC structure, allowing the new curriculum to build on the HSC's existing strengths.

An understanding of the steps being taken by the Board may help to put the entire process, and the timeline, in perspective.

- To prepare for the changes to the HSC the existing curriculum was subjected to a rigorous review which involved both national and international comparisons of best practice in syllabuses.
- Following extensive consultation with the community, a new structure for the HSC was determined in August 1998 and the Board established its procedures for the development of new syllabuses for all HSC subjects.
- The Board developed a draft writing brief for each syllabus and consulted with schools during October and November 1998.
- Draft syllabuses will be sent to schools in February/March 1999 and will include assessment details and sample examination questions.
- Completed syllabuses and assessment packages will be in schools in July 1999.
- In 2000, Year 11 students commence new HSC courses.

By providing draft writing briefs to all schools, teachers and the community had the opportunity to comment on the general direction

of each new HSC course and any areas of study they believe should be included or excluded.

Comments that the Board cannot deliver quality courses in the timeframe have ignored the extensive consultation process that the Board has undertaken. Listening to teachers' suggestions and criticisms is a crucial part of each stage of the process and will help us to deliver a quality outcome.



'The overall reforms are significant, but we are not starting completely anew.'

Given the feedback we have received so far, by and large, I think we are getting the process right. New courses for the vast majority of subjects will be able to be implemented without difficulty. There will always be a small number of subjects that generate interest or involve a slightly more complicated process. The Board is working with teachers to resolve these issues.


We have been working with the universities to finalise the status of courses for inclusion in the Universities Admission Index (UAI) so that schools, students and parents will be aware of the different options available. When draft syllabuses begin arriving in schools during February and March, many of the questions relating to assessment and examination will be answered.

Detail for planning

As you would expect, the syllabuses will be far more detailed than the writing briefs and it is in these documents that teachers will find examination specifications, sample examination questions, assessment details and other support materials. In short, most of the information they will need to start planning for the implementation of any changes in the courses they teach.

I agree it is an involved and demanding process. But in addressing many meetings with some 2000 teachers and parents across the state during the past six months, I know the community is ready for a new HSC and broadly supports the changes we are making.

We are all conscious that in the current age of change, syllabuses need to be kept contemporary. It is no longer acceptable to have outmoded syllabuses or to delay change unnecessarily.

Four years have passed since Professor McGaw undertook the most comprehensive review of the HSC in its 30-year history. The overwhelming message was that the HSC needed to change. We are making it ready for the third millennium. 

Talent Takes Centre Stage at OnSTAGE 98

An entertaining showcase of young talent in all facets of performance, from acting and scriptwriting to costume and set design, ensured OnSTAGE 98 was an event to remember.


The selection of outstanding projects and performances by 1998 Higher School Certificate Drama students was presented over a five-day period at the Seymour Theatre Centre.

'These performers, although young in years, have the ability to enrich the minds of the audience by capturing their imagination and guiding them through original concepts in creative and entertaining ways,' said NSW Minister for Education and Training, Mr John Aquilina.

'We have an incredible wealth of talent in our schools and it is wonderful to see this talent nurtured and developed within the education system.'

The HSC Drama course caters for the diverse range of talents and interests of its students by providing opportunities to gain experience in a number of areas, including scriptwriting, costume design, acting and critical analysis.


'OnSTAGE 98 is about recognising the world-class resource of talent continually emerging from NSW schools as much as it is about acknowledging the tireless commitment and dedication of both the students and their teachers,' Mr Aquilina said.

Among the 16 group and eight individual performances, subjects such as pre-millennial anxiety, challenges facing humanity and the resemblance between the human race and certain species of the bug world are all addressed with creativity and humour. 



John Cook named in Honours List

Mr John Cook, former Director of Examinations and Assessment at the Office of the Board of Studies, was awarded the Public Service Medal in the Australia Day Honours List for outstanding service to secondary education in NSW.

Mr Cook, who retired last year, worked in education for more than 35 years. His direct involvement with the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate since their introduction in the mid 1960s led to him being known in education circles as 'Mr HSC'. 


ON BOARD

Student Newspaper

On Board is produced by the Office of the Board of Studies four times a year for distribution to students in Years 10, 11 and 12. Written, illustrated and designed by a student editorial team, *On Board* keeps students in touch with examination dates and requirements, as well as providing them with items of interest.

The Term 1, 1999 edition of *On Board* will include articles on the School Certificate, looking at how schools and students in 1998 dealt with the first School Certificate in its new format; the HSC Merit List – what it is, who appears on it, how it is developed; and this year’s exhibitions of ARTEXPRESS, DesignTech, OnSTAGE and Encore – interviews with past participants will explore how their careers have developed. In response to feedback from past issues, there will be an increased emphasis on interviews and photos, giving expression to a range of students.

Applications will be sought for new student members for the 1999 *On Board* editorial team. Participation provides a valuable opportunity for students interested in journalism, design and illustration.

For information or feedback about *On Board*, please contact Kathy Prokhovnik on (02) 9367 8248. 



Board Bulletin

Extra copies available

Schools may request additional copies of the *Board Bulletin* if the standard quantity is not enough.

Secondary schools may request 20 copies instead of the standard 12, and primary schools may request 12 instead of the standard 4 copies.

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PRODUCT NEWS

Welcome back. The Office of the Board of Studies will continue to provide schools with quality service and assistance during the year. Don't forget you can use our e-mail address to seek information about services and products, and to place orders.

Keep a look out for these new items, due for release soon.

The final three titles in the series **PDHPE K-6**: these address the Growth and Development syllabus strand, at \$10 each title:

I Am Special – Stage 1

My Growing Self – Stage 2

Getting It Together – Stage 3.

English K-6 — A Resource of Classroom Practices: a new resource for teachers providing an A-Z of classroom practices that develop students' skills in talking and listening, reading and writing.

Maths 9-10 resource books: two new titles will complement the current *Building Design* title, and will also be available for \$16 each.

1998 HSC Sample Answers: six new titles are due for release during March:

Legal Studies

Design and Technology [book and CD-ROM package]

Visual Arts

English 2/3U Common and 3U

Ancient History

Studies of Religion.

An order form will be sent to your school, containing details of prices.

Motorised Markbook (Version 6): an easy-to-use method of storing, editing, ranking and printing all of your class marks. At \$200, the package includes a CD-ROM, manual and a free school network multi-user license. *Motorised Markbook* will come in two versions – one for Windows V3.1, Win95/98 and NT and the other for Apple Macintosh.

Making Multicultural Australia: an educational multimedia 3 x CD-ROM package exploring key issues and landmark events of Australia's multicultural history. Installation guide and free school network licence included – \$95.

Contact information:

Fax your orders to (02) 9262 6270, quoting an official purchase order number. We are happy to take credit card orders over the phone. Please call (02) 9367 8178. Orders may also be posted to us if you would like to pay by cheque. The address to send a postal order to is GPO Box 5300, Sydney 2001. There is a postage charge of \$4 for one item or \$8 for two or more items.

If you would like to make an enquiry about any of the Board's products, you can speak to a Client Services officer by phoning (02) 9367 8178. Alternatively, our e-mail address is: clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Enquiries: (02) 9367 8331

Helen Kerr, Leader/ Client Services Section. 



Designing the Future

HSC Students Lead the Way

To witness some of the most useful and innovative designs of the future, pay a visit to the DesignTech 98 exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

The exhibition showcases the work of last year's outstanding Higher School Certificate Design and Technology students and ranges from a collection of garments based on ancient oriental designs to a portable, self-watering greenhouse.

Students were asked to research an area of concern and then develop a design concept that would meet a need within that field, while carefully documenting the process in a written portfolio.

'The course will stand students in good stead for future employment because during their studies they have developed qualities such as creativity, adaptability, enterprise and the ability to design in response to an identified need,' NSW Education and Training Minister, John Aquilina, said.

'This year's design achievements are remarkable.'

Illness, disability and the environment are just some of the concerns that have been addressed by this year's students, who use their technical proficiency to improve the quality of life for others.

One student has been inspired by his own love of sailing

to design a dinghy suitable for sailors confined to wheelchairs, while another has invented a kitchen workstation for people with mobility and dexterity difficulties. Fashion, sports and space-saving devices also feature prominently, with a number of students designing and building furniture with a difference, including a space-age chair made entirely from plywood and a storage device in the shape of an egg.

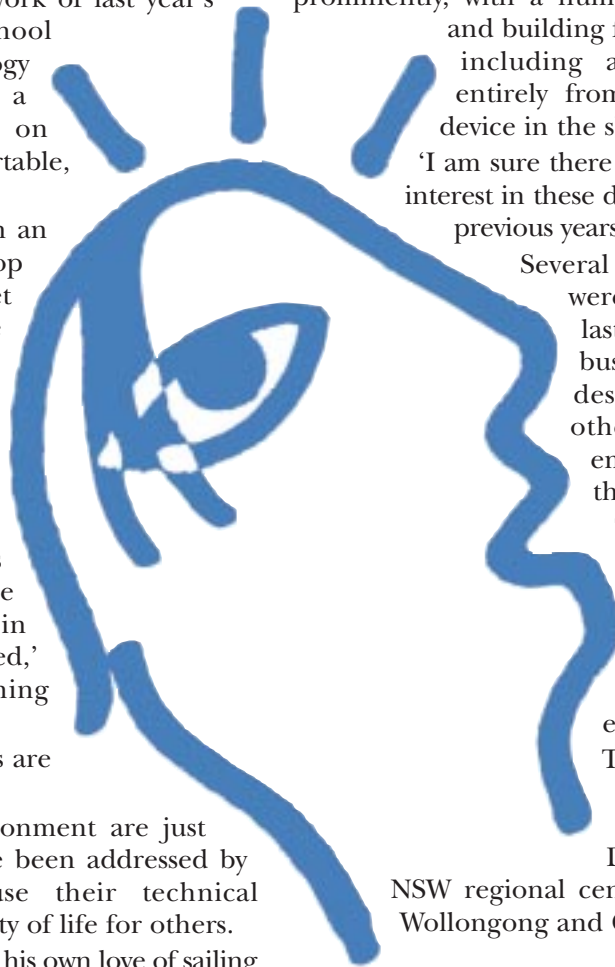
'I am sure there will be a lot of commercial interest in these designs, as there has been in previous years,' Mr Aquilina said.

Several students whose projects were exhibited in DesignTech last year were approached by businesses to develop their design commercially, and other students gained employment on the basis of their successful designs.

The 22 Major Design Projects on display were chosen from 4500 student works submitted for the 1998 Design and Technology HSC examination.

The exhibition will be at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, until 18 April 1999.

DesignTech will then tour NSW regional centres, including Newcastle, Wollongong and Coffs Harbour.



ARTEXPRESS

Once again, the internationally acclaimed exhibition, ARTEXPRESS, is on display at The Art Gallery of NSW, 29 January – 21 March.

ARTEXPRESS is a selection of outstanding works submitted by students for the practical component of the 1998 Visual Arts HSC examination.

A wide range of works, including wearables,

photography, sculpture and computer-generated art, are included in the exhibition.

ARTEXPRESS is also on display at the State Library of NSW from 21 January – 28 February and the College of Fine Arts from 29 January – 21 March, before touring to Newcastle, Lismore, Goulburn, Albury, Orange, Inverell and Campbelltown.

