

What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



The Opening of William Merrylees Library – foundation chancellor Dr David Asimnus, AO, Hon Wai Fie, Kim Beazley, AC and the foundation vice-chancellor of CSU, Emeritus Professor C D Blake, AO.

CSU celebrates its 20th birthday

at the archives
Wayne Doubleday



This year marks the 20th Anniversary of Charles Sturt University (CSU), and the CSU Regional Archives is heavily involved in the commemorative events planned by the university throughout the year. Despite CSU being just twenty years old, it has a strong historical bond with precursor institutions which date back to 1892 and the Wagga Experiment Farm.

Indeed the precursor institutions were as numerous as they were geographically dispersed. They included two Experiment Farms; two Agricultural Colleges; three Teachers Colleges; four Colleges of Advanced Education; and one Institute of Higher Education.

This geographical dispersion remains a feature of CSU today, perhaps to an even greater extent, with main campuses located at Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange & Wagga Wagga; specialist centres located on campuses at Broken Hill, Canberra, Goulburn, Manly, Parramatta & Ontario; and study centres in the heart of Sydney and Melbourne. Support for the establishment of a university, particularly in the Riverina, dated back to the 1950s and 1960s with the Riverina University League.

However, it was not until the late 1980s when momentum really gathered pace. Late 1988 and early 1989 were particularly hectic with intense discussions, negotiations and lobbying centred on possible academic sponsorship models and network arrangements between a number of

institutions.

Ultimately, the NSW Cabinet decided to adopt the concept of a multi-campus rural university, sponsored by the University of NSW. CSU was formally established on June 2, 1989 with the granting of Royal Assent to the Charles Sturt University Act. Interestingly, during the first reading of the Bill to the Legislative Assembly, the university was called the "University of XYZ", as a name was yet to be determined.

The university's name honours the noted explorer, soldier and public servant Captain Charles Sturt, who explored the principal rivers on which the original three campuses of the University were located. The concepts of exploration, learning, enquiry and discovery as embodied by Captain Sturt, appealed greatly to the administrators of the new university.

The Charles Sturt University Act was enacted on July 19, 1989, the same day the interim board of governors convened for the first time.

Under the stewardship of Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Birt, the then vice-chancellor of the University of NSW, the interim board of governors was faced with the arduous tasks of deciding where to base the vice-chancellor's office and how to establish the academic and administrative structures of the new university.

The interim board of governors also resolved to ask Mr David Asimnus to become the Foundation Chancellor of CSU. The appointment of the university's foundation vice-chancellor soon followed, with Professor Cliff Blake formally commencing in this role on May 1, 1990.

In the following year, two more important events occurred. On May 13, the official naming ceremony of "The Grange" took place in Bathurst, with Captain Anthony Napier Sturt (the great-grandson of Captain Charles Sturt) in attendance.

Two days later, David Asimnus was officially

installed as the foundation chancellor of Charles Sturt University.

In establishing its new identity the university was granted its own distinctive coat of arms from the College of Arms on June 2, 1992. It comprised three elements: the open book – a traditional symbol of a university; three waves depicting the three rivers which were explored by Captain Charles Sturt (namely the Macquarie, the Murrumbidgee and the Murray); and the Sturt desert pea, named after Captain Sturt, which is also the floral emblem of the university.

The 1990s were a period of considerable growth, development and achievement for the university. During this time, the university grew to become the largest distance education provider in Australia, a remarkable achievement for such a young institution.

A new campus at Dubbo was soon established, and by 1997 construction had commenced at the Thurgoona campus near Albury. CSU was also named University of the Year for 1997 – The University of the First Generation by the *Good Universities Guide*. After nurturing tertiary education in NSW for more than 30 years, Professor Blake retired from the position of vice-chancellor in 2001.

He was replaced by Professor Ian Goulter on July 4, 2001. Likewise, David Asimnus, the foundation chancellor, retired in 2002, with current chancellor, Mr Lawrence Willeit, installed on the 20th March 2003.

A new phase in the development of CSU had clearly taken place. By 2005, the university had commenced the delivery of teacher education programs in Ontario, Canada, and had completed a successful acquisition of the Orange campus from the University of Sydney.

The establishment of a Veterinary Science Program, and more recently the School of Dentistry and Health Sciences, have placed Charles Sturt University at the forefront of recruiting, educating and retaining professionals for regional Australia.



Former NSW Police Commissioner Peter Ryan, QPM BA Msc, and the late Foundation Chancellor Dr David Asimnus, AO.