



Award for Outstanding Philanthropic Support of Higher Education 2007



Purpose

To recognise support for higher education; and to draw attention to the extent of this support, the key role it plays in enabling important and innovative programs, and in leveraging further support.

WINNER

Sir William Tyree OBE

Sir William Tyree Laboratory in Power Engineering, The University of Sydney

Following a \$1m commitment in 2007 by Sir William Tyree OBE, the Sir William Tyree Laboratory in Power Engineering will open in 2008.

In 1982, Sir William and the AW Tyree Foundation funded the Tyree Chair of Otolaryngology, held by Professor William Gibson. Professor Gibson went on to establish the RPAH Adult Cochlear Implant Program in 1984 and the Children's Cochlear Implant Centre in 1986. Sir William's gift towards this area, then, has had an enormous impact on research and practice in the area of hearing impairment.

Also during the 1980s, Sir William and the AW Tyree Foundation were generous supporters of the Sir William Tyree Chair at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Between 1996 and 1999, Sir William and the AW Tyree Foundation funded four Sir William Tyree Scholarships in Computer Science to encourage excellence in the field of computer science.

Sir William and the AW Tyree Foundation have also been donors to the University's Optical Fibre Technology Centre, the Warren Centre's Sustainable Transport in Sustainable Cities forum, and the University's Melanoma Foundation.

Further to this, Sir William and the AW Tyree Foundation have supported higher education elsewhere: Sir William is also a supporter of the University of New South Wales. He has supported the Australian Industry InnovationXchange Network, now IXC Australia.

Sir William is explicit in identifying his commitment to education as an investment in Australia's future, saying 'I want to try and improve the education of people coming on to replace us old blokes in Australia, because unless something is put back into education, Australia will not grow.' His commitment to investment in education, then, is based on a strong commitment to invest in the future, and an awareness that philanthropic investment in education is an essential investment that results in broader benefits to Australian society.

Sir William's philanthropy in the area of engineering is in part underpinned by his own success in the engineering industry. Sir William founded Tyree Industries (subsequently sold to Westinghouse), and the Tyree Group of Companies, still run by the Tyree family, is one of Australia's 100 largest private companies. Sir William has received many national and international honours for his contributions to the engineering industry, including an OBE (1971), a knighthood (1975), an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Sydney (1985). He has also received many awards and honours from his peers in the engineering industry, including the James N Kirby Gold Medal from the Institute of Production Engineers, Australia (1980), the Centennial Medal of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, USA (1984), and the Peter Nicol Russell Memorial Medal (1985).

HIGH COMMENDATION: Mr Ron Diamond, Central Queensland University

Mr R F (Ron) Diamond has demonstrated long term and visionary philanthropic commitment to higher education. His contributions span institutions and disciplines and are monetary as well intellectual. His support has come willingly and without solicitation and has held firm despite administrative and organisational problems. In addition to Mr Diamond's financial contributions and advocacy, he has influenced Central Queensland University's leadership in their decision to establish a CQU Office of Development. He was an active member of the University's Foundation. In 2000 Mr Diamond, established a trust in honour of his late brother, Dr R J (Jim) Diamond who distinguished himself in the fields of physics and mathematics. Mr Diamond donated \$50 000, on behalf of himself and his wife, Helen, and actively sought Government funding to complement his contribution. He was successful at securing a further \$10,000 from the Queensland Government in recognition of the achievements of Dr Diamond who, in 1933, was the first State ward to win a scholarship to the University of Queensland.

The non-profit Science Centre was a hands-on learning facility. The Robert James Diamond Science Scholarships were established in Mr Diamond's own words in a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, "to contribute something to stimulate interest, scholarship and achievement among young people in the area".

To date, five \$1000 (plus CPI) scholarships have been awarded to support disadvantaged students in their first year of studying science at Central Queensland University.

In 2006, Mr Diamond augmented his commitment to higher education by donating \$50 000, again on behalf of himself and his wife, to the University of Queensland to establish the Cecilie Sloane Postgraduate Creative Writing Research Scholarship. The late Cecilie Sloane was his sister-in-law and had been a highly regarded tutor and lecturer at UQ.

As an encouragement to others on modest incomes to contribute to universities, in 2000, he proposed to the Federal Treasurer that deductions for lump sum donations to approved philanthropic causes, be spread over five income years. That proposal is now law..

Mr Diamond is an octogenarian and has ensured his commitment will continue by establishing endowment funds with the interest to be used for annual awards.

Finally, his agreement to be nominated for this award is testament to his willingness to support higher education and inspire others to do the same. When asked if he would consider the nomination he agreed to do so "If it would help the University."

Professor Ashley Goldsworthy AO OBE

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Note your diary – applications for next year's Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Collaboration in Research & Development and Education & Training, Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year and Outstanding Philanthropic Support of Higher Education will be called in **May 2008**.

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