



above: the students and lecturers for L&S April 2000
left: Tony Abbott MP at the welcome dinner



TONY Abbott MP spoke with some longing at the opening dinner of the *Liberty and Society (L&S)* conference about the value of such a conference. To paraphrase what he said:

'When you have left university and are out in the workplace and you are making withdrawals on your intellectual capital, you will value all the more the intellectual deposits you make over this weekend. The opportunities that *L&S* will give you to think widely, reassess your beliefs and values and build your framework of the world are rare and should be treasured.'

The first *L&S* programme for the year 2000 was held on the weekend of the 28-30 April. Thanks to the generous support of Westpac, the 27 students and 4 lecturers were accommodated in very pleasant surroundings at Westpac College at Ingleside. Students were selected from New Zealand and all states of Australia, apart from Tasmania, with one of our farthest flung students driving six hours from Kalgoorlie to Perth to catch her flight to Sydney. It is only possible for students from distant cities to attend because of the support we get from companies and individuals, which we in turn pass on as travel and accommodation subsidies. We believe it is important that the programme is open to everyone and that lack of funds does not stop any students applying.

The tireless lecturers were: Chandran Kukathas from ADFA on political thought, Professor Stephen King from Melbourne University on liberal economics, Dr Suri Ratnapala from Queensland University on liberal law, and Mr Gary Sturgess from Sydney on ideas and practical politics. The positive reaction to the lectures was reflected in the evaluation reports which rated virtually all the lectures 80% or higher in the Excellent to Very Good range. As well as the lectures, one of the great aspects of the weekend is the opportunity to argue and discuss issues in an informal way with lecturers and other students. Every bit of time was used with groups involved in debates well into the nights.

We are planning our next *L&S* to be held on 30 June-2 July. If you know of anyone who may be interested in attending, please contact the CIS for an application form.

Executive Programme

In a slightly different direction, the CIS is working on a more practically based *Liberty and Society* style programme aimed at middle level business executives. We have had many comments from business leaders regarding the lack of broad thinking among bright middle level executives. This programme will explore the world from a liberal perspective by looking at historical material as well as applications for the future. The seminar would be self-funding and would help to raise money to fund the student *L&S* seminars.

For more information, please contact
Jenny Lindsay at the Centre
ph: (+61) (2) 9438 4377
fax: (+61) (2) 9439 7310
email: jlindsay@cis.org.au

liberty & society