

The right medicine

Bond and UQ join forces for degree approval

by Janelle Estreich

BOND University could have its first medical students by 2004, after an agreement paving the way for homegrown Gold Coast doctors.

The Robina private institution and the University of Queensland will announce a deal today in which the two universities will share their medical teaching resources.

Fifty students a year each will pay \$200,000 for the five-year course which will feature internships at Gold Coast Hospital and Allamanda, Pindara and John Flynn private hospitals.

The degree has the blessing of Queensland Health Minister Wendy Edmond and is reliant only on an approval by the Australian Medical Council.

It would also stop the brain drain of talented students forced to leave the city to study medicine in other cities.

Bond University School of Health Sciences Dean Professor Chris Sharpley said a national advertising campaign would be launched this week to find a chief for the new medical school.

"We will advertise nationally on Wednesday

for a joint founding head of medicine at Bond who will also be head of the school of medicine at UQ's Gold Coast clinical division," he said.

"The joint head of medicine will be based on the Bond campus at Robina and will oversee students at Gold Coast hospitals."

Bond University lodged its submission for a medical school with the Medical Council in October last year.

The Medical Council is expected to make a site visit next year and, if the proposal is approved, the degree course could begin in 2004.

"The AMC had some concerns whether, as a small university, we had all the relevant teaching resources," said Professor Sharpley.

"Being closely aligned with the major medical school in Queensland will help us to deliver our curriculum."

Under the agreement between Bond and UQ, facilities, teaching and clinical expertise will be shared.

There will also be an interchange of staff and students between the two campuses.

Professor Sharpley said the agreement allowed for some joint staffing appointments, as well as joint research activities to be centred

on the Gold Coast.

On Thursday, the two vice-chancellors signed an agreement which allows them to share their medical resources.

Harvard University has also expressed interest in a staff/student exchange program.

"Up until May this year, we had around 320 students who wanted to apply, and since then we have had at least one call a day," said Professor Sharpley.

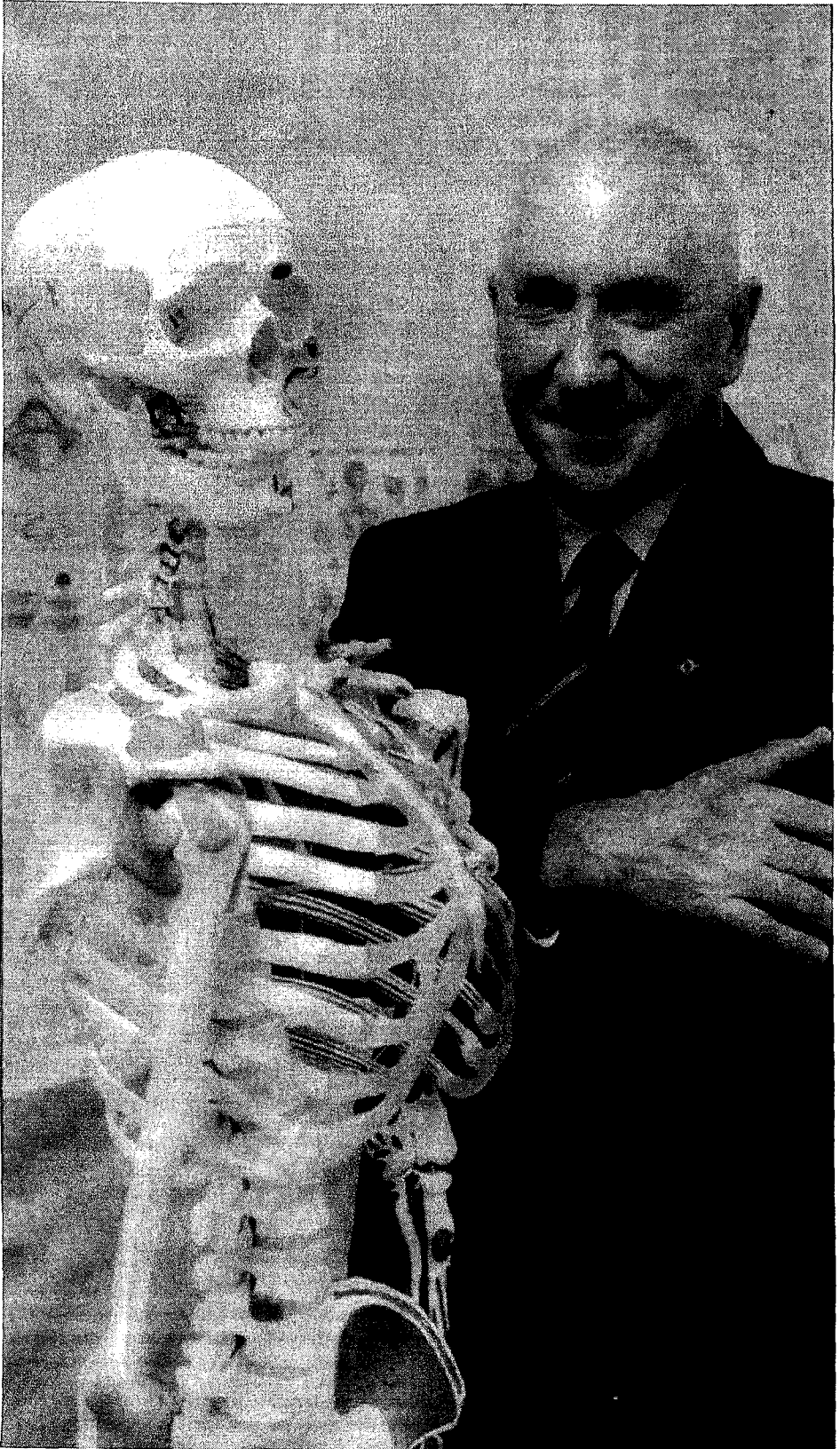
He said southeast Queensland students would be given preference and Australian students would make up 85 per cent of the intake.

Most classes would be run off-campus with students spending the bulk of their time at Bond's campus at John Flynn Hospital at Tugun.

Professor Sharpley said he was confident the submission to the AMC would be successful.

"Local students will no longer have to go to Brisbane or interstate to study medicine and the entire medical community will benefit."

The State Government is supporting the push for a medical school on the Gold Coast, arguing that more Queensland graduates would ease Australia's shortage of doctors.



Dean of Bond University's School of Health Sciences, Professor Chris Sharpley