

ney had no difficulty turning its attention to tennis. David Cathels, 9, of

Anna Kournikova and Amanda Coetzer.
Photos: Tim Clayton Report - Page 36

Sydney Morning Herald, 9 Jan 2001, p. 1

'High school' classes for fee-paying uni students

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Higher Education Writer

Opposition parties demanded an inquiry into the state of Australian universities yesterday following revelations that sub-standard students were receiving degrees.

After reporting yesterday that universities were giving full-fee-paying students preferential treatment, the *Herald* was inundated with allegations from academics nationwide saying they

had been told to downgrade courses and regrade full fee-paying students.

Most asked for anonymity, saying their careers would be damaged if they spoke out. Others said all essential decisions were taken by administrations, and meetings had no public minutes.

Dr Ted Steele, an Associate Professor at Wollongong University, Australia's University of the Year, said he had been told to increase the grades of honours students.

"When I was phoned to give

the student a reference for further study I had to tell the truth and say the student simply wasn't up to it.

"Just a week before I had warned the department that we were devaluing the degree and if someone rang me I was going to tell them the truth. It's not fair on the student either, because it gives them unrealistic expectations."

With many universities looking to non-government sources for more than 40 per cent of their

funding, academics said they were repeatedly told that full-fee-paying students represented a lot of extra income.

One Queensland academic said he had been told to reduce lecture content to high school level to improve the rates of students passing the course.

"Already the lecture course involved was reduced to 50 per cent of its previous length and

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