

# Academic to fight against sacking

Newcastle University Council made one of its most difficult and controversial decisions recently when it dismissed a tenured member of its academic staff.

The decision was made at a time when Australian academics were increasingly concerned with the security of the tenure system.

Dr M. Spautz, a senior lecturer in the department of commerce, was dismissed on May 23 after the council resolved that his conduct had been such as to render him unfit to hold his office.

The dismissal came after a long-standing dispute between Dr Spautz and another member of the commerce department, Professor A. Williams.

## Unionists give to Olympic fund

By JOYCE MORGAN

Last December, after a report into the dispute by a council committee, Dr Spautz was suspended from teaching and instructed to stop his campaign against Professor Williams. But Dr Spautz continued what he termed his campaign for justice.

A committee of inquiry was formed by the council in February and was chaired by Mr Justice M. Kirby, the Deputy Chancellor and Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission.

The committee presented its report to a special meeting of the council on May 20, where the council resolved that Dr Spautz be dismissed.

Dr Spautz said this week that he intended taking legal action against his dismissal.

"I am going to go all out for justice," Dr Spautz said, "even if I have to sell my house. I feel I owe it to the rest of the staff. This is criminal."

Dr Spautz said he had experienced some difficulty in finding a solicitor willing to take his case.

What concerns the academics at Newcastle University is that Dr Spautz was dismissed without being formally charged with any offence.

The Newcastle University Staff Association executive presented a statement to the council meeting stating that the association noted that Dr Spautz had not been formally charged by the university with any offence and believed it improper for the council to impose any penalty on Dr Spautz simply as a result of the inquiry into his conduct.

The statement concluded that if the council believed that a prima facie case existed for Dr Spautz to be charged with misconduct, he should be charged and a formal disciplinary tribunal of the university established to hear the matter.

Despite the staff association statement, the council dismissed Dr Spautz.

According to the staff association president, Professor G. Curthoys, the disciplinary by-laws need to be tightened, and the association will press for this.