

# QUALITY

(Dinner Entertainment, Quality Retreat, Mt Eliza -3 June 1995)

For DEET, the newest game in town  
In playing which, we swim or drown  
Is rolling circus, QUALITY  
And we compete most fervently  
As we have done with other games  
Labelled each with catchy names  
Invented by those bureaucrats  
Who sadly have us by the knats  
Since opened Gough the fed'ral purse  
And gave us, 'stead of blessing, curse

As from their vantage they look out  
And see us scholars lurch about  
Like Gondwana's dinosaurs  
Some upright, and some all fours  
They have not wit to criticise  
Nor brain nor skill to supervise  
They cannot match our learned way  
And witty intellectual play

But they can books and papers count  
And calculate the cash amount  
That to our coffers then will flow  
(Called research quantum, as you know)  
But do our studies qualify  
And if so, should they count as high  
As papers in the open press?  
(Even greater, I would guess)  
Our compositions, works of art  
Inventions, or their counterpart  
Essential, all, for us to show  
In Quality Portfolio

What is this beast called Quality?  
We talk of it quite endlessly  
But does it hear us, can it see?  
Does it sense our aching doubt?  
We know at all what we're about?  
We write of it and make some charts  
And worship it with all our hearts  
We've put aside so many days  
To groom it, feed it, sing its praise  
To clean its pen, and humour it  
Dispose of its perfuméd shit  
(That is, the small and scatt'ered poops  
Which somehow 'scape from feedback loops)

Lurking there against the wall  
Does it think of us at all?  
Will it trot into the ring?  
And sing the song it then should sing  
From policies bound up with string?  
And will the judges broadly beam  
Then gasp with pleasure, eyes a gleam  
And fix upon the silken fur  
That which we covet, cordon bleu!  
And say that "that's real Quality,  
The like of which we rarely see"!

"Those other beasts don't even rank  
Their fur was dull, they even stank!  
They couldn't say their lines at all  
Or answer judges' simplest call  
Questions most embarrassing  
Had them cowering in the ring  
So Monash we reward alone  
For others we won't spare a bone  
Until they learn the Monash way  
They'll have to live with their dismay

Clearly, they should devolute  
As Monash does, since that's real beaut!"

Likely the scenario  
Ranks us justly, so we'll glow  
T. Stokes will shout the whole damn club  
And Mal with some delight will snub  
Frustrated Peno in his grief  
So then to Melbourne's great relief  
No more this condescending type  
Will serve up nauseating tripe  
That we endured in round Q1  
Those were the days it wasn't fun  
At Mt Eliza revelling  
Jim will dance, and Cliff will sing

But when in nightmares soft we moan  
of when the Q3 ladder's shown  
We'll greet it with a soulful groan  
And ruddy-headed Stokes will jump  
From tallest Menzies and will thump  
Upon the concrete there below  
We'll scrape him up, and on we'll go  
Obeying every DEET advice  
And bureaucratic sly device  
Expending futile effort more  
Prepare ourselves for damn Q4  
Penington will smugly grin  
At Malcolm Logan's deep chagrin  
And Darvall narked will snarl and spit  
(You'll never hear the end of it)  
Resentment, grievance, grudges bloom  
An all pervasive sour perfume

With Quality we'll be replete  
(I mean "fed up", the full surfeit)  
This intellectual project grand  
This story tale, this sleight of hand  
Exposing us in disarray  
Worse tomorrow, than today  
Good scholars writhing in our task  
Mal-ordered process we unmask  
It is not skill, nor common sense  
That helps us plan experiments  
We are not just, and far from wise  
To firmly, kindly, supervise  
For outcomes, we care not at all  
From grants, however big or small

We care not for progression rate  
Or whether students graduate  
The nation's interests prompt not us  
For community, we never fuss  
We simply plod our effete way  
And idle, as they think, each day

But then we wake, with our sleek beast  
And belch the fumes from vict'ry feast  
"Directions for the Future" there  
Headaches thick, but prospects fair  
They'll envy us our policies  
And Logan's endless strategies  
Jealous of our management  
And of the money we have spent

So with this prospect firm in view  
I take my seat, and drink to you

Peter Darvall