patenting also offers the owner of the invention a benefit for his work, usually
in the form of royalties paid under a licence to use the invention.

"Therefore it is essential that as soon as
an invention is deemed worthwhile for
development that a patent is taken out
first in the country of origin.

"A convention date is then established
for world patent approval. Once that is
ratified, there is a year's grace for cor-
responding applications to be lodged
in countries where patent protection is
desired.

"However, there are pitfalls. It could be
that similar research has been under-
taken elsewhere and similar conclusions
reached. In such cases it is just a
matter of waiting to see which patent
is approved first. I have personally
known of royalties to hinge on as little
as two days in a convention date."

Dr Weckhardt sees patenting as a de-
manding form of publication in which
if too little is stated the application
may be knocked back for insufficient
data or if too much is claimed beyond
the true scope of the invention it is
likely to be rendered invalid.

'It takes an expert approach and a hard
discipline to know exactly what you are
claiming in a patent application,' he
said.

There are further complexities. Patent
laws in many countries are such that
disclosure anywhere in the world pre-
cludes the granting of patent protec-
tion in that country. Publication of de-
tails in a specialized journal will almost
certainly preclude patent protection or
provide enough information for some-
one to use the invention without any
benefits passing to the owner.

That is why the AIC will not work on
an invention submitted to it until the
inventor has patent protection, say by
filing a 'provisional'.

The University Patents Committee
stresses to all University research
people to talk first with the Committee
about any idea they feel has potential
before discussing details outside.

'The patent attorney acting for the Uni-
derstanding
versity can assess quickly whether the
invention requires urgent patent ac-
tion or whether it has not yet reached
the stage where protection should be
sought.

'My experience at the University has
been that the Patents Committee
works quickly when fast action is
needed and that strong encouragement
has been given to work with develop-
ment potential,' Dr Weckhardt said.

Obituary: Robert Gordon Menzies

Robert Gordon Menzies, Chancellor of
the University of Melbourne from 1967
to 1972, died at his Malvern home on
Monday 15 May 1978.

Prime Minister of Australia from 1939-
41 and 1949-66, Sir Robert was ap-
pointed Lord Warden of the Cinque
Ports in 1965 in succession to Sir Win-
ston Churchill. He was created a Knight
of the Thistle in 1963.

Sir Robert received his early education
at Jepart and Ballarat before attending
Wesley College, Melbourne. He
graduated from the University of Mel-
bourne with First Class Honours in Law
and was awarded the Dwight Prize in
Constitutional History, the Sir John
Madden Exhibition, the Jessie Legatt
Scholarship, the Bowen Essay Prize and
the Supreme Court Prize.

In 1918, Sir Robert was admitted to
the Victorian Bar and the High Court
of Australia, and in 1929, was appoint-
ted a King's Counsel. He was appoint-
ed a member of the Privy Council in
1937, and a Companion of Honour in
1951.

Sir Robert was Deputy Premier of Vic-
toria from 1932-34, and was elected
to the House of Representatives as the
Member for Kooyong in 1934.

After his retirement in 1966, Sir Robert
accepted an appointment as Scholar-in-
Residence at the University of Virginia
in the academic year 1966-67.

His publications were numerous. Among other subjects, he wrote on
the Australian Constitution, the Com-
monwealth and autobiographically.

Sir Robert received the honorary de-
gree of Doctor of Laws in the Uni-
versity of Melbourne in 1942, and many
honorary degrees and awards.

In 1967 and 1968, Sir Robert gave ap-
proximately $3,000 to the Baillieu Lib-
ary from the royalties for his book
Afternoon Light, and from funds re-
maining from a Citizen's Dinner given
in his honour. In 1976, he arranged
for his collection of books, some 4,500
volumes, to be given to the Baillieu
Library.

Throughout his long and very distin-
guished life, Sir Robert was concerned
for the welfare of the University of
Melbourne and he served the Univer-
sity in many capacities from his years
as an undergraduate until he retired
as Chancellor in 1972.

This University will always be grateful
to him, as will the other universities
of Australia. The present standing of
Australian universities is very largely
due to Sir Robert's vision and his
statesmanship while he was Prime Min-
ister of the Commonwealth of Aus-
tralia.