EXPANSIONS, INEQUALITIES AND APPROXIMATIONS. ON THE OCCASION OF GAVIN BROWN'S 65TH BIRTHDAY

(University of Sydney, March 5–6, 2007)

Biographical note

Professor Gavin Brown AO, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, was born on 27 February 1942 in Lundin Links, Fife, Scotland. Dux of Madras College, St Andrews, he was awarded a Harkness Scholarship for study at the University of St Andrews, where he graduated with a Master of Arts degree (1st Class Honours and the Duncan Medal) in 1963. Professor Brown was then awarded a Carnegie Scholarship, which enabled him to undertake postgraduate study at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne where he was awarded a PhD in 1966. Professor Brown also spent a year as a Junior Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh.

Professor Brown commenced his academic career at the University of Liverpool, where he rose to the rank of Senior Lecturer in Mathematics. After accepting the Chair of Pure Mathematics at the University of New South Wales in 1975, Professor Brown and his family emigrated to Australia. At the University of New South Wales, Professor Brown held a number of academic administrative posts, including Head of the Department of Pure Mathematics, Head of the School of Mathematics and, from 1989–1992, Dean of the Faculty of Science.

During his time at UNSW, Professor Brown's mathematical research and, in particular, his work involving Fourier analysis, led to the award of the Sir Edmund Whittaker Memorial Prize and the Australian Mathematical Society Medal. He was also elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and later became a member of its Council (1992–1995) and Vice-President (1993–1994). Professor Brown also held Visiting Professorships at the University of Paris, the University of Cambridge and the University of Washington.

From 1988–1993, Professor Brown was also actively involved in the work of the Australian Research Council. He chaired several of its funding committees and, during 1992–1993, was a member of its Council.

Professor Brown moved to Adelaide in 1992 when he was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Adelaide. In January 1994, he became Vice-Chancellor and held this post until he resigned on 30 June 1996. Features of Professor Brown's period as Vice-Chancellor included a major restructuring of University management, a strong focus on links with industry and a programmed return of the University's budget to surplus. Professor Brown was also very active in national and regional committees during his time at the University. The most notable of these was his service as Chair of the National Advisory Group on Science and Technology Awareness and Promotion.

Professor Brown took up his present position of Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney on 1 July 1996. The University, which is Australia's first, has some 46,000 students and the most diverse range of course offerings in the country. During his tenure the University of Sydney has reasserted its leadership role in Australia dominating each of the major Australian Research Council funding categories and obtaining outstanding National Health and Medical Research Council results. The University's reputation for quality learning and teaching is demonstrated by its increasing percentage share of first preference applications for admission over the last several years in which it has drawn even further ahead of all its competitors. Professor Brown has also been active in supporting the overall student experience and encouraging extra-curricular activity such as sport and debating. Sydney University has won the Australian Student Games for the last five years, provided many Olympian and Paralympian athletes and won the World Student Debating Championships as well as the Australasian competition.

Author of more than 100 research papers, Professor Brown continues active mathematical research and is on the

board of several international journals. He is a regular commentator on higher education policy and has given invited presentations to international meetings, most recently in China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong, Germany, US and Britain.

He is President of the international group of universities, Academic Consortium 21, Vice-Chair of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and Foundation Chairman of the Go8 universities. He is on the executive of the Business Higher Education Round Table and the Global Foundation and serves on the Australian government's Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council. In 1997 Professor Brown was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of St Andrews and in 2004 an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Dundee. In January 2006 Professor Brown was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia.