

EDITORIAL

It is incumbent upon those who inflict new journals upon a world already burdened by an excess of such things to explain their conduct. We gladly do so, and not by way of excuse. We deem the subjects covered by this journal to be of particular economic, scientific and social importance; they are also subjects in which great and rapid change is occurring, that change being inevitably accompanied by uncertainty. A journal can assist in the reduction of uncertainty by providing a central and orderly forum from which information may diffuse and in which debate may take place. Although many existing Australian journals publish papers relevant to the interests of *Prometheus*, there has previously been no single publication dealing exclusively with these issues. That has been inconvenient for those publishing and working in these areas, but there is a more weighty consideration. Technological change, innovation, communication, information and science policy are not disciplines in themselves; they lack the foundation and core of established disciplines and many studies have been published in these areas without the benefit of the rigour imposed by traditional disciplines. The chaos of published presumption and superstition accompanying the Myers Report on technological change in Australia — and perhaps the Report itself — are ample testimony to that depressing situation. The foundations which might support a growing understanding of these areas and upon which others might build, have been either too scattered or too unsubstantial to support a single structure of any weight. This single journal is almost certainly inadequate for such a Herculean task, but it is just such a positive and even cleansing role which is its goal.

Hercules was actually the fellow who eventually saved Prometheus from a rather nasty fate. Prometheus had stolen the art of making fire from Zeus to give to mankind. Zeus, not known for his kindness towards humanity, punished Prometheus by chaining him to a rock to have either eagles or vultures nibble his liver by day. Spontaneous regeneration occurred by night to provide a fresh feast for the birds each morning, and so Zeus intended the process to continue for all eternity. While editing a journal has its similarities, it is from Prometheus's role as the bringer of technology that this journal derives its title. In the Prometheus legend, technology was clearly of fundamental benefit to man, and Prometheus, although never specifically worshipped as a god, was popularly regarded as the bringer of hope, the means by which unjust and uncaring authority could be resisted. That is not inappropriate to the purpose of this journal.

The times are not auspicious for the launching of a new journal; subscriptions do not spring from the depths of recession, and this journal desperately needs subscriptions if it is to survive beyond its second issue. Establishment costs only have been met by the contributors listed on the cover, and we are most grateful to these organisations for their faith and for their money. Unlike most other journals, *Prometheus* has no society or institution to underwrite its losses. It stands or falls on its merits or, to be more correct, on general perception of and reaction to those merits. *Prometheus* urgently needs subscribers; without subscribers the most the journal can be is a worthwhile venture that failed.