



Opening of the Caloola Farm computer training centre. From left to right Mr Keith Robinson (senior teacher), Mr Fred McMaster (secretary of the board of management), Mr Karzyszto Michalkiewicz (student), Mr Duncan Black (IBM Canberra manager), Mr Vic Groenhout (computer program coordinator)

IBMs down on the farm

Canberra's unemployed are improving their job prospects by learning how to use IBM PCs at the new Caloola Farm computer training centre.

Eight IBM JX s were donated last December by IBM Australia for use on the computer operators' course. They have been installed in the Northern Canberra Baptist Church Hall in Turner.

Caloola Farm which is situated 50 Kms south of Canberra in the Nass Valley, started as a training centre for the young unemployed in 1981.

Towards the end of 1983, Caloola Farm began courses in office and manual skills. The sixteen week courses are attended by the long-term unemployed. IBM assisted in the establishment of the initial program by donating 11 selectric typewriters to the project.

Since November 1983, more than 200 people have been provided with training under the Caloola Employment Training Program (CETP), and a job placement rate of 70 percent has been maintained.

In 1986 Caloola Farm extended

its scope to run a computer operating program in Canberra for unskilled unemployed people.

According to Mr Vic Groenhout, the Computer Program Coordinator, the project has been very effective.

"We have found that learning computing skills greatly increases the chances of the unemployed getting a job," he said. "Not only have trainees found jobs working with computers, but it is motivating them and giving them confidence to apply for all sorts of jobs."