

Death rate lower in IVF patients: research

MEDICAL RESEARCH

Australian women who undergo IVF treatment have a lower death rate than other women the same age, according to new Monash University research.

The Monash research team investigated outcomes for nearly 30,000 women who had been referred to IVF clinics throughout Australia before 1994. The study included both treated and untreated women.

The head of Monash's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Professor David Healy, said the research team's aim was to determine the maternal mortality rate following IVF conception and establish whether deaths were a result of treatment complications.

Professor Healy said possible but uncommon complications of IVF and related assisted reproductive technologies could be life-threatening. They include complications relating to ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, surgical procedures and pregnancy.

He said IVF pregnancies were at higher risk of serious complications because of the relatively high incidence of ectopic and multiple pregnancies and advanced maternal age compared with naturally conceived pregnancies.

"There are some risks associated with IVF and related treatments and patients are rightly concerned," he said.

"But this study can allay their fears to a large degree - breast and gynaecological cancer rates, for instance, are no higher in women who have undergone fertility treatment.

"Overall, deaths from all causes were significantly lower in IVF patients than in the general female population of the same age."

Among the 17,112 women who had nearly 60,000 IVF treatment cycles in the study, there appeared to be no deaths due to complications of ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, Professor Healy said.

He said the most likely explanation for the low mortality rate is in the selection factors that make IVF patients different from the general population.

Previous studies have shown that married, wealthy and educated women live longer than single, poor and uneducated women.

"These factors may have contributed to the low mortality rate, since the majority of women in the study were married and had private health insurance, which suggest higher socio-economic status in Australia," Professor Healy said.

"As well as providing some reassurance about the safety of IVF treatment, the study indicates that selection processes deter the unhealthiest women in the population from pregnancy and infertility treatment."

Allison Harding

INSIDE

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News

Monash in Olympic coup

Monash University will facilitate information sharing between Olympic host cities in a new partnership with the IOC.

Page 3

Opinion

A new era for teaching

The teaching profession is now enjoying unprecedented popularity, but more teacher training places need to be made available to sustain the momentum, advises educationist Professor Sue Willis.

Page 5



Monash industrial design student Mr Brendan Carroll is pictured with his 'Urban Assault Vehicle', on display at the Melbourne Motor Show this month. Photo Greg Ford

Students take the Melbourne Motor Show by storm

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Twelve futuristic model vehicles designed by Monash University students are on show for the first time at the Melbourne Motor Show in March.

Monash's Faculty of Art and Design was the only non-commercial

vendor to be offered a place at the Motor Show this year. The 12-day event is expected to attract more than 250,000 visitors.

The exciting concept vehicles, designed and built by Monash industrial design students, show what cars might be like in 10 years' time. The designs incorporate new technolo-

gies and take environmental concerns and behaviour of transport users into account.

Many of the models use lightweight, recyclable materials, onboard computers, electronic technology and alternative fuel technology, such as fuel cells and electric vehicle technology.

The models will be displayed under the banner of 'Forecast Motors', featuring large-scale drawings and plans of the vehicles and computer terminals which enable users to manipulate images of the models.

Continued on page 2

\$5 million grant win

A \$5 million grant has been awarded to Monash University to establish Australia's first national primate breeding and research facility.

Deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Development) Professor Peter Darvall said the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant would see the extension of Monash's existing national marmoset breeding and research facility, to create the new National Primate Breeding and Research Facility.

Director of Animal Services at Monash Mr Stephen Marshall welcomed the grant.

"This is recognition of Monash as having the people who can build the facility and manage it on behalf of the NHMRC, the investigators and the wider community," he said.

The decision was made to set up and extend the facility at the Gippsland site to create a building of between 1500 and 2000 square metres.

The new primate facility will house long-tail and short-tail macaques and marmosets, which will primarily be used in biomedical research.

Mr Marshall said it would also have a major welfare focus, offering a 'geriatric unit' for older primates who have passed their prime for research.

Design work is due to begin on the primate facility in April. Construction is scheduled to commence mid-year, with completion expected by early 2003.

Mary Viscovich

IN BRIEF

Director of synchrotron project appointed

A prominent British physicist will play a leading role in the development of the Australian Synchrotron at Monash University.

Professor Robert Lewis, currently an instrumentation physicist at the Daresbury Laboratory in Cheshire, England, will take up the Chair of X-Ray and Synchrotron Physics in the School of Physics and Materials Engineering in June.

In addition to his Monash-based role, Professor Lewis will be on the Australian Scientific Advisory Committee for the Synchrotron. He will also be director of the Centre for X-Ray Physics and Imaging at Monash.

The Australian Synchrotron will be built over the next five years on Monash-owned land on the corner of Blackburn and Wellington Roads in Clayton.

Orientation program recognised

Monash has become the first university in Australia to have its Orientation program officially recognised as the formal start to the university year.

Centrelink has agreed to pay eligible first-year students their benefits from the beginning of Orientation, acknowledging the effectiveness of Monash's Transition Policy.

Until now, Centrelink has provided payment only after the start of formal

classes, but this has changed since Monash made it compulsory for first-year students to attend scheduled academic programs during Orientation.

Coordinator of the Monash Transition Program Ms Tanya Kantanis said the decision by Centrelink comes only one year after the introduction of the university's Transition Policy.

"The effectiveness of the policy has already produced a tangible, positive outcome for first-year students with this important recognition by Centrelink," she said.

Construction starts on STRIP project

Construction has commenced on the \$300 million Monash Science Technology Research and Innovation Precinct (STRIP) on Monash University's Clayton campus.

The Monash STRIP will be developed in five stages over the next 10 years. It is designed to bring together researchers and industry partners for the commercialisation of intellectual property in an environment closely linked to Monash academics and students.

The first stage of the Monash STRIP includes a \$35 million building, to be completed early in 2003. The purpose-built facility will provide a synergistic environment to encourage interdisciplinary research and development.

Students take the Melbourne Motor Show by storm



Photo Greg Ford

Continued from page 1

The display concept was developed by Monash visual communications students Adam Horne and Dylan Nichols.

Forecast Motors offers designs to suit a wide variety of tastes and needs, such as Peter Lamb's 'Kobba' (pictured above), a combination vehicle for tradespeople that feature pods for tools and equipment that can be replaced at weekends with extra seating.

Brendon Carroll's 'Urban Assault Vehicle' is part car, part motorcycle, allows extreme sports enthusiasts to transport bikes, skis and other equipment on the back of the vehicle.

Other designs include a car with a windscreen that converts into a large video and computer screen, an electrically powered surf lifesaving rescue

vehicle and a robot guide for use in museums.

Industrial design course coordinator Mr Mark Wilken said the presentation represented a window of opportunity for the students, who had spent 12 months developing the concepts for the exhibition.

"It's not everyday that our students are invited to display their talents alongside the world's leading automotive manufacturers. It's a great opportunity for them to be noticed by industry representatives," he said.

Forecast Motors is generously sponsored by the Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce, Expo Hire, Icorp Consolidated and Apple Computers.

The Melbourne Motor Show will run until Monday 11 March at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

Fiona Perry

Major grant for malaria research

VACCINE RESEARCH

Monash University medical researchers are using a \$3.1 million grant from the US-based Malaria Vaccine Initiative to develop two promising vaccines against the disease.

The MVI, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, awarded the funds in December to Monash to work on a joint project with Australian biotechnology company Progen Industries.

Professor Ross Coppel, who leads the project team in the Department of Microbiology, said the research was based on merozoite surface proteins 4 and 5, which have shown promising results in pre-clinical tests and are considered particularly appropriate targets for vaccines designed to protect children.

The project will fund efforts to manufacture the vaccines ready for human testing by late 2004.

Monash has been part of a renewed global assault on malaria – a disease that kills more than one million children and infects 500 million people annually.

Professor Coppel said he was excited about the potential of the research. "Diseases of the Third World tend not to attract the attention of large pharmaceutical companies because the return on investment is low and the high costs of drug and vaccine development cannot be recouped.

"The support of MVI allows us to take our research to a more advanced stage, so that companies can become involved when efficacy has already been demonstrated. This minimises their risk and makes involvement in malaria vaccines economical for them."

Deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Development) Professor Peter Darvall said Monash was one of only three Australian research organisations selected for funding for vaccine development projects.

"Monash researchers have been working tirelessly on developing a vaccine for malaria for many years on limited research funds," Professor Darvall said. "This grant, using US funds and partners and with significant industry support, means their important work can continue."

Monash's partner in the research project, Progen Industries Limited, is a Queensland-based biotechnology company committed to the discovery, development and commercialisation of small molecule pharmaceuticals for the treatment of a variety of diseases.

The MVI was established through a US\$50 million seed grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH). MVI seeks to accelerate the development of promising malaria vaccines and ensure their availability for the developing world.

Allison Harding

Hundreds pay tribute to Silagy

More than 500 people attended a memorial service for Professor Chris Silagy AO at the Melbourne Museum last month.

Professor Silagy, foundation director of Monash University's Institute of Health Services Research, died on 13 December after a long battle with lymphoma. He was 41.

Professor Silagy was internationally recognised for his work in the field of evidence-based health care. A professor of Public Health at Monash, he was also director of the Australasian Cochrane Centre and chair of the Board of the newly formed National Institute of Clinical Studies.

Regarded as one of Australia's leading evaluators of health care programs, Professor Silagy was a member of numerous international and national committees, including the National Health and Medical Research Committee (NHMRC) Health Advisory Committee.

In 2000, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Honours list for service to medicine, particularly in the areas of



The late Professor Chris Silagy.

research and education, and in developments in the field of evidence-based medicine.

Director of Monash's Centre for Clinical Effectiveness Associate Professor Jeremy Anderson said Professor Silagy was a passionate advocate of an evidence-based approach to health care, and of the important role that consumers had to play within the process.

"Chris was also known for his vision, drive and tremendous

courage. Few people can have accomplished so much in any lifetime, let alone one so tragically foreshortened," he said.

"To say he was an inspiration devalues the man. Chris was a dynamo, a whirlwind of intellectual energy and enthusiasm who touched everyone in contact with him.

"His work with the Cochrane Collaboration, his successes at the Monash Institute of Health Services Research and his vision for the National Institute of Clinical Studies are tangible reminders of his achievements that we work with every day. We will honour his memory by continuing his plans for the Monash Institute of Health Services Research."

To help achieve Professor Silagy's vision, the Monash Institute of Health Services Research has established the 'Monash University Medical Foundation – Chris Silagy Fund'. Donations can be made to the Institute at Level 1, Block E, Locked Bag 29, Monash Medical Centre, Clayton, Victoria, 3168. For more information, contact +61 3 9594 7501.

History student teachers lend expertise to national museums

HISTORY TEACHING

Twelve Monash history student teachers last year had the opportunity to put their studies into practice at two of Australia's leading cultural institutions after being awarded teaching history fellowships.

The fellowships, established by the university's Faculty of Education in partnership with the Australian War Memorial and the National Museum of Australia, aim to give the students an understanding of history teaching at educational and tourism institutions in Canberra.

After studying museum displays and school programs offered by the two institutions, the students evaluated the programs and, based on their findings, designed additional resources.

Fellowship recipient Ms Suzannah Mandler, who has since graduated, said the visit provided an opportunity to see what resources were available for schools at the institutions.

"It was great to see what they have there and how they cater for schools," she said. "As well as finding out what they offer in Canberra, I now know



Monash history students are interviewed by Mr Rod Quinn of ABC Radio National in Canberra.

what resources the institutions can send to schools."

Australian War Memorial education manager Ms Ann Owner said the students' resource projects would be considered and could be incorporated, in full or in part, into programs at the museum.

"We were keen to have the students come to work with us," she said. "This is a place rich in resources and, although we as educators often work

with young people, we don't often work with future teachers.

"We were keen to catch up on current methodologies and interpretation techniques and to listen to the young student teachers to find out how they might present materials."

The fellowships, the first of their kind, are expected to become an annual event at Monash.

Diane Squires

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IOC and Monash combine on Olympic Games know-how

OLYMPICS

The knowledge gained from running an Olympic Games will now be shared among the world's sporting bodies in an agreement between Monash and the International Olympic Committee, launched in Salt Lake City last month.

The establishment of Olympic Games Knowledge Services (OGKS) signifies an unprecedented level of organisational support for Olympic host cities, cities aspiring to stage the games and, potentially, organisers of other major international events.

At the official launch of OGKS at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the president of the IOC, Dr Jacques Rogge, hailed the creation of the program as an Olympic milestone and an integral part of the IOC Games support system.

The plan to set up a formal program to transfer Olympic knowledge was initiated by the IOC at the 2000 Olympic

Games in Sydney in conjunction with the Sydney Organising Committee (SOCOG). The goal was to capture the know-how of Olympic Games organising committees and prepare written guides and other educational material to assist future committees in meeting their enormous task.

To enhance this program, the IOC established OGKS to provide complex knowledge management services. OGKS is a joint venture of the IOC and Monash Ed, a Monash University company in partnership with Cambridge Consulting and Equiset Global.

Monash vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson said the university's partnership with the IOC reflected Monash's acknowledged expertise in global educational services.

"With almost 50,000 students on campuses across four continents, Monash is well suited to provide teaching and research services to major international organisations. We



Professor Robinson meets IOC president Dr Jacques Rogge.

are delighted that our skills have been recognised as being adaptable to such a dynamic field as the organisation of the world's most high-profile sporting events," he said.

"Monash has particular strengths in the rapidly growing field of knowledge management. Our expertise in IT systems and data management will be utilised by OGKS to gather, order and deliver the vast amounts of information that surround the organisation of an Olympic Games."

OGKS is based in Lausanne, Switzerland, and is headed by the former secretary general of the Australian Olympic Committee and SOCOG board member Mr Craig McLatchey.

OGKS will deliver and coordinate a range of services such as:

- conferences, seminars and briefings led by OGKS staff or expert consultants;
- education and consulting services including a range of printed and online information;
- research facilities including statistical analysis and benchmarking.

David Bruce



Leaping into the Games: Cities bidding for international sporting events will jump over organisational obstacles with help from the IOC and Monash. Photo AAP

New centre to aid foreign curriculum development

EDUCATION

Monash University will join forces with King's College London in a quest to help developing countries improve their school maths and science curricula.

A new centre, to be established in the Faculty of Education, is being funded through a \$55,000 Monash Research Fund grant, with contributions from the Education faculty and King's College.

The centre, to be based at Monash's Clayton campus, will bring together ideas from the two institutions and visiting scholars.

Professor Dick Gunstone, who has been appointed director of the new centre, said one of its initial projects would be to create an electronic yearbook to identify influences on school curricula in maths and science.

He said the centre, which will eventually become self-funding, would target organisations that invest money to help grow

economies, such as the World Bank and the Asia Development Bank.

"We aim to provide those organisations with a better understanding of how to invest money in school science and maths curricula in developing countries," Professor Gunstone said.

"Often money is given to groups in western countries to develop specific curriculum projects in developing countries, but the countries themselves don't learn the processes behind such projects.

"This centre will help increase understanding in these countries of the origins and assumptions underlying curricula and the approaches to teaching that can be undertaken in schools to develop science, mathematics and technology."

Professor Gunstone said a strong link already existed between science and mathematics educators at Monash and King's College, which was the initial motivation for the alliance between the two institutions.

Diane Squires



Monash vice chancellor Professor David Robinson speaks at the launch of Olympic Games Knowledge Services in Salt Lake City last month.

Science horses around to produce a rare donkey

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH

Monash University reproductive research is helping save the world's most endangered donkey breed.

In a world first, a rare Poitou donkey foal has been born to a surrogate standard-bred horse after embryo transfer from the biological mother, which was artificially inseminated by its breeding partner.

The foal brings to only three the number of Poitou donkeys in Australia. The foal was born in January under the guidance of Dr Angus McKinnon, an honorary research fellow at Monash's Institute of Reproduction and Development (MIRD).

The female donkey foal, yet to be named, was born to a standard-bred mare at the Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital, near Shepparton. A breeding pair of Poitou donkeys, brought to



Australia by Yarra Glen couple Ron and Dianne Condon, produced the embryo.

While the hospital is a world leader in the field and performs more than 150 embryo transfers a year, this is the first time an endangered equine species has been successfully bred in a surrogate – and one of very few donkeys born from embryo transfer into

a horse anywhere in the world. Horses usually do not accept pregnancies from embryo transfer of other species of equines that have different sets of chromosomes.

Dr McKinnon said the embryo transfer was performed because the natural mother was suffering leg problems and it was uncertain if she would carry a foal to term.

The Poitou donkey – which originated in France – is the largest, hairiest and most endangered species of donkey in the world. Fewer than 200 registered Poitou donkeys exist in the world.

Mr and Mrs Condon, who breed alpacas on their Victorian farm, sought assistance from Dr McKinnon and the hospital to produce a foal after they became aware of the plight of the breed during a trip to the US.

"They are such beautiful creatures and we just fell in love with them – and then after we did some research and discovered how endangered they were, we thought we'd help build up the gene pool," Mrs Condon said.

Dr McKinnon said the successful embryo transfer had huge implications for the breeding of other rare species.

The donkey is just one of a long list of endangered species assisted through MIRD's animal conservation program and gene bank project, including the bilby and greater bilby, the northern and southern hairy-nosed and common wombat, five species of wallaby, the black rhinoceros, the red panda and the orang-utan.

Allison Harding



Research by Monash's Institute of Reproduction and Development has enabled the birth of a rare Poitou donkey to a surrogate mare. Photo Shepparton News



Tenaya Humphries, granddaughter of Ron and Dianne Condon, becomes acquainted with the new-born donkey. Photo Shepparton News

New cervical cancer screening hope

MEDICINE

Monash University researchers are testing a new device with the potential to revolutionise screening for cervical cancer.

The device, which was developed by Australian company Optiscan Pty Ltd, is a probe about the size of a ball-point pen that enables high magnification of intact living tissue.

Currently, management of cervical cancer involves the Papanicolaou (Pap) smear screening test in conjunction with follow-up examinations. A biopsy of cervical tissue is then required for a definite diagnosis.

While a Pap smear only removes very superficial cells, the new probe, called a rigid endomicroscope, can see several cell layers beneath the surface – without disturbing the tissue.

Cervical cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in the western world, with an estimated

1000 new cases and 300 deaths in Australia each year.

Associate Professor Graham Jenkin, of the Department of Physiology in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, said he believed the device, which is being tested on live sheep and on human tissue, showed enormous potential.

"I have no doubt this will revolutionise testing for and monitoring of cervical cancer – it will make detection more efficient and more comfortable because cell structures can be seen *in situ* without surgically removing them for pathology," he said.

"Digital images of cells magnified 1000-fold appear in real time on a computer screen, enabling immediate detection of changes in cellular structure.

"This new device works in a non-invasive manner with immediate

results – which is obviously preferable for both the doctor and patient."

Dr Wendy McLaren, a scientist at Optiscan who also holds a part-time research position at Monash University, said the device used laser light in conjunction with optical fibre technology to allow instant examination of cellular changes.

"This will be particularly useful for repeat examination of patients predisposed to cancer, such as those with a family history of the disease," she said.

"The device will enable early detection of morphological changes at the cellular level before it shows up at the macroscopic level, when it's often too late for curative treatment."

She said testing of the device on patients is expected to begin within the next year.

Allison Harding

Celebrant lends expertise to new professional code

MARRIAGE

As the only Australian tertiary institution to offer training for civil celebrants, Monash University is working with the Attorney-General's Department to develop competency

standards for aspiring civil marriage celebrants.

Monash civil ceremonies course coordinator and celebrant Ms Judy Watt has been invited to help develop the competencies, along with representatives of celebrant organisations.

The revision of standards comes with the re-introduction into Parliament last month of the Marriage Amendment Bill 2002, which aims to raise professional standards in celebrancy services for civil and religious celebrants.

The bill contains a range of reforms designed to raise the level of professional standards required of celebrants and to capitalise on their unique position to encourage and promote pre-marriage and other relationship education services.

According to Ms Watt, celebrants are currently appointed by the Attorney-General's Department on the basis that they are 'fit and proper' persons to take on the role and that a celebrant is needed in their local area.

"At the moment, anyone can apply and be appointed as a civil celebrant without any checks as to whether they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to perform this important community role," Ms Watt said.

The legislation will require that new celebrants undertake formal training, to be underpinned by a set of competency standards. Existing celebrants will be required to undertake professional development.

Ms Watt said Monash's Graduate Diploma of Arts (Civil Ceremonies) trained participants to conduct ceremonies, not only for marriages but also for a range of life-cycle events including funerals, name-givings, major anniversaries, divorce, citizenship and retirement.

From March to October this year, Monash is hosting a series of public lectures, 'Rites of passage: marking life and death in contemporary Australia', featuring leading civil celebrants and speakers from a range of religious traditions.

For more information on the graduate diploma or public lectures, contact Ms Judy Watt on +61 3 9905 2036.

June Yu



New civil celebrants will be required to undertake formal training under proposed competency standards. Photo Marco del Grande, Newspix

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Schools



Explore Monash Gippsland

Thursday 11 April, 10.30 am – 2 pm

Thursday 11 July, 10.30 am – 2 pm

Tuesday 24 Sept, 10.30 am – 2 pm

Secondary students who are interested in courses taught at Monash's Gippsland campus may not get the chance to visit the campus on Open Day in August. This year, we are running Explore Monash Gippsland sessions during the school holidays to give students and their families the opportunity to do so.

Families will be given a tour of the campus and the student residences and will be able to select academic areas of interest to be included on the tour. Staff and current Monash students will be on hand to answer any questions.

Bookings are required for these sessions. For more information, contact Ms Sharon Foster on +61 3 9902 6594 or +61 3 5122 6594.

'At Monash' seminar series

Business and Economics, Law

Wednesday, 8 May 2002

7.30 pm – 9 pm

Robert Blackwood Concert Hall Clayton campus

Medicine, Health Sciences, Pharmacy

Tuesday, 14 May 2002

7.30 pm – 9.30 pm

Robert Blackwood Concert Hall Clayton campus

Nursing, Education

Thursday, 16 May 2002,

7.30 pm – 9 pm

George Jenkins Theatre Peninsula campus

Arts, Science

Tuesday, 21 May 2002

7.30 pm – 9 pm

Robert Blackwood Concert Hall Clayton campus

Engineering, Information Technology

Wednesday, 29 May 2002

7.30 pm – 9 pm

Robert Blackwood Concert Hall Clayton campus

The 'At Monash' seminar series provides senior secondary students with the opportunity to explore Monash faculties more closely. Each seminar will feature speakers from the faculty, and graduates and current students will talk about their university experiences.

The seminars are aimed mainly at Year 11 and 12 students. Most of the seminars will take place in the evening to encourage parents to attend and to avoid interrupting class time for the students.

For more information, contact the Prospective Students Office on +61 3 9905 4164.



Howzat!

A Queensland player is caught and bowled by a Tasmanian cricketer in a match played during the Under 19 Australian Women's Cricket Championships held at Monash's Clayton campus recently. The final saw New South Wales triumph over Victoria in a fiercely contested game. Individual highlights of the tournament included centuries scored by Victorian Candace Hulett and New South Wales team members Leah Poulton and Sarah Alex, and Western Australian captain Renee Chappell's hat-trick against the ACB Invitational Team. Photo Greg Ford

Teaching: the way forward



After years in the wilderness, the status of teaching and the state of education is now back on the national agenda. But to improve the quality of our education system and maintain renewed interest in the profession, there must be an increase in the number of teacher training places, warns Monash University educationist **PROFESSOR SUE WILLIS**.

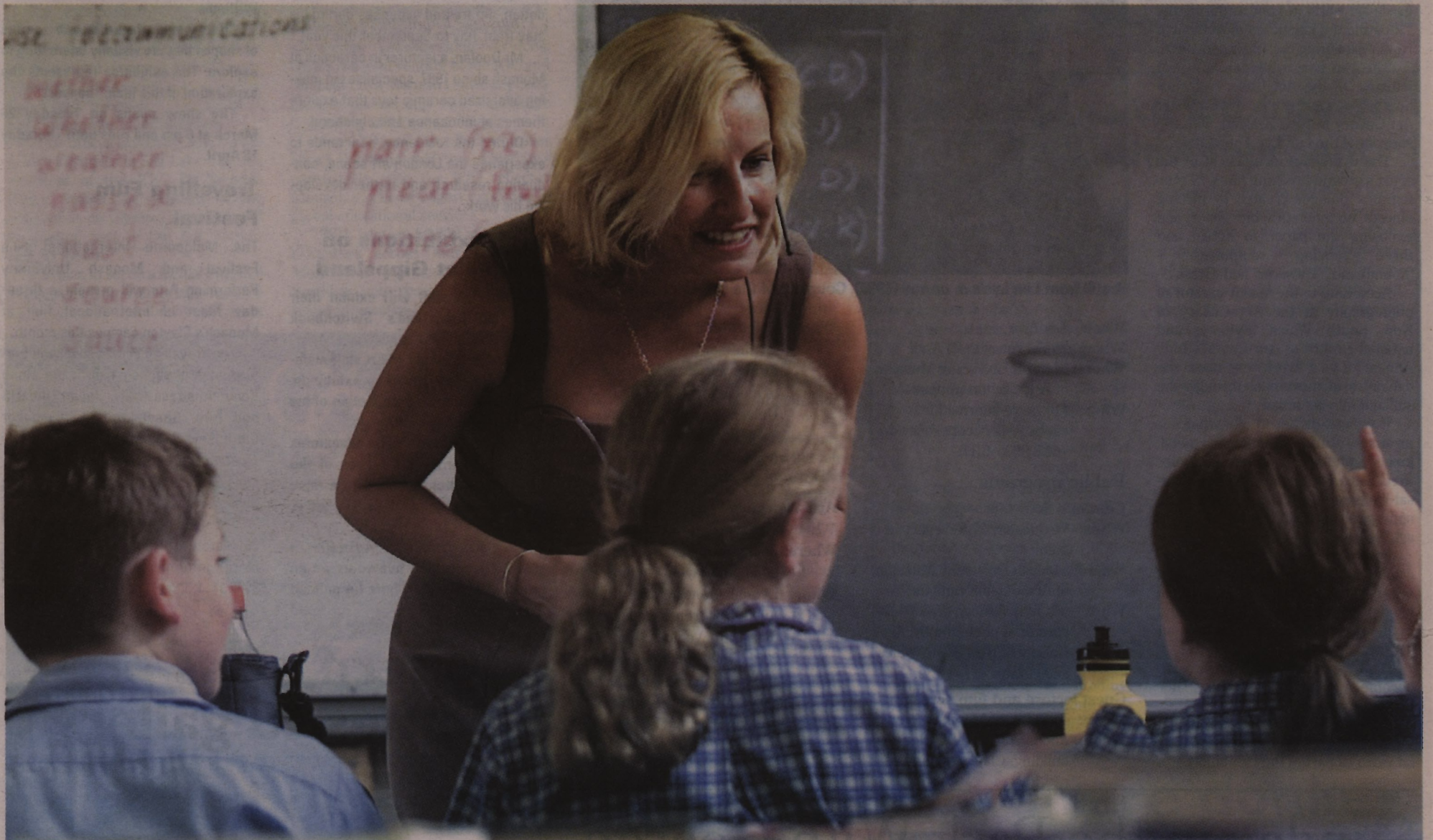


Photo Shaney Balcombe, Newspix

OPINION

THE INCREASE in applications for teacher education places this year has been something of a media event, as many prospective students who reasonably might have expected to gain a place in teacher education were turned away.

At Monash, there were 1344 qualified first-preference applicants for 400 places available in the Graduate Diploma of Education – an increase of 50 per cent on last year. All of these people were graduates with degrees in fields relevant to their chosen teaching specialisation or level. In some specialties, and on a scale of 1 to 7 where 7 is excellent, most people receiving offers had Grade Point Averages of 5.9 or above.

At the undergraduate level, the increase in applications was not so dramatic – 12 per cent overall – but this followed increases in demand for the past two years and was greatest at the Peninsula and Gippsland campuses.

Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Ranks (ENTERS) in some courses at those campuses have increased by 20 points since 1997. Ironically, the increase in retention rates that has accompanied this trend has resulted in fewer commencing places being available and increased the upward pressure on ENTERS.

With teacher shortages predicted in almost every state of Australia, particularly in rural areas, this

evidence of the increased attractiveness of teaching and of students increasingly attracted to studying at rural campuses ought to be good news. And, of course, it is.

Five years ago, one of the most worrying features of the teaching profession was that many secondary teachers were dissuading their students from going into teaching, so low was the morale among teachers.

When our children couldn't get jobs, we were told that poor academic standards and inattention to 'the basics' must be the explanation. A boring curriculum caused teenagers to 'wag' which, in turn, caused our houses to be burgled.

That the local railway station was covered in graffiti was due to poor discipline in schools (or was it a lack of opportunity for creative expression? – I forget which). Schools were either outdated, unresponsive and irrelevant to the majority of students, or pandered to trendy new ideas and the 'me' generation.

Employment and promotional opportunities in teaching had plummeted largely as a consequence of public policy. Many young graduates did not get positions or were employed in casual and part-time work which was unrewarding financially and professionally.

There was considerable 'talking down' of the teaching profession by public figures engaged in pay disputes. Efficiencies introduced to balance the budget were seen as simple cost-cutting measures which reduced teachers' capacity to provide quality education. Job satisfaction was low and many teachers were simply fed up – and said so.

Meanwhile, the Australian Council of Deans of Education, which had for a number of years commissioned well-researched studies of supply and demand, were warning of coming and potentially widespread teacher shortages. On the whole, their concerns were dismissed as self-interest.

and this was particularly so in fields such as mathematics, science and information technology.

Suddenly, it seemed, the status of teaching and the rewards for teaching were being given high priority. There was a National Inquiry into the Status of Teaching; governments around the country started actively promoting teaching; incentives in the form of scholarships and prizes were offered; and the language of politicians and the media began to change towards one of affirmation of teaching – and, of course, salaries improved and career progression was back on the agenda.

It is easy to be cynical, but my view is that the change in attitude was not

Unless there is an increase in the number of teachers graduating, particularly in areas of shortage, we will not gain the benefits of the increase in applications.

And so what has changed? About four years ago, it became clear that the predictions of teacher shortages were not exaggerated. The rate at which teachers were leaving the profession was increasing.

MANY newly qualified teachers who did not get positions found that their skills were highly valued in other fields. The pool of unemployed teachers who were supposed to be waiting by the phone and ready to drop everything when schools called were found not to be nearly as available as employers expected.

Well-prepared students were not making teaching their first choice,

simply a matter of potential teacher shortages. Increasingly, it was understood that few interests are served by an undermined, dispirited and poorly rewarded teaching profession.

Communities that *do not respect* and value their teachers cannot expect their children to either, and children do not learn well from people they do not respect or value. We also know that the qualifications and the level of achievement of teachers are very significant predictors of student success. Teachers make a difference, and capable, well-qualified teachers make the right kind of difference.

Perceptions about teacher shortages leading to a good job market, improved salaries and career prospects, and the general affirmation of teaching as a choice have all contributed to the increased attractiveness of teacher education and to the academic quality of students entering teaching.

Unfortunately, this has not been accompanied by an increase in the number of places available. At the graduate diploma level, the area of fastest growth which offers the quickest mechanism for overcoming specific areas of shortage, we are unable even to offer fee-paying places, since there is a specific embargo on us doing so.

We will be graduating excellent teachers who can make a difference, but we will not be graduating enough of them or enough of them in the right areas. Unless there is an increase in the number of teachers graduating, particularly in areas of shortage, we will not gain the benefits of the increase in applications. Some schools will continue to be forced to resort to less well-qualified or 'fast-tracked' teachers, or to those teaching outside their area of expertise. All children deserve good teachers, and as a country we are now in a position to ensure that they get them. But to achieve this, we need to open up more places in teacher education.

■ Professor Sue Willis is dean of the Faculty of Education at Monash University.

New exhibition honours experimental artist

From handpainted celluloid to moving sculptures, the dynamic work of renowned artist, experimental filmmaker and photographer Len Lye is now on show at the Monash University Museum of Art.

A New Zealand-born artist, Lye was a leading figure of both the avant-garde art world in London during the 1930s and the kinetic art movement in New York during the 1950s and 1960s.

The Len Lye exhibition is a joint initiative of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Zealand, with the support of the Len Lye Foundation.

The exhibition includes 14 of the artist's ground-breaking films, 21 photographs (images created by placing objects on photographic paper and exposing the paper to light), and three moving sculptures – 'Roundhead', 'Universe' and 'Grass'.

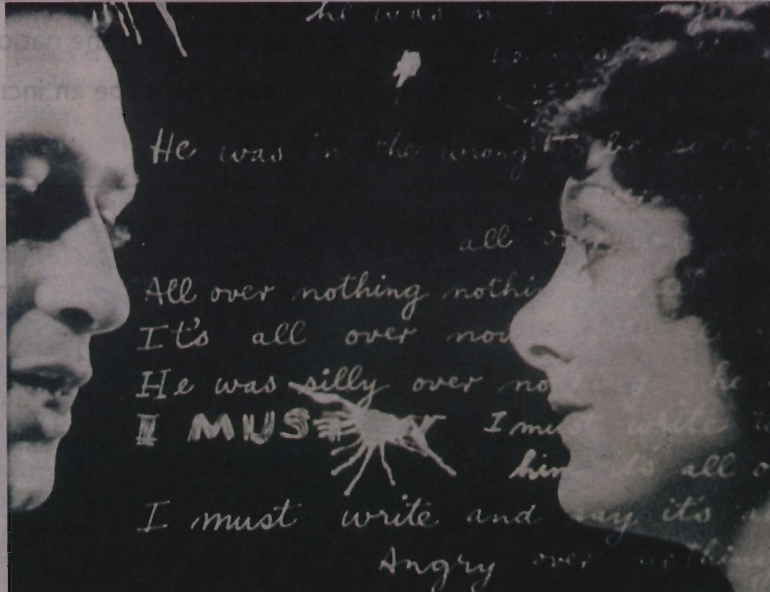
According to the senior curator of photography at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and national curator of *Len Lye*, Ms Judy Annear, Lye's work explores the dynamics of movement through the still and moving image.

"Lye was driven to use whatever means – words, film, music, metal, kinetics, photography, batik – in order to realise a singular vision of a universal life force that he recognised as an appropriate subject for an object of art," she said.

Fascinated with film, Lye used catchy music, saturated colour and organic forms on the surface of hand-painted and scratched celluloid in an attempt to make films without a camera.

His experiments led him to become a pioneer in a genre later known as music video.

A loop of 14 of Lye's experimental films will screen continuously on digital video as part of the exhibition.



A still from Len Lye's *n. or n.w.* (1937). Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation.

What: *Len Lye*

When: 26 February to 20 April

Where: Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton campus

Who: For more information, contact Ms Nicola Vance on +61 3 9905 4217.

Public programs

Curator's floor talk

When: Wednesday 27 February at 1 pm

Where: Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton campus

Who: Ms Judy Annear, senior curator of photography, Art Gallery of New South Wales and curator of *Len Lye*.

Guest lecture and film screening

When: Tuesday 19 March at 1 pm

Where: Room S704, level 7, Menzies building, Clayton campus

Who: Arthur Cantrill, experimental filmmaker, lecturer and former associate professor of media arts at Melbourne University, will show seminal 16mm film works by Len Lye and discuss Lye's films, theory and writings.

Artist's lecture

When: Tuesday 9 April at 1 pm

Where: Room S704, level 7, Menzies building, Clayton campus

Who: Lyndal Jones, artist and Australia's representative at the 49th Venice Biennale 2001, will speak on motion and emotion in relation to her own work and the filmic and sculptural art of Len Lye.

Derek Brown

ARTSSCENE

Lecturer wins Australia Council residency

Monash fine arts lecturer and ceramic artist Michael Doolan has been awarded a prestigious three-month Australia Council residency in London.

The residency, awarded by the Australia Council Visual Arts Craft Fund, will cover the artist's accommodation, airfare and expenses during his stay from July to September this year.

Mr Doolan, a lecturer in ceramics at Monash since 1987, specialises in making oversized ceramic toys that explore themes of innocence and childhood.

During the residency, he intends to experience the London art scene, conducting research and further developing his work.

Staff exhibitions on display at Gippsland

Two Monash staff will exhibit their work at Gippsland's Switchback Gallery this month.

Monash Museum of Art staff member David Hugh Thomas's exhibition, *Works on Paper*, is a collection of his ink sketches since 1997.

From the artist's surfing adventures as a teenager, to his heroes of the 1970s, the sketches represent a time, places or people that have touched or influenced his life.

Thomas returned to Australia in 1997 after spending five years as an artist in New York, where he painted

with oil on canvas. Thomas now works with ink on paper. *Works on Paper* will run until 21 March at the Switchback Gallery.

Works by Monash fine art lecturer and artist Glyn De Williams will also go on show at the Switchback Gallery this month.

The Hat Show showcases paintings exploring the theme of hats and what they can represent visually, said De Williams.

"Hats present the artist with a series of shapes that are visually interesting to explore. The exhibition represents the exploration of this idea," he said.

The show opens on Tuesday 26 March at 6 pm and runs until Thursday 18 April.

Travelling Film Festival

The Melbourne International Film Festival and Monash University Performing Arts will present a three-day feast of international film at Monash's Clayton campus this month.

The Travelling Film Festival will feature award-winning films from Hong Kong, Australia, Italy, Japan, the US and Iran. Special guest, filmmaker Clara Law, will introduce her work, *Floating Life*, and, following the screening, will discuss the issues raised in the film.

The festival will run from Tuesday 26 March to Thursday 28 March. For more information, contact +61 3 9905 1111.

Modern glass prize comes to gallery



'Nuptial bonds' by Karleena Mitchell.

Glass artwork created by Monash students and alumni are on show at the university's Faculty of Art and Design Gallery this month in an exhibition displaying works by finalists of the 2001 Ranamok Glass Prize.

The prize, now in its sixth year, showcases the latest developments in contemporary glasswork. Five students and seven alumni from Monash's Faculty of Art and Design were among 35 finalists vying for the prestigious prize, which attracted more than 100 entrants from Australia and New Zealand.

The exhibition features Monash students Lisa Cahill, Marcus Dillon, Karleena Mitchell, Fiona Ruttelle and Crystal Stubbs and faculty alumni Natasha Filippelli, Philip Stokes and Maureen Williams.

A diverse range of works is on show, including Karleena

Mitchell's 'Nuptial Bonds', a personal homage to her 21-year marriage represented by a glass foot sitting next to a bronze foot, and Lisa Cahill's 'Untitled', which uses glass to depict the basic elements of a landscape.

Well-known artist and Monash alumnus Maureen Williams, also a finalist, entered a piece that uses a glass vessel as a three-dimensional canvas to express abstract ideas.

What: 2001 Ranamok Glass Prize Exhibition

When: 25 February to 22 March

Where: Faculty of Art and Design Gallery, Caulfield campus

Who: For more information, contact the gallery manager on +61 3 9903 2882.

Derek Brown

Sunday in the Park With George



Laura Coates and Matt Balmford in a scene from *Sunday in the Park With George*. Photo: Greg Ford

Monash University performing arts graduates are about to bring to life the famous French painting 'Sunday Afternoon on the Island of la Grande Jatte' in a musical spanning two centuries.

The play, *Sunday in the Park With George*, was written by renowned American writer Stephen Sondheim and brings to life characters in the Georges Seurat painting. It is only the second time the play will be performed in Australia.

Drama and Theatre Studies director Mr Peter Fitzpatrick, who directs the performance, said *Sunday* was "a beautiful work – more than just a spectacle show, it is the pinnacle of intelligent musical theatre".

"It is one of Sondheim's most admired shows, and his favourite," Mr Fitzpatrick said.

The play opens with a scene from the painting, set in a park in Paris in 1884. It tells the story behind the lives of each of the characters, who, while walking in the park dressed in their Sunday best, are looking for 'haisons of one kind or another'.

By the end of the first act, the characters have become nothing more than images on a canvas.

The second act is set in an art gallery in Chicago 100 years later and

Continued on page 7

Biography sheds new light on the life of Jim Cairns

POLITICS

A new biography of former Whitlam government treasurer Dr Jim Cairns provides a fascinating insight into a political career that helped define an era.

Due out in April, *Keeper of the Faith: A Biography of Jim Cairns* by Monash academic and political historian Dr Paul Strangio finally lays to rest many of the myths surrounding the man and the ALP during one of the most turbulent eras in Australia's political history.

In what is likely to be the last biography written with the full cooperation of the former treasurer, Dr Strangio said Dr Cairns, now 87, had granted him complete access to never-before published records, including his police service, student and academic records.

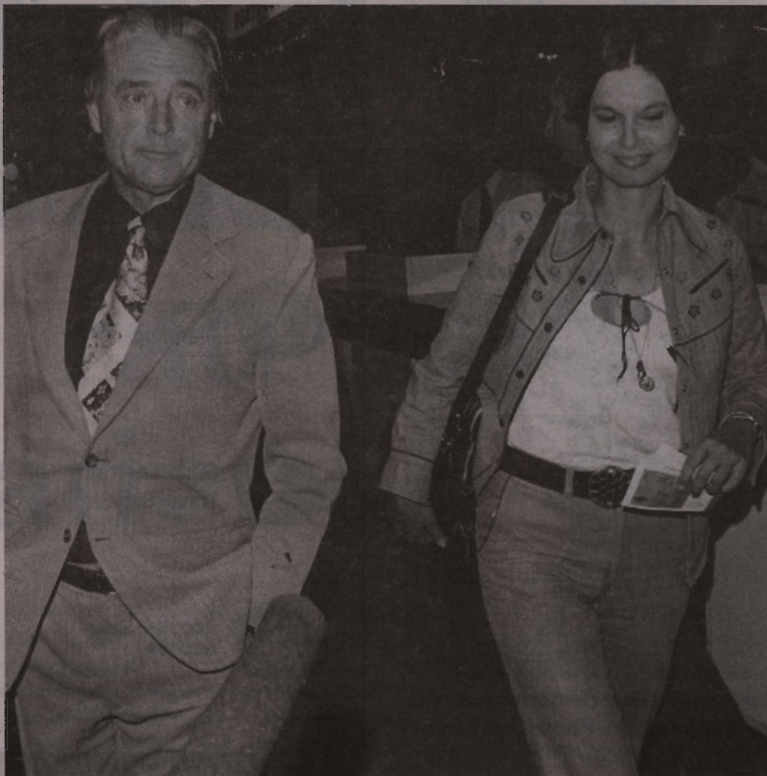
Among those interviewed for the biography were Tom Uren, Frank Crean, Fred Daly, Sam Goldbloom, Junie Morosi and Gough Whitlam.

Dr Strangio said his book challenges the still-popular myth that the ALP was always opposed to the Vietnam War.

"It was the left wing of the ALP and a handful of left-wingers led by Cairns who were consistently opposed to the Vietnam War. The right, including Whitlam, were not opposed to it initially," he said.

One of the sub-themes of the book is the great Cairns and Whitlam ideological and political rivalry, Dr Strangio said.

"Within the ALP, Whitlam is the icon, Cairns has been marginalised, and the victors write the history – to



Dr Jim Cairns with Junie Morosi in 1974.

Photo News Ltd

some degree that is what has happened."

While much has been written of Cairns in the context of 1975, Dr Strangio said, very little of his post-1975 career had been documented.

"His whole life has been a search for the secret recipe for a good society. In the early 1990s, Cairns said that everything he fought for – socialism and cooperation – had all amounted to 'a hill of beans'. It was such a sad, poignant thing to say."

But while Cairns regretted that his vision wasn't quite fulfilled, Dr Strangio said, he recognised that he had stood up for worthy causes and left a significant imprint on Australian society.

"There is a lovely quote by Max Teichmann, a former Monash academic, that Cairns didn't leave a legacy of dams and bridges – but he stood for alternative values, and that is vital in any healthy democracy."

Mary Viscovich

Performance artist to be awarded honorary doctorate

Monash University will this month award Australian-based international performance artist Stelarc an honorary doctorate.

Stelarc will receive the award on 21 March at the Robert Blackwood Concert Hall at Monash's Clayton campus. He will present the occasional address at the ceremony.

Stelarc has achieved a high level of international recognition in the field of conceptual, performance and body art. His work explores and extends the concept of the body and its relationship with technology through human/machine interfaces, incorporating the internet and web, sound, music, video and computers.

The artist has performed extensively in Australia, Japan, Europe and the US in new music and dance festivals and experimental theatre. He has used medical instruments, prosthetics, virtual reality systems and the internet in his performances.

Born Stelios Arcadiou in Cyprus in 1946, Stelarc trained at the former Caulfield Technical College (an antecedent of Monash University), the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and the University of Melbourne.

Since 1972, the artist has won numerous Australia Council and Myer Foundation grants, and in 1995, was the recipient of a three-year Australia Council Fellowship.

In 1997, Stelarc was appointed Honorary Professor of Art and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is currently principal research fellow in the Performance Arts Digital Research Unit at the Nottingham Trent University, UK.

Dean of Monash's Faculty of Art and Design Professor John Redmond said the award was recognition of Stelarc's contribution to international contemporary art.

"We are thrilled that Monash has chosen to bestow this honour upon Stelarc. He has made, and continues to make, a major contribution to discourse on contemporary art through regular presentations in scholarly and public forums. The honorary doctorate recognises his significant achievements," he said.

"Stelarc has been active in the Faculty of Art and Design since his graduation. He took up an honorary position in 1997 and participated in the 1999 Alumni Exhibition, which marked the opening of the new Art and Design building at the Caulfield campus.

"We are very pleased to welcome him back as artist-in-residence in June and eagerly anticipate his valuable contribution to faculty life."

Stelarc will be artist-in-residence in the Faculty of Art and Design from June to August this year.

Fiona Perry

Sunday in the Park With George

Continued from page 6

focuses on Georges Seurat's grandson, who is also an artist named Georges.

Mr Fitzpatrick said the second act focused on young Georges' struggle to market his artwork. "The young Georges must first learn why it is he is painting. He has to recapture the old Georges' beliefs."

The performance features Don Humphris as the old and young Georges and Laura Fitzpatrick as the central character Dot in the first act and then her daughter, among an outstanding cast of graduating students from the Centre for Drama and Theatre Studies.

Sunday in the Park will run in the drama theatre, Performing Arts

Centre, Clayton campus, from 12 March to 16 March, and from 19 March until 23 March. All performances start at 8 pm. Tickets cost \$25 (\$15 concession).

For more information, contact Ms Lidia Faranda on +61 3 9905 9135. Bookings can be made on the Sunday hotline on +61 3 9905 2970.

Diane Squires

INPRINT

The Australian Judiciary

By Enid Campbell and H. P. Lee
Published by Cambridge University Press
RRP: \$75

As a society regulated by the rule of law, we often place our faith in judicial institutions such as the courts and tribunals to protect our rights and solve our conflicts. The judges in charge of these institutions help contribute to the development and reinforcement of our laws and regulations.

The Australian Judiciary helps provide a better understanding of the judicial system within Australia. It provides information about the history, training, techniques, problems and future of the system as well as an analysis of various aspects of the system.

H. P. Lee is the Sir John Latham Professor of Law at Monash University and the author of many legal books on Australia, Singapore and Malaysia. Enid Campbell is an Emeritus Professor of Law at Monash University and the author of several legal publications.

Telling Stories:

Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand

Edited by Bain Attwood and Fiona Magowan
Published by Allen & Unwin
RRP: \$35

Recent decades have seen an upsurge in interest in Indigenous history among both Indigenous and settler peoples in Australia and New Zealand. Life stories, land claims, genealogy, song, dance and painting have all made new contributions to the recovery and representation of the past.

Telling Stories looks at the place of life stories and of memory in history; who tells life stories; the purpose for which they are told; the role of story and history in the politics of land claims; and the way language impacts on research and writing.

Dr Bain Attwood is a senior lecturer in history at Monash University. He is also author of *The Making of the Aborigines* and editor of *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines* and *In the Age of Mabo*. Dr Fiona Magowan is a lecturer in anthropology at the University of Adelaide and has published works on Australian Aboriginal women's music and dance.

Nietzsche in Context

By Robin Small
Published by Ashgate
RRP: \$56 (paperback)

Nietzsche in Context is a broad, accessible survey and examination of Nietzsche and his work in the context of philosophers of his own time. Aimed at students and wider readers as well as Nietzsche scholars, it is the first book to relate Nietzsche to those contemporaries who influenced him rather than to those who are well known today.

The book draws on original sources which have never been discussed in English and which have been inaccessible to many readers. It also considers important new material. *Nietzsche in Context* goes beyond historical scholarship by including original philosophical analysis and interpretation of the ideas under discussion.

Dr Robin Small is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. He has published on such thinkers as Hegel, Marx, Husserl and Kafka and is editor of *A Hundred Years of Phenomenology: Perspectives on a Philosophical Tradition*.

POSTscript

Dummett – Philosophy of Language by Dr Karen Green, senior lecturer in philosophy at Monash University, has been published by Polity Press.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming book, contact monashnews@adm.monash.edu.au

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MUARC and TAC promote anti-speeding message

ACCIDENT RESEARCH

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and its recently signed sponsorship partner Collingwood Football Club launched a new road safety campaign at Monash University's Accident Research Centre (MUARC) recently.

The new, powerful and emotive 'Wipe off 5' advertising campaign, aimed at reducing speed, reinforces that even low-level speeding can have tragic consequences.

The 'Wipe off 5' message came about after research conducted by MUARC showed that even small changes in speed can mean the difference between death and a serious injury, or a serious injury and a minor injury.

According to the research, a car travelling at 60 kilometres per hour will take 45 metres to stop in an emergency braking situation, whereas a car braking at 65 kilometres per hour will still be travelling at 32 kilometres per hour after 45 metres.

Director of MUARC Dr Ian Johnston said travelling five kilometres per hour above the limit was risky.

"Five kilometres per hour extra increases the chance of death by 10 per cent and the chance of serious injury by 50 per cent," he said.

Joining the fight against speed is Collingwood Football Club, who has just signed a three-year sponsorship deal with the TAC. The TAC has increased its sponsorship involvement with the club to promote its anti-speeding messages in schools and the wider community.



Collingwood captain and test driver Nathan Buckley demonstrates the risks of travelling five kilometres above the limit. Photo Joe Mann

Club president Mr Eddie McGuire said the team was committed to doing everything it could to assist in reducing the road toll. "Hopefully, by setting an example and talking to people in the community about this important issue, we will be able to make a real difference," he said.

To demonstrate the club's dedication to the TAC deal, Collingwood has issued every player with a hands-free mobile phone car kit, a portable breathalyser and a cab charge card.

"We want our players to enjoy full lifestyles and the fruits of their labour,

but we also want them to be responsible," Mr McGuire said.

Following the launch, Collingwood captain Nathan Buckley took part in a controlled speed test at Monash. He drove a vehicle towards cardboard pedestrians at 60 kilometres per hour and then again at 65 kilometres per hour to test the braking distances.

He said he was shocked at the difference five kilometres per hour could have.

"You just don't realise how much harder you hit objects when you are going five kilometres more," he said.

Janae Houghton

Robot demonstrates the fine art of Chinese calligraphy

ENGINEERING

A group of engineering students at Monash University Malaysia have pushed the boundaries of robotics and created a robotic arm that writes in Chinese.

As part of a class project, five final-year mechatronics students aimed to develop a different application from the usual robotic functions such as welding, painting and material handling, which are commonly used in manufacturing and on assembly lines.

According to team member Mr Danny Leong, the group decided on Chinese calligraphic writing, as they wanted to prove that robots could perform more than just routine applications.

"We wanted to show people that robots could do fine work such as calligraphy. To most people, robotic systems are associated with manufacturing and assembly work or with remote and hazardous environments," he said.

The students created the robot by combining their knowledge of aspects of mechanical engineering, electronics, computing and computer control systems such as sensors and actuator technology.

Mr Leong said the most challenging part of the project was identifying the basic strokes in calligraphic writing and then programming the system.

"The robotic arm has the capacity to write simple Chinese characters and numerics. We are developing the

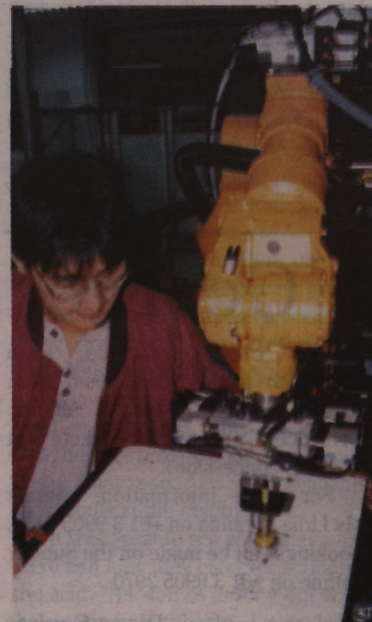
application further to enhance the robot's versatility so that it can write phrases and names," he said.

The project was undertaken by final-year mechatronics engineering students taking the 'Intelligent mechanism design' unit.

The unit was developed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for designing, building and operating intelligent products and systems.

A demonstration of the robotic calligraphy took place during Monash Malaysia's Open Day earlier this year.

Janae Houghton



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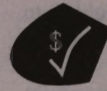
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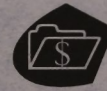
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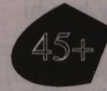


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