

MONASH News

Research, news and opinion from Monash University

Volume 7 | Number 4 | June 2004

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Education

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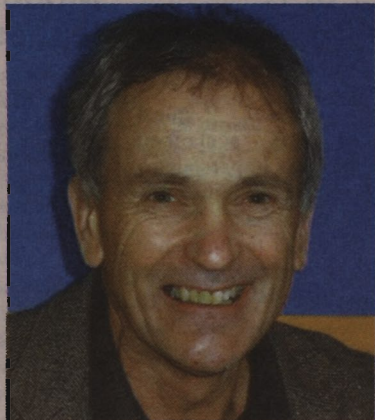
Boys, balls and bad behaviour

Education

In the wake of national public outcry over gang rape allegations against rugby league and AFL players, a Monash University physical education expert has called for radical action at junior levels to combat the problem of footballers behaving badly.

Associate Professor Lindsay Fitzclarence said physical education teachers and coaches should encourage junior footballers to develop a sense of individual responsibility for their actions, to overcome the 'group-think' factor that contributes to gang rape.

"Games such as football that actively foster tight bonding between players also have the capacity to objectify those not in the group as outsiders, creating an environment of 'group-think' where females can be treated as less than equal," Dr Fitzclarence said.



Researching footballers' bad behaviour: Associate Professor Lindsay Fitzclarence.

"Another factor within the ranks of elite sportsmen is the development of an exaggerated sense of entitlement and a diminished sense of responsibility and empathy, in which personal and group wants and desires dominate over consideration for others.

"When you add this to a set of unwritten laws of conduct in which drug abuse, excessive alcohol use and violence are prevalent, the sorts of scandals that have surfaced recently are no real surprise."

Dr Fitzclarence, an associate dean in the Education faculty at Monash's Gippsland campus, has been researching abusive behaviour by footballers for more than seven years, in partnership with Dr Christopher Hickey of Deakin University. They are currently completing a book on the topic.

The researchers, both former physical education teachers, observed and recorded a number of disturbing behaviour patterns in the junior football team they were coaching in the mid-1990s.

Their anxieties about what they were seeing were reinforced after witnessing an onfield assault at a senior football match that ended up with the victim in intensive care for nearly a week.

"There is a fine line between illegal behaviour and the practices required to play body contact sport," Dr Fitzclarence said. "Footballers are not being given enough training in how to walk that line and not cross over to the other side.

"Male team sports like football have been built on a military model that stresses group cohesion. Phrases such as 'one for all and all for one' reinforce that ideal, but when that is carried beyond the boundary of the game and into sexual relations, we have serious problems."

He said the best way to stop bad behaviour at senior levels was to attack the problem at junior levels, by promoting a culture of social and emotional responsibility.

"Teachers and coaches should aim to develop players' social and emotional skills as much as physical skills and team tactics, helping to create a revolution from below that can work its way up through the system."

Dr Fitzclarence said the crucial factor in breaking down group-think

barriers that foster abuse of team outsiders was to find ways to encourage and reinforce individual responsibility while still maintaining the cohesion necessary to be an effective team.

"Teachers and coaches are in key positions to challenge intolerance of differences. To do this, they need to encourage young males to be able to make independent choices when they deem it is necessary to do so.

"But this is difficult emotional territory. To take a stand against one's group can come at a high price.

"Isolation and even rejection are what most young people fear most of all. Learning to understand such feelings and reactions thus becomes an important step in the process of developing emotional maturity."

— Michele Martin

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Platypus sense is electric

Medicine

The uncanny ability of platypuses to locate a shrimp on a muddy river bottom at night is due to the bills and brains of these unique mammals being specially equipped with electro-sensors that allow them to home in on the electrical signals of prey, Monash scientists believe.

Professor Uwe Proske and Dr Ed Gregory from the Department of Physiology have studied the data available on platypus physiology and speculate that the row of nerves in platypus bills, wired to the touch and electro-sensing part of the platypus brain, work like a short-range radar system to pick up the electrical signals of fish, shrimp, crayfish and other prey.

Their speculations about platypus electro-receptors have been published in the journal *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology*.

"Electro-sense in animals has evolved at least twice," Professor Proske said. "The first time was in fish – sharks, rays and other non-bony fish as well as in electric bony fish. The second time was in platypuses and echidnas. The electro-sensory system in the platypus evolved entirely independently of that in fishes."

Professor Proske said platypuses



Photo: AAP

appear to have developed touch receptors in their bills, similar to those in human skin, as part of their electro-sensory system. "Some cells in the platypus bill respond to touch and some to weak electric fields, weaker than anything humans can feel. These cells send their respective messages to the brain."

It is important that the electro-receptors be sensitive to the slightest change in electric field, as the platypus doesn't rely on its other senses when hunting – its eyes, ears and nostrils are closed when it dives, looking for prey on the bottom of a stream or pond.

"If you look at the surface of the platypus brain, about two-thirds of the sensory part of the brain is connected to the bill," Professor Proske said.

"One of the surprising things we found were brain cells that responded both to signals coming from the touch cells and from the electro-sensory cells. So does the platypus feel touch when it detects an electric field?

"We think that as a shrimp swims, it generates an electro-myogram such that when its tail is flicked, it produces

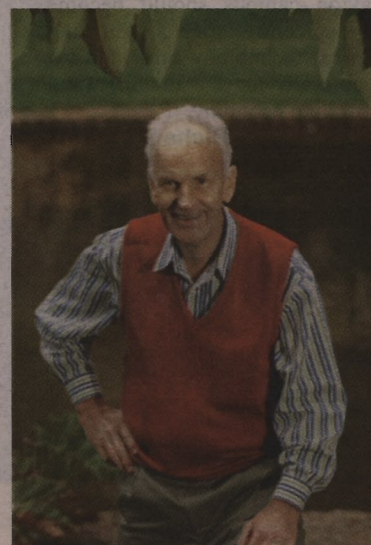
a signal the platypus can detect. So, as the platypus is swimming in the dark, the first thing it detects is the electro-signal. Then, at a delay, there is a small disturbance of the water as a result of the tail flick, and the disturbance triggers the touch nerve endings in the bill.

"It has been speculated that there are cells in the brain that are tuned to respond to sensory signals coming from the bill at a preferred interval. The interval response tells the platypus how far away the prey is.

"The system is obviously effective, as a platypus can capture half its body weight in food every night."

Although Professor Proske is particularly interested in how the electro-sensory system of the platypus works, these ideas could have practical applications.

Just as the use of sonar by porpoises was developed into a practical application by the US navy, it is possible that knowledge of how the membranes in a platypus nerve fibre are affected by a weak electric signal could be used to detect



Uncovering the platypus 'radar system': Professor Uwe Proske.

Photo: Greg Ford

objects underwater that produce electric signals.

— Penny Fannin

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Suburban home bedazzles with colour

Howard Arkley's 'Family home – suburban exterior' (1993, Monash University Collection) is one of the works featured in the *Satellite Cities and Tabloid Life* exhibition showing at the Monash University Museum of Modern Art (MUMA), Clayton campus, until 3 July.

For further information, call +61 3 9905 4217 or visit www.monash.edu.au/muma. And see page 6 for details of a new exhibition series at MUMA – 'Incident in the Museum'.



From the vice-chancellor's desk

A monthly column by the vice-chancellor of Monash University,
Professor Richard Larkins



The growing strength of biotechnology in Victoria is nowhere better reflected than at Monash, where research and infrastructure projects are entering exciting new phases of discovery and development.

The university is at the centre of a research and commercialisation boom, with the first stage of the Monash Science Technology Research and Innovation Precinct (STRIP) now fully operational and the research institutes that are so much a part of Monash – the National Stem Cell Centre, the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, and the Monash Research Cluster for Biomedicine – producing high-quality research of great current and future benefit to humankind.

Construction of the Australian Synchrotron at Monash's Clayton campus is also well under way. With this powerful scientific instrument being in such close proximity, there is a great opportunity for Monash to become the regional centre for synchrotron science and the research and industry that flows from it.

We also have a major branch of the CSIRO located on our Clayton campus, and increased collaboration with the outstanding scientists located there will further enhance the potential of the precinct.

The first stage of the Monash STRIP was completed on the Clayton campus earlier this year, and planning for stages two and three has begun. The STRIP brings together researchers and commercial partners in an environment where they can share ideas and collaborate. It is an ideal

environment for fostering research-based business development.

One of the STRIP's major tenants, the National Stem Cell Centre (of which Monash is a major stakeholder), last month received an additional \$55 million in funding from the Federal Government to continue developing treatments for serious diseases using stem cells and related technologies.

This success can be partly attributed to the significant effort the university has made in designing cutting-edge research programs and attracting high-calibre researchers.

Surrounding Monash's Clayton campus is Australia's largest industrial concentration of information technology and telecommunications, scientific, medical, advanced materials, plastics, transport and equipment manufacturing.

Monash is ideally positioned in every sense to become the leader of science and technology research in Australia, and its Clayton campus should become the epicentre of a thriving science, technology and industry precinct driving the Victorian and Australian economy.

– Richard Larkins

No 'perfect babies' for Monash Law

Law debate

Age and experience defeated youth and enthusiasm last month when two teams of Monash Law alumni debated the question 'Should the law allow genetic engineering to create the perfect baby?'

The Great Law Week Debate was co-hosted by the Law faculty and the Law Institute of Victoria. Held in the Legislative Council chamber of Parliament House in front of students and legal professionals, the debate was part of celebrations to mark the 40th anniversary of the Monash Law School.

The over-40s team, who argued against the genetic engineering of babies, won the day. The result was not surprising as the team's three members included some of Melbourne's top legal brains – Mr Julian Burnside QC, Mr David Shavin QC and Mr Simon Wilson QC.

The under-40s team, who argued in favour of the question, included a current Monash law student and two Monash law alumni. They were former World and Australasian Debating Champion Ms Kim Little, from law firm Clayton

Utz; former Australasian Debating Champion runner-up Mr Chris Fladgate, who works at law firm Mallesons Stephen Jaques; and Monash arts/law student and current Australasian Debating Champion runner-up Ms Simin Kocdag.

The five-member judging panel – Monash Law dean Professor Arie Freiberg, Law Institute of Victoria president Mr Chris Dale, Melbourne City councillor Ms Kimberly Kitching, barrister Ms Roisin Annesley and Monash Association of Debaters president Mr Tim Sonnreich – all decided that the negative team's arguments were more persuasive.

The special guest moderator was acclaimed public speaker, impersonator and Monash alumnus Mr Campbell McComas.

The QCs told the audience it would be catastrophic to allow politicians to design the population by deciding what constituted a perfect baby, while the younger team argued that state-sponsored genetic engineering should be available to everyone because the technology provides healthier, smarter babies.

– Robyn Anns



Perusing the books: From left, vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins; Arts associate dean (graduate research) Associate Professor Denise Cuthbert; Italian consul-general Dr Francesco Calogero; and Italian studies convenor, SLCL, Dr Annamaria Pagliaro.

Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

Books strengthen links between Monash and Italy

Italian studies

Monash has joined a select group of three universities outside Europe that have received a significant donation of Italian books from the government of Italy.

The government has given Monash more than 700 books, which will form the basis of an Italian studies research centre to be developed within the university's School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics (SLCL).

It is only the third such book donation by Italy's Ministry for Cultural Heritage to universities in cities outside Europe with large Italian communities, the others being to a university in Alexandria, Egypt, and one in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Monash collection includes encyclopaedias and reference texts, works of classical and contemporary literature and books on librarianship.

At a ceremony to acknowl-

edge the donation, vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins said it signified the importance of the close cultural links the university had established with Italy since setting up a centre in Prato in 2001.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Italian consul-general Dr Francesco Calogero said the donation was part of an international program to provide readers of Italian throughout the world with access to a wide range of Italian literature and texts.

And Arts associate dean (graduate research) Associate Professor Denise Cuthbert said the books would provide the nucleus for the proposed Italian studies research centre, which would coordinate and enhance research and teaching in Italian studies at Monash.

– Michele Martin

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Briefly

Rural doctors are happy

A Monash University study of more than 1100 rural doctors has found that Federal Government strategies to attract doctors to rural areas are working.

The three-year study by Ms Jo Wainer, a senior lecturer in Monash's School of Rural Health, found a high percentage of rural doctors expressed contentment with their life as a rural doctor and satisfaction with rural medical practice.

Ms Wainer said Federal Government programs to encourage medical students and young doctors to experience rural practice were supported by her finding that intended length of stay in rural practice was associated with prior experience of it.

"Based on this strategy alone, women intend to stay an additional 3.8 years in rural practice and men an additional 2.9 years," Ms Wainer said.

Monash library a national leader

The Monash University Library is the first library in Australia to introduce state-of-the-art scanning equipment that is bringing archival microform collections to life and into the digital age.

The new microscanners, developed by Canon and imported from Japan, enable Monash's vast collection of microforms (microfiche and microfilm) to be viewed, digitised, emailed and printed.

Users can scan extracts, photographs and engravings from old newspapers and documents, and include them in research works by saving the images digitally.

Music and multimedia librarian Ms Georgina Binns said six microscanners had been installed at the Sir Louis Matheson Library at the university's Clayton campus and two at the Caulfield campus library, following a successful trial involving students, academics and library staff.

Neurology ward goes wireless

In a first for the Monash Medical Centre, ward 54 has gone wireless. Efficiencies are expected to increase with clinical staff using innovative hand-held devices and mobile equipment to deliver patient care.

The project, called mWard, has been developed by the Centre for Health Services Operations Management (CHSOM) within the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University, in conjunction with partners NEC Business Solutions and Southern Health.

It aims to demonstrate the benefits of wireless technology in a hospital environment, and the positive impact the technology can have on the workflow of nurses and doctors, and ultimately, on patient care.

Infrastructure for the mWard project has been established in the neurology, neurosurgery and stroke areas at Monash Medical Centre. The equipment used has been donated by NEC Business Solutions, their partners Telenet and Spectralink, and Warp Systems Pty Ltd.

French-connected marketing students

A team of Monash University marketing students has won the right to represent Australia in an international marketing competition in Paris this month.

The three-person team will compete against groups from 25 countries at the annual L'Oréal Marketing Award International.

They qualified for the trip when they were declared winners of the Australian L'Oréal Marketing Awards on 4 May in Melbourne.

A second team of Monash marketing students was declared runner-up in the national competition.

Three teams from Monash and three from RMIT University were given six weeks to analyse the L'Oréal Biotherm Homme brand of men's products, and devise a strategy and creative brief for the potential launch of the product.

A judging panel, including executives from the company and the Mojo advertising agency, questioned the teams about their entries, then deliberated for more than two hours before declaring the winner.

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Bringing parliament to the people

Politics

Victorians want a closer relationship with their state parliament and more say in how Victoria is governed, new research by Monash University's Parliamentary Studies Unit has found.

Co-directors of the unit Associate Professor Colleen Lewis and Dr Ken Coghill said their two-year study of community perceptions of Victorian politicians and parliament showed people were looking for a bigger role in the democratic process.

"Our study recommends that the public's role be strengthened through an expanded system of parliamentary committees, which would call for public comment and hold public hearings on proposed new laws," Dr Coghill said.

"This approach, already highly developed in other countries such as New Zealand, would move law-making out into the community via the parliamentary committees, which would become the interface



Knowledge gap: The research demonstrated lack of community knowledge about how parliament operates.

Photo: Fairfax

between the general public and parliament."

The researchers cast a wide survey net, interviewing members of the public, politicians, parliamentary staff and political journalists. Dr Lewis said the one aspect all those surveyed seemed to agree on was that Question Time in parliament was creating a negative impression of parliament and politicians.

"Just about everyone we spoke to zeroed in on Question Time and said there was too much bad conduct

on display there, denigrating the institution of parliament itself," she said.

"Even the politicians felt that their behaviour during Question Time was poor and needed to change so the session could serve its true purpose as an accountability check."

Dr Lewis said the research also demonstrated a significant lack of knowledge about how parliament operates, which could be addressed

by it taking a more active role in promoting its work.

"We recommend it does this by setting up a community or media liaison centre, to educate community members about what goes on in parliament, the differences between the legislative assembly and legislative council, what a backbencher does, what a minister does and other important aspects," she said.

"A community or media liaison centre could also be involved in educating political journalists via a substantial, mandatory induction program for those seeking accreditation as members of the parliamentary press gallery.

"Another possible role for such a centre would be to set up regular radio spots to talk about things like current happenings in parliament, bills being debated or important overseas visitors, as well as publishing booklets about parliamentary business."

An education program for politicians themselves was another key recommendation of the researchers,

who said lack of professional training for politicians was a world-wide problem.

"Ongoing professional development is required to equip politicians to be a more effective link between parliament and the community," Dr Coghill said.

"Education programs could include sessions on the operation of the parliamentary system, the legislative process, parliamentary committees and preparation for office as parliamentary secretaries and ministers."

Dr Coghill and Dr Lewis recently presented their research findings and recommendations to the Victorian Parliament and the Australasian Study of Parliament Group. They are also due to present a paper on their research at an international parliamentary studies conference in the UK at the end of July.

- Michele Martin

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Monash heart surgeons make history

Surgery

Monash University Department of Surgery staff have made history by performing the first robotic heart operations in the southern hemisphere.

Senior lecturers Mr Aubrey Almeida and Mr Randall Moshinsky, both experienced cardiac surgeons, have performed more than a dozen operations in the past few months using the da Vinci Robotic Surgical System - a highly sophisticated device that allows complex operations through a 4 cm incision.

After being the first Australian cardiac surgeons to train using the robotic surgery system at East Carolina University School of Medicine in the US, the Monash surgeons are now using the \$3 million device at the Epworth Hospital in Melbourne.

The system consists of a high-resolution 3-D telescope and two robotic arms that are inserted into the patient through small incisions. The surgeon performs the operation by controlling fine instruments at the tips of the robotic arms while seated at a console away from the operating table. A second surgeon is at the operating table at all times.

Cardiac surgery has traditionally been performed through a long cut through the breast-bone, which offers good exposure to the heart but comes at the expense of prolonged discomfort, pain and scarring. The da Vinci system minimises the intrusion into the body and means complex surgical procedures can be conducted through spaces between the ribs.

Robotic-assisted cardiac surgery dramatically improves patient outcomes, including shorter hospital stays, less post-operative pain, less risk of infection, less scarring and faster recovery.

Mr Almeida said patients who had undergone robotic surgery were being



Making history: Mr Randall Moshinsky operates using the da Vinci Robotic Surgical System at Epworth Hospital in Melbourne.

Photo: Heath Missen

discharged in half the time they would be after conventional open heart surgery.

The head of the Monash University Department of Surgery, Professor Julian Smith, said the groundbreaking technology opened doors for the establishment of a cross-faculty robotic surgery institute focused on further developing the technology in Australia.

Professor Smith has discussed the proposal, including applying for a State Government Science, Technology and Innovation Grant, with members of the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Information Technology.

"The benefits of setting up such an institute would far outweigh initial costs," he said. "Monash University is in an ideal position to take this exciting technology forward."

The da Vinci Robotic Surgical System, sold in Australia by Device Technologies, is a descendant of a US Department of Defence project in the 1980s to create a robot that would allow surgeons to operate on critically wounded soldiers from a safe distance, or even perform emergency surgery on astronauts.

-- Allison Harding

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Study leads to new drug-driver laws

Drug testing

New laws allowing Victorian police to randomly test drivers for illicit drugs have been largely instigated by a landmark study at Monash University's Department of Forensic Medicine.

The laws, which will enable police to pull over drivers to test their saliva, were to a great extent the result of a 10-year study led by Professor Olaf Drummer, head of scientific services at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine. They come into effect on 1 July.

The pivotal study, which revealed that half of all drivers killed had drugs or alcohol in their systems, showed a strong and highly significant association between the presence of any drug and the likelihood of the driver being culpable.

The research also has international significance, with Professor Drummer travelling to the US earlier this year to discuss the results with policy-makers and researchers at a meeting commissioned by the White House.

Professor Drummer said the Drug Control section of the White House was keen to develop a federal policy that could be applied across the whole country and that was defensible from a scientific perspective.

The study compiled full toxicological investigations on 3398 driver fatalities in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia between 1990 and 1999. Only cases that were on-road motor vehicle crashes were included. Crashes that occurred off-road or those classified as due to natural causes or suicide were excluded.

The toxicology testing was similar in the three states and included testing for alcohol and drugs of abuse - cannabinoids, amphetamines and related stimulants, benzodiazepines, cocaine and opiates.

The study revealed that 1694 - almost 50 per cent - of drivers who had died in an accident had drugs and/or alcohol in their systems at the time of the crash. Of those, 88 per cent were considered responsible for the crash, compared to 71 per cent of the drug and alcohol-free drivers.

Professor Drummer said the study provided strong evidence that drivers killed in crashes and taking drugs such as cannabis and strong stimulants, or two or more drugs in combination, were more likely to be responsible for the crash than those taking neither drugs nor alcohol.

And the combination of such drugs with alcohol further increased the likelihood that drivers caused the crash in which they died.

- Allison Harding

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Passing the baton in family business



Succession planning vital: Associate Professor Rowena Barrett.

Small business

Many family-owned businesses are run by ageing founders and operators who have not adequately considered the complexities of passing on their businesses to successors, research by Monash University's Family and Small Business Research Unit (FSBRU) has found.

FSBRU director Associate Professor Rowena Barrett said her unit's investigation showed that many family and small business operators who would retire within the next decade had not addressed the vital issue of succession planning.

"We believe business operators need to take a holistic approach to succession planning, because it does not work if you look at it from just one perspective," Dr Barrett said. "You can look at succession planning from the financial, taxation and legal points of view. But unless you also factor in the individuals, you are destined to fail."

The unit sourced and evaluated existing international research and statistics on small and family-owned businesses, concluding that most small businesses do not consider the psychological aspect of the hand-over process.

"They need to ask themselves questions such as what the preparedness is of those involved, whether the owners are ready to let go and whether the chosen successors are ready to take over," Dr Barrett said.

The FSBRU advises that effective succession planning involves balancing expectations of management and staff with what is best for the business. An eldest son or daughter might expect to be the heir apparent. But what happens if a younger sibling is considered more suitable? How should a family business operator handle that?

"The best person to take up the reins may not be a family member at all," Dr Barrett said.

"Business operators should also look at the relationships involving management and other employees. The person the boss thinks would be best to take over may not be popular with the other staff. That person's appointment could lead to lowered morale, reduced output, a decline in the company's profits and, ultimately, even send the business to the wall."

Following its preliminary investigation, the FSBRU has identified a series of relationships, factors and processes at work within family business succession, which may combine to produce many different results.

"The consequence is that there is no one correct way to conduct family business succession," Dr Barrett said. "Relationships include those between individuals such as the incumbent and the successor, as well as between other key stakeholders in the business."

"Factors and processes deal with such things as communication, the life stage, culture, context, management processes and history of the business, and the preparedness of the successor to succeed and the incumbent to be succeeded."

The FSBRU held a succession planning workshop, 'Succession planning: why is it important, how can it be done and what help is available', in Melbourne on 7 June as part of its further research into the topic.

The results of the workshop, which involved small business owners and employees and succession planning experts, will be used as the basis of a detailed report on the subject commissioned by management consultancy Linchpin Group Australia.

— Robyn Anns

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Schools

Chemical Engineering Experience

The Chemical Engineering Experience is a two-day school holiday program hosted by the Department of Chemical Engineering at Monash's Clayton campus on 29 and 30 June.

The program will provide an opportunity for secondary students aged between 16 and 19 who are interested in science, chemistry or engineering to find out more about chemical engineering. It includes hands-on activities, laboratory time, an industrial site visit and a chance to interact with practising chemical engineers. Participants will also gain an insight into the career opportunities available to chemical engineers.

It is a good idea to register soon, as spaces are limited. The cost is \$95, which includes all activities, transport, site visits, lunch and morning tea. Overnight accommodation is available, at a subsidised rate, for students from outside Melbourne.

For further information, contact Ms Lilyanne Price on +61 3 9905 1872.

Explore Monash – a program for regional students

The Explore Monash program aims to introduce regional students to the study opportunities and experiences available at the university's Clayton campus. It also gives these students, who may not be able to attend Open Day, an opportunity to visit the university.

The program takes place on Friday 9 July from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm. It coincides with the school holidays, so students and their families can visit Melbourne to attend.

Participants receive information about courses, admissions and scholarships and have the opportunity to tour the Clayton campus and halls of residence. At the end of the day's program, participants may also choose to visit another Monash metropolitan campus, and campus tours will be organised for interested parties.

For more information or to book online, visit www.monash.edu.au/psu/events/explore-monash.

Funding boost for primary care mental health research

Research funding

Monash University's Department of General Practice has received \$350,000 in grants from the beyondblue Victorian Centre of Excellence in Depression and Related Disorders.

Victorian Health Minister Ms Bronwyn Pike announced the grants on 18 May.

A consortium grant of \$300,000 over three years was awarded to the Primary Care Evidence Based Psychological Interventions (PEP) Collaboration headed by Dr Grant Blashki, senior research fellow in the Department of General Practice.

Dr Blashki said the grant recognised the valuable work being done within the department and the central role of GPs as health care providers.

"GPs are the front line in managing common mental illnesses in the community such as depression and anxiety," he said. "This is because GPs are accessible, able to sift out the physical and psychological symptoms with which people with mental illness usually present, and are perceived as a low-stigma option for people seeking out professional assistance."

"The PEP project is an opportunity to better understand which psychological interventions can be integrated into general practice, how best to train GPs, whether patients benefit in terms of objective



PEP Collaboration team members: (Back row, from left): Professor Graham Meadows, director, Adult Mental Health Research, Training and Evaluation Centre, Southern Area Mental Health Services, Dandenong Hospital; Professor Jeff Richards, director of Primary Care Research, Monash Department of General Practice; Associate Professor Jane Gunn, Melbourne University Department of General Practice; and Ms Leonie Young, chief executive officer, beyondblue. (Front row, from left): Ms Lisa Ciechowski, research officer, Monash Department of General Practice; Dr Grant Blashki; Victorian Health Minister Ms Bronwyn Pike; and Ms Sandra Davidson.

Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

clinical measures, how consumers and carers experience care provided by their GPs, and how GPs interact with mental health specialists and make appropriate referrals."

The project will involve researchers from several organisations including the DIAMOND (Diagnosis, Management and Outcomes of Depression In Primary

Care) collaboration based at the University of Melbourne, King's College London, the Mental Health Council of Australia and the University of New South Wales.

A further project to evaluate screening for the co-existence of depression and substance abuse disorder by general practitioners received a \$50,000 grant across one year.

Headed by Ms Sandra Davidson, a research fellow from Monash's Department of General Practice, the project will examine how frequently GPs assess for substance use disorder among patients diagnosed with depression, and also aims to increase GPs' awareness of the need for systematic screening of co-morbidity among their patients.

"The project builds on the department's increasingly successful research program in primary mental health care and on its strengths in training GPs in mental health, including substance abuse issues," Ms Davidson said.

The Victorian Centre of Excellence in Depression and Related Disorders was established in 2002 to promote developments in depression-related research. It is funded as part of the Victorian government's financial commitment to beyondblue: the national depression initiative. The centre supported 16 projects in 2004 from \$1.27 million in funding.

— Karen Stichtenoth

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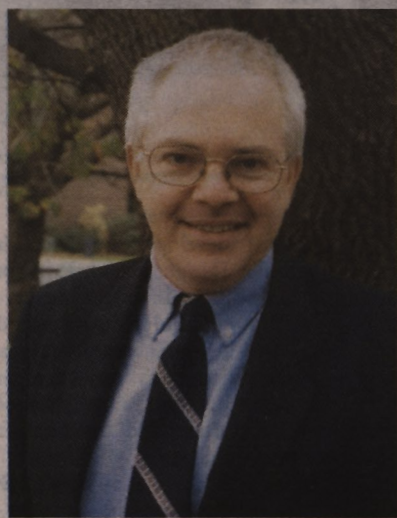
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International education: Bringing cultural diversity



International education in Australia continues to grow, with a remarkable 22.6 per cent of all Australian higher education students coming from overseas last year – four times as many as in 1996. And with further strong growth expected, universities face the challenge of meeting this demand by expanding the international content of the curriculum, writes **Professor Simon Marginson**, director of the Education faculty's Centre for Research in International Education at Monash University.

In the mid-1990s, Australian society was rocked by controversy over the then Keating government's commitment to closer ties with East and Southeast Asian countries in business, education, culture and migration – dubbed (with some exaggeration) as 'Asianisation'. One expression was the Keating government's support for the rapidly growing international education program.

The Howard government was elected in 1996 and re-elected in 1998 and 2001, partly by reasserting a traditional Anglo-Australian identity and publicly repudiating Keating's attempt to open Australia to Asia and reconcile with Indigenous people. But the gulf between the two sides of politics was not as great as the rhetoric suggested. There is often a difference between what political parties say at election time and their practices in government; and in between election campaigns, the pragmatics took over.

Australia is located on the edge of Asia, the main growth zone in the world economy. The nation is highly dependent on regional trade, and military cooperation is significant. Australia needs to live at peace with its neighbours, and to do this it needs to better understand them. The immigration program is not free from suspicions of cultural bias – Australia remains an English-language monoculture, and government still lacks a capacity to fully embrace cultural plurality as part of its programs. Nevertheless, a growing proportion of the population – about one in 10 people in Melbourne – are Asian-born.

That is the fundamental demographic reality. As the Asian middle classes grow, in a mobile world Australia, like Europe and America, will welcome more migrants from the region, both long and short term. This kind of 'Asianisation' is irreversible whoever is in power.

More skilled people will migrate from China, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka and other Asian nations because they have the capacity and the credentials to choose where they live. Often they will relocate to English-speaking nations, while retaining personal and economic ties with their homelands and perhaps returning there to live at a future time. For those with the economic means it is a more flexible world, and rigid

notions of identity no longer make much sense.

While most of the world's people do not have the economic means to be skilled migrants, to some extent mobility has been globally democratised. Freedoms that until recently were largely confined to Europeans and Americans have spread to Asia. This is coupled with a new spirit of global openness and engagement, notably in China. It is a profound change in world history and has the deepest implications for Australia.

A key driver of worldwide people movement is international education. Foreign study is often the precursor to migration or global business travel. The growth of international education in Australia is well known. Last year there were 210,397 international students in Australian higher education (55,819 offshore), a remarkable 22.6 per cent of all students and four times the number of international students when the Howard government took power in 1996.

The story is even more remarkable at Monash, where in 2003 there were no fewer than 15,996 international students (13,723 onshore, 2273 offshore), almost 2000 more than the next largest enrolment at RMIT University. This was 29.8 per cent of all Monash students.

You ain't seen nothing yet

However it is likely that 'You ain't seen nothing yet', as Al Jolson put it in the first 'talkie'. Again, this is dictated by the combination of demographic weight and economic growth that underpins the dynamic global potential of the Asian nations.

China, India and Indonesia are three of the four largest nations in the world. In 2015 there will be 21 cities with more than 15 million people, and 12 of these cities will be located in Asia. These cities are immense reservoirs of potential and future demand for education. In China, Indonesia and Thailand (among others), socio-economic growth is outstripping the growth of educational provision, hampered by restraints on government spending. For the foreseeable future, the number of domestic higher education places will be inadequate to meet

demand. This alone will drive continued growth in foreign students; but even if domestic capacity is adequate, many families will send their student children abroad because of the skills and positional advantages provided by a foreign degree and the potential for migration.

An increasing number of Asian households have the capacity and willingness to invest in education. Private investment in education plays a larger role than in western Europe or, until recently, in Australia. According to OECD data, in 1999 in China 21 per cent of all educational costs were paid by households, in Indonesia 49 per cent and in Korea 56 per cent.

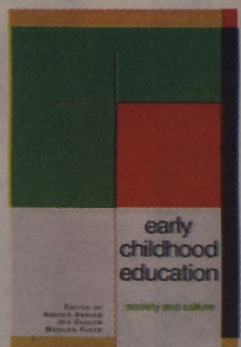
In future, the 'Asianisation' of Australian universities and society will continue and consolidate. The challenge for Monash and other leading Australian universities is to anticipate this by deepening the internationalisation of the curriculum and the student experience. All international students want to become competent in the Anglo-Australian context. Few want to abandon their languages and cultures, and these will remain part of the global environment, in which dual identity is becoming more common.

The sheer weight of regional demography and economics means the cultural balance will start to tip, and a more genuine educational plurality will emerge in Australia. First some, then all Australian universities will become more genuinely 'Asianised'.

The educational imperative will be twofold: to provide a better English-language education – English will remain the dominant language in Australia as well as a global language – while embracing the linguistic diversity of the region, which includes 16 languages with more than 50 million speakers. Some of these language groups are very large – 1000 million speakers of Putonghua (Mandarin), 900 million speakers of Hindi and Urdu, 250 million Bangla speakers and 160 million people with Bahasa Indonesia/Malaya. When Australian universities become truly serious about cultural diversity and cultural exchange, they will be very different places.

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INPRINT



Early Childhood Education Society and Culture

Edited by Angela Anning, Joy Cullen and Marilyn Fler

Published by SAGE Publications, RRP: \$55.95

Written by eminent figures in the field, this book presents social and cultural perspectives on current theories of learning in early childhood education. It sets out research-based evidence, linking theory and practice in early childhood settings.

At the heart of the book lies a strong and traditional theme – the importance of the child's perspective and respect for each child's individual background.

Within the context of early-years settings, the book is structured around four main themes: the dynamics of learning and teaching; the nature of knowledge; assessment; and evaluation and quality.

Marilyn Fler is professor of early childhood education at Monash University.

Cognitive and Behavioral Rehabilitation From Neurobiology to Clinical Practice

Edited by Jennie Ponsford

Published by Guilford Press

RRP: \$68

This book offers a comprehensive, up-to-date and balanced overview of the current literature on neuropsychological rehabilitation.

With each chapter written by one or more internationally recognised expert in the particular topic, the book integrates the full spectrum of basic and applied research to recommend best practice for rehabilitation of a range of cognitive and behavioural disorders.

The concluding chapter provides overall strategies for helping people recover from the two most common forms of acquired neurological disability – traumatic brain injury and stroke.

Jennie Ponsford is an associate professor in the Psychology department at Monash University and director of the Monash-Epworth Rehabilitation Research Centre.

Harm Minimisation, Zero Tolerance and Beyond

By Dr Philip Mendes and Dr James Rowe

Published by Pearson Education Australia

RRP: \$49.95

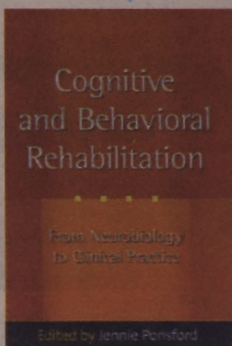
Harm Minimisation, Zero Tolerance and Beyond concentrates on the political factors and forces that determine government policies on illicit drugs, and considers alternative structural perspectives while examining the harm reduction/zero tolerance divide.

The authors emphasise the broader political debate around illicit drug policies including the influence of ideas and ideologies, interest and lobby groups, and global policy factors and trends.

They also analyse and explain contemporary Australian illicit drug policies and outcomes and predict likely future directions.

The book provides detailed case studies of contemporary Australian drug debates, and the questions for discussion at the end of each chapter will assist students to understand and reflect on the factors and forces that determine illicit drug policies.

Dr Philip Mendes is a senior lecturer in social policy and community development in the Social Work department at Monash University and has written articles on social policy for numerous local and international publications.



Graphic designer aims to inspire

Leading US graphic designer Stuart Alden is the latest participant in the Artist/Designer in Residence program conducted by Monash University's Faculty of Art and Design.

Mr Alden commenced his stay at the Caulfield campus last month and will be in residence until 11 June.

While at Monash, he will be delivering a series of lectures to visual communication students at all year levels and participating in tutorials and studio classes. He will also direct a group of students who are developing a visual contribution to Melbourne's upcoming *Digital Design Biennale* exhibition.

"It is important to inspire and help students with their passion so that they are better prepared for the working world of thinking designers," Mr Alden said.

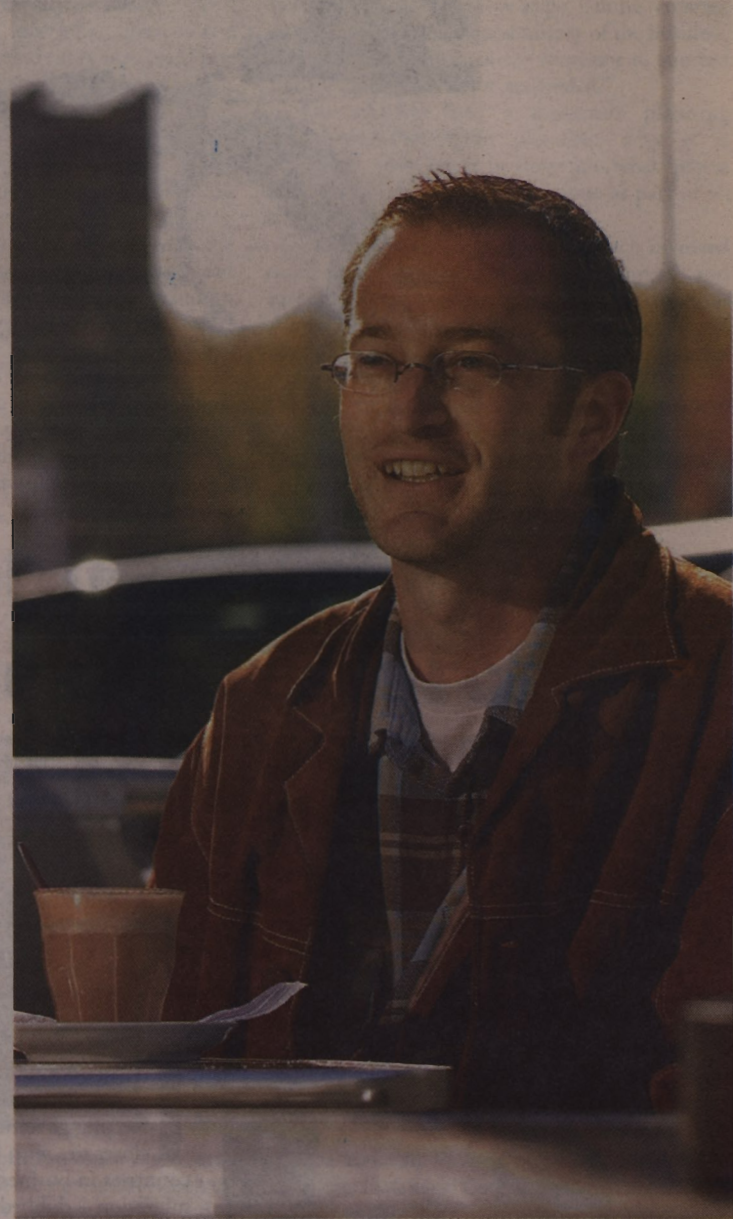
"Design is a dialogue between the artist and the client. By developing depth of thinking in their work, students will learn to ask better questions about their projects rather than going in with preconceived ideas. Understanding the problem will provide them with the ability to offer different types of solutions."

Since completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Colorado State University in the early 1990s, Mr Alden has gone on to create effective work for his US clients as a designer, photographer and artist. He has also taught at various institutions in his home state of Colorado, including the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design and the Metropolitan College of Denver.

Mr Alden is also an active representative of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), serving currently as vice-president of the AIGA Cross-Cultural Design Community of Interest, and as regional liaison to the US Western Region serving on the Colorado board of directors.

Monash Department of Design deputy head, external, Mr Russell Kennedy said Mr Alden's residency provided students with a wonderful opportunity to learn from a highly creative and prominent graphic designer.

"Stuart manages to seamlessly combine the creative disciplines of photography, graphic design



Highly creative: Mr Stuart Alden.

Photo: Greg Ford

and writing," Mr Kennedy said. "He is an example to students of the importance of blending visual and written communication skills. Students find him very approachable and really respond well to his design knowledge and literary wit."

An exhibition of work created by Mr Alden during his residency was held at the Art and Design building at Monash's Caulfield campus earlier this month.

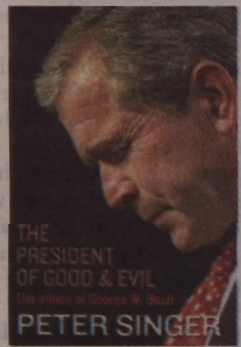
The Artist/Designer in Residence program is designed to complement international study programs

developed by Monash's Art and Design faculty. Participants stay on campus at the faculty apartments in Caulfield and spend their time teaching, researching and lecturing. Since its inception in 2000 the program has attracted respected artists and designers from around the world.

– Karen Stichtenoth

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POSTscript



The President of Good and Evil

The ethics of George W. Bush

By Peter Singer

Published by Text Publishing Company

RRP: \$30

In this book, philosopher Peter Singer scrutinises the policies and actions of George W. Bush from an ethical perspective, saying he wrote the book because Bush is not only US president, he is also that country's most prominent moralist. "No other president in living memory has spoken so often about good and evil, right and wrong," the author says.

In this searching probe into the meaning of the Bush presidency, the author also examines what he calls "a distinctively American moral outlook", a particular and pervasive world view that affects all of us today.

Peter Singer is currently Ira W. DeCamp professor of bioethics in the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University. Prior to this, he held various academic positions at Monash University for more than 20 years, including director of the Centre for Human Bioethics between 1980 and 1992.

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

Books featured in 'Inprint' are available or can be ordered at Monash's four on-campus bookshops.

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www.monash.edu.au

New exhibition series at MUMA

The Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) has introduced a new series, 'Incident in the Museum', an occasional program of newly commissioned exhibitions, projects and events by contemporary artists.

Incident in the Museum 1: Stephen Bram, the inaugural exhibition in the series, opened on 29 May. It features a new, architecturally scaled installation by Stephen Bram, a leading Australian abstract painter who has achieved recognition both in Australia and in Europe for distinguished art projects developed in relation to architecture.

The spatial dynamics projected in Mr Bram's paintings have been realised at MUMA in a dynamic, all-encompassing wall painting created by the artist over several days, which subjects the viewer to altered perspectives and spatial perception.

It uses simple geometric shapes to produce for the viewer a new experience of the existing museum architecture, alternately real and illusory.

Mr Bram is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery in Melbourne, where his most recent individual exhibition was presented in April.

Show notes

What: *Incident in the Museum 1: Stephen Bram*

When: 29 May to 3 July, Tuesday to Friday 10 am – 5 pm, Saturday 2–5 pm

Where: Monash University Museum of Art, ground floor, building 55, Monash University, Clayton campus

Who: For more information, contact +61 3 9905 4217, email muma@adm.monash.edu.au or visit www.monash.edu.au/muma.



Abstract painter: Stephen Bram.
Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

Israeli expertise assists rural education programs

Academic low-achievement among children and adults in Australia's rural and remote communities, particularly Indigenous ones, has long been a significant factor preventing many such communities from becoming economically sustainable.

But steps are being taken to address the issue via an Israeli accelerated learning program that is providing the basis of improved education outcomes in rural and remote Australia, through a project being co-directed by a Monash education lecturer and researcher.

Dr Zane Ma Rhea is working with Professor Marcia Langton of the University of Melbourne and Ms Helene Teichmann of HTT Associates, a consultancy that specialises in devising strategies for corporations to work together with governments and communities. Together, they are providing leadership to develop and implement the Yachad Accelerated Education and Work Readiness (YAEWR) project.

A team of Israeli accelerated learning experts, led by Professor Elite Olshtain from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is also involved.

"The YAEWR project was conceived after Professor Langton's 2003 study tour to Israel, where she saw great potential in an accelerated learning program which addressed education disadvantage via principles of gifted and talented education rather than remedial solutions," Dr Ma Rhea said.

"The overriding principle is that the standard school curriculum should be taught to educationally disadvantaged groups in the classroom, along with additional accelerated learning classes before and after school, to bring the students up to the national average.

"It's based on a philosophy that every student is capable of being taught the standard curriculum and able to achieve the expected outcomes, provided appropriate attention is given to overcoming any learning impediments such as linguistic or cultural differences.

"Evidence gathered in many parts of the world shows the accelerated learning approach has led to educational achievement and improved career pathways for academically low-achieving students."

Dr Ma Rhea said the YAEWR project aimed to develop economic sustainability in rural and remote communities in Australia.

"It features two main strands – accelerated education for academically low-achieving children and adults to lift their performance to standards closer to the national average, and the development of employability and work readiness skills," she said.

In the project's first and current phase, the focus is on three trial sites – in Western Australia's East Kimberley

region, Queensland's Cape York area and in northern Victoria.

"In each of the sites, a program is being developed for the whole community, serving the needs and interests of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, based on visits to the sites last year by the Australian and Israeli teams," Dr Ma Rhea said.

They consulted with a wide variety of stakeholders, including local community members, business groups, schools, TAFE colleges and potential funding bodies, both public and private. Seed funding of \$24,000

along with government and industry partners, to develop their local accelerated education and work readiness projects and to consult and agree on benchmarks, expected outcomes and the skill development needs of teachers.

"In August, we'll begin our first project implementation visits with our Israeli colleagues to each of the sites to undertake professional development with teachers from pilot schools."

Dr Ma Rhea said the performance of participating students in a range



Dealing with rural educational disadvantages: Dr Zane Ma Rhea.

Photo: Greg Ford

"The accelerated learning approach has led to educational achievement and improved career pathways for academically low-achieving students."

– Dr Ma Rhea

was sought and obtained from the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

The project has also attracted strong interest from the federal Department of Education, Science and Training.

This year, team members have been working to develop a network of interested employers and employer groups at the three sites, build links with various Indigenous Employment Program initiatives and develop appropriate school-to-work transition programs with Job Search training providers.

In July, Dr Ma Rhea and Professor Langton will conduct an employer forum in the East Kimberley region to ensure business leaders are informed of the project and to encourage them to become collaborative partners in creating employment pathways and mentoring opportunities into the future.

"Clearly, there is a need for urgent intervention to assist people in rural and remote communities to develop economically sustainable livelihoods, and of particular urgency in all the trial sites is a focus on Indigenous communities," Dr Ma Rhea said.

"At the moment, we're working to bring together Indigenous, farming, pastoralist and mining communities,

of subjects would be rigorously assessed according to both local and international standards.

"We anticipate that student performance in each pilot area will be commensurate with, or will exceed, the national average by the year 2006," she said.

"The expected flow-on effects to employment should also be highlighted, as international evidence shows students will improve their employment prospects by increasing their levels of educational attainment.

"And engagement with local employers will strengthen the local school to work pathways and build the capacity of local people to attract industry to their area, based on the availability of a pool of experienced potential employees."

The success of accelerated learning programs internationally has been measured by increased workforce participation and the creation of an economic base for those participating communities, Dr Ma Rhea said.

"We anticipate that the YAEWR project will produce the same measurable, positive outcomes."

– Michele Martin

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An ancient art: Ms Jai Hartnell says going to Cambodia helped her learn about people with a tradition dating back thousands of years.

Photo: Greg Ford

Puppets come out of the shadows

Puppetry enthusiast and Monash University fine arts student Ms Jai Hartnell has recently returned from a one-month tour of Cambodia studying the traditional art form of shadow puppetry.

The trip was part of an annual cultural delegation organised by the Cambodian Living Arts-Cambodian Masters Performers Program and was funded by a \$2000 travel and study grant provided by Unima Handspan International.

Ms Hartnell, a third-year student majoring in sculpture, has developed a deep interest in Asian art and design while studying at Monash's Caulfield campus.

She said the trip to Cambodia was an opportunity to learn more about people with a tradition dating back thousands of years.

"I gained an insight into the ancient art of shadow puppetry in Cambodia as well as practical experience, which helped fuel my excitement about the beauty and possibilities of shadow puppetry in its many forms," Ms Hartnell said.

"Cambodia today is in the midst of a revival of traditional arts forms. This is a unique and exciting creative environment which may hopefully save the country from the fate threatening some other Asian cultures, where traditional arts have died out within the indigenous community and

survive only as a source of tourism."

Theory of art and design lecturer and Asian art expert Dr Peter Maddock said Ms Hartnell had come back with new ideas that could provide Australian puppet-making with an inspiration-boost from which great things could develop, including deeper communication with our Asian neighbours.

"Jai's enthusiasm to explore traditional and contemporary Asian art and design and seek out collaborations with Asian artists and designers has been inspired by her studies at Monash," Dr Maddock said.

"The knowledge she gained in Cambodia has helped her artistic practice become more worldly-wise and aesthetically sophisticated.

"Her enthusiasm for Cambodia has also been passed on to other students who now wish to go there and to other south-east Asian nations, in order to find out what is going on in traditional and contemporary art and design that may be of great relevance to a Pacific Rim nation such as ours."

Ms Hartnell is planning an extended trip to Cambodia in 2005. In the meantime, she is continuing her involvement in puppet-making workshops and community theatre.

– Karen Stichtenoth

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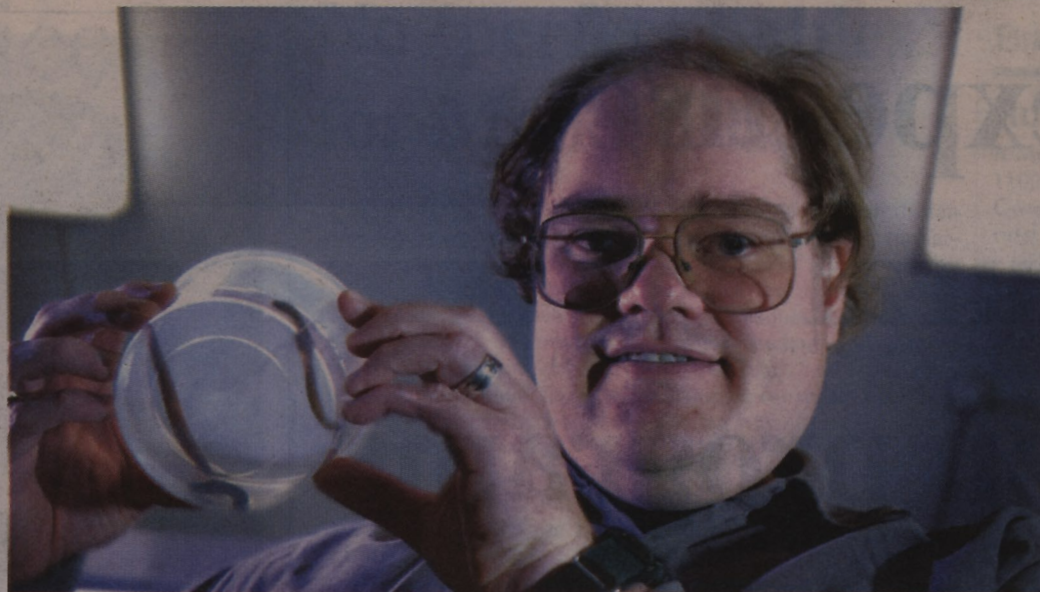
Leeches fall into the parent trap

Evolution

When it comes to parenting, leeches are quite accomplished. Although some leeches abandon their young at birth, a Monash University study of the Australian leech species, *Helobdella papillornata*, has found that it broods its eggs and young on its body for several weeks and captures food for its offspring.

Evolutionary biologist Dr Fred Govedich from the School of Biological Sciences has been studying the parenting behaviour of leeches in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the evolution of parental care in animals.

"Although the word 'leech' is often considered synonymous with selfishness



Leech parenting expert: Dr Fred Govedich.

Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

and exploitation, many leeches are devoted parents," Dr Govedich said.

"After fertilisation, sexually mature leeches produce cocoons containing eggs. *Helobdella* attaches this cocoon, which contains 30 to 40 eggs, to its body. Once the eggs hatch, the juveniles attach themselves to the parent, remaining there for five to six weeks."

Helobdella is a member of the glossiphoniid family of leeches. It is a tan colour, grows up to

two centimetres long and is typically found in ponds or bodies of slow-moving water.

"Leeches are hermaphrodites, but *Helobdella* displays parental behaviours that are associated with birds and mammals, which have separate sexes," Dr Govedich said.

"This particular leech cares for its eggs by providing ventilation and defending them from predators such as fish. Then, once the young are hatched and attached to the body, the parent captures snails and other suitable foods

for them to eat as well as transporting them to areas where there is plenty of oxygen and lots of prey for the young to feed on once they leave the parent."

Dr Govedich has also found that *Helobdella* is a social leech. It will aggregate in groups of up to 50 other leeches and will also provide food to the young of other leech species.

"In many ways, the parenting of this leech is similar to that of some birds and mammals. In terms of the evolution of parental care, it is fascinating that an invertebrate is displaying vertebrate-like parenting.

"These findings with respect to *Helobdella* introduce an interesting new angle for evolutionary biologists to consider when attempting to explain how parental care has evolved."

— Penny Fannin

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Speaking their language aids dementia patients

Aged care

Elderly dementia patients from non-English-speaking backgrounds communicated more with others and took fewer psychiatric medications when living in ethno-specific nursing homes, a Monash University study has found.

The study revealed that Italian-speaking residents in mainstream facilities had a significantly higher rate of prescription of daytime tranquillisers than those in Italian-specific facilities.

Dr Susannah Runci, from the university's Aged Mental Health Research Unit, said that 30 per cent of participants in mainstream facilities were prescribed daytime benzodiazepines, but none of the participants residing in Italian-specific facilities were prescribed them.

Dr Runci said her research, under the supervision of Associate Professor Jenny Redman and Professor Daniel O'Connor, also revealed a shortage of ethno-specific aged-care facilities in Melbourne.

"This means the quality of care provided for non-English-speaking residents might be compromised due to cultural and communication difficulties, particularly for those with dementia," she said. "It also appears that family members are often used as interpreters, which can be a cause for concern."

As part of a three-stage study, Dr Runci compiled a profile of nursing home residents in south-eastern Melbourne who either preferred or needed to speak a language other than English.

"We discovered more than 1100 people – about 19 per cent of the aged care facility population in the survey – either preferred or needed to speak one of 40 different non-English languages," Dr Runci said.

"We also found that people from such backgrounds were most commonly the sole resident with that language or had only one other resident speaking that language at their facility, which is very isolating."

Dr Runci then observed and compared the language use of 39 Italian-background residents living in either Italian-specific or mainstream aged care facilities.

"A significant finding here was that the residents in Italian-specific facilities engaged more often in meaningful communication in the Italian language than those in mainstream facilities," Dr Runci said.

"These are people who mostly came to Australia in the post-World War 2 migration boom, and while many learned to speak English, they can lose that ability with dementia."

She said more research was needed to enable any pattern of over-prescribing of medication to be

confirmed. It might be, for instance, that Italian-specific facilities have a lower rate of prescribing of daytime benzodiazepines than general rates in aged care facilities.

"It is also possible that the distress of non-English-speaking residents could not be effectively communicated to staff members and was misinterpreted as 'problem' behaviour," Dr Runci said.

The third stage of the study compared the impact of an intervention conducted in either English or Italian language for three Italian-background people with dementia who were considered verbally disruptive by staff at their facilities.

"This behaviour can include yelling, screaming and repetitive requests that can be disturbing for other residents and of course be a sign of discomfort or an indication that they have unmet needs," Dr Runci said.

However, the results showed increased communication when the intervention was conducted in the person's original language.

Dr Runci said the research findings emphasised the importance of language-relevant services and, given the growing ageing migrant population, could have important government policy implications.

— Allison Harding

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Ethno-specific aged care shortage:
Dr Susannah Runci.

Photo: Greg Ford

MONASH News

Published monthly by Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 3800

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