



## Breakthrough in early detection of autism



Children who test positive to autism can now receive earlier specialist intervention.  
Photo Greg Ford.

### MEDICAL RESEARCH

Children with autism are now being diagnosed as young as 18 months of age using a basic screening system developed by Monash University researchers.

Ending years of frustration and anxiety for parents, the new DBC Early Screen system, developed by the Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology, has the potential to reduce the average age of diagnosis from six years to two.

This screening means children who test positive to autism can now be referred earlier for a diagnostic assessment and begin early intervention.

Monash PhD candidate and research fellow Ms Kylie Gray, who developed the screening system, said early diagnosis was essential to be able to identify at-risk children for referral to specialist autism assessment teams.

"Research has demonstrated that it is essential to start early intervention, before the age of four, while the

child's brain is still developing, so that the intervention will have a greater impact on the child's development," she said.

The DBC Early Screen was based on the Developmental Behaviour Checklist created in 1990 by Monash professor of psychiatry Professor Bruce Tonge and Professor Stewart Einfeld from the University of New South Wales. The checklist was developed to assess behavioural and emotional problems in children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

"Previously, the checklist could be used to screen for autism in young people aged four to 18 years," Ms Gray said. "But part of my PhD work was to look at whether we could extract items from that questionnaire to develop the screen for very young children."

An initial community field trial was conducted through Southern Health's Specialist Children's Services.

"Any child in the 18-to-48-month age range who came in with suspected developmental delay was given the DBC Early Screen," Ms Gray said.

"I assessed the children, with no knowledge of the results of the screening instrument. Then we looked at whether the screen was accurately picking up those children that we had diagnosed with autism."

In a group of 60 autistic and 60 non-autistic children, the results showed the DBC Early Screen was accurate in predicting autism in 82 per cent of cases. In some cases, children as young as 18 months were diagnosed.

Ms Gray and Professor Tonge have now applied to the National Health and Medical Research Council for funding to commence a large-scale community field trial. Their aim is to develop a package of material for early childhood services to start using as part of their standard assessment process.

"As clinicians, we often hear stories of parents who say they knew early on there was something wrong with their child, but they just didn't get the assistance they needed," Ms Gray said.

Mary Viscovich

## It's a war on the field for our troops

### INJURY PREVENTION

Most injuries sustained by Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel are the result of training and sports activities, a Monash University study has shown.

The Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) study, commissioned by the ADF, showed that injuries sustained during physical training resulted in the highest number of working days lost.

Physical training accounts for three times the number of casualties incurred during all other activities such as combat training and tactical exercises.

According to MUARC research fellow and author of the report Dr Jennifer Sherrard, while participating in sport and training is good for morale and physical well-being, it also increases the risk of injury.

"The most common injuries were strains and sprains and disorders of muscles, tendons and soft tissues. As well, a high number of fractures were sustained by rugby and soccer players," she said.

"Most of the moderate and severe injuries occur within the first two weeks of training, and they are the greatest cause of days off due to sickness and hospitalisation."

She said the highest risk factors for injury were older age, female gender, poor aerobic fitness and previous injuries. Extended periods of running was also identified as a high-risk activity.

The report suggested ways in which the ADF could reduce injuries while keeping personnel involved for the mental and physical health benefits. It also recommended introducing training drills

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Australian Defence Force personnel suffer fewer injuries training for combat than playing sport. Photo Newspix.

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# Of mice and (wo)men?

## MEDICAL RESEARCH

Better treatment for women who suffer from infertility or menopausal problems could result from new research at Monash University and Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research.

The findings, by PhD student Kara Britt, may even raise questions about whether the sex of an embryo is determined by chromosomes or hormones.

Working with a unique model - female mice that have been genetically engineered to be estrogen-free - Ms Britt's research has found that, in some cases, female mice begin to develop testicular tissue.

"In a male, these so-called sex cord structures would support the development of sperm," Ms Britt said.

Ms Britt is in the final year of her research at Monash University's Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research, a leading hormone research centre based at the Monash Medical Centre in Melbourne.

The significance of her work was recognised in January, when she was named 2002 Young Australian of the Year (Science and Technology).

Her work has focused on the role of estrogen, the so-called 'female hormone', in ovarian follicle development.

Follicles are the housing units of the eggs, Ms Britt explained, protecting and nurturing them until ovulation, with infertility in some



Monash PhD student Ms Kara Britt with one of the special ArKO mice. Photo Greg Ford.

cases possibly being due to the failure of follicles and eggs to develop.

"The role of estrogen in those processes is not well understood," she said. "How do you measure the impact of estrogen? By removing it altogether."

In her research, Ms Britt said the female mice that had been genetically engineered to be estrogen-free were dubbed 'ArKO' or aromatase knock-out mice, because they lacked aromatase, a substance essential for estrogen production. The ArKO model is a world first which is producing radical results.

"Not only were follicle, egg and ovarian development in general impaired, the ArKO mice began to develop testicular tissue normally only seen in males," she said.

The ArKO mice were then treated with estrogen pellets under the skin, or phytoestrogens, dietary estrogen of the kind found in soy. This improved follicle growth in most of the mice, with the sex cord structures disappearing.

The results, according to Ms Britt, have wide-ranging implications as the ArKO mice could be the model that will lead to a better understanding of the role of hormones in menopausal women who also experience low estrogen.

"Determining the role of hormones in ovarian development means the findings could be applicable to fertility treatment," she said.

But the impact of the findings could be broader - if male tissue can grow within a female through the removal of estrogen, it is possible that hormones may play a role in keeping an ovary as an ovary, preventing it from developing testicular characteristics.

Ms Britt says the next question she would like to answer is how exactly estrogen does this.

For further information, visit [www.med.monash.edu.au/phimr](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/phimr) or contact Ms Rebecca Scott on +61 3 9594 4391.

Kay Ansell

## INBRIEF

### Early childhood centre for Monash Peninsula

Construction of a \$1.5 million state-of-the-art Early Childhood Centre will begin on Monash's Peninsula campus this year.

Ron Unger Architects have been engaged to handle the project, which will also include rooms for five different age groups and large communal areas that can be used for wet-weather play, community meetings and a range of other activities.

It is anticipated that the centre will be completed by mid-2003.

### Online drug training service to help rural Australia

The Victorian College of Pharmacy will host Australia's first online training program to help health professionals provide drug services to regional and rural Australia.

Launched recently by Victorian Health Minister Mr John Thwaites, the program will train pharmacists, doctors and nurses in delivering drug substitution and withdrawal programs to drug-dependent people across Australia.

The college has developed the program in partnership with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Centre and the South City Clinic, with funding from the Department of Human Services.

The program was developed in response to the Pennington Report, which highlighted an urgent need to train more regional and rural pharmacists and doctors in how to deliver methadone services to their communities.

### Course for Indigenous Australian students

Indigenous students will find an alternative pathway into Monash, with a new diploma introduced this year.

The Diploma of Arts (Australian Indigenous Studies) is a two-year, full-time diploma that offers a guaranteed place in the second year of a Bachelor of Arts degree upon successful completion of the course, or the possibility of entry into arts/law, education or science degrees.

Administered by the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies (CAIS), the course replaces the Monash Orientation Scheme for Aborigines, which provided a one-year bridging course to prepare Indigenous students for tertiary study.

## It's a war on the field for our troops

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that gradually increased in duration, frequency and intensity.

Ms Sherrard said none of the actions taken to prevent injuries should discourage personnel from playing recreational sport. Instead, they should focus on increasing fitness levels for long-term health gains. In the future, the changes could result in reduced costs in treatment and compensation due to injury, disability and chronic health problems.

In addition, the report suggested that the ADF refine its current form of injury surveillance system by data collection and analysis, which would improve information about the causes and effects of injury.

Interestingly, ADF personnel were found to have similar physical



activity levels to the public, with 20 per cent being inactive, 60 per cent participating in three forms of exercise each week and 20 per cent doing more than three forms of exercise each week.

Janae Houghton

## Getting kids active

### EDUCATION

Young children attending child care will be encouraged to become more active under a pilot program developed by Monash University education lecturer Dr Justen O'Connor.

The Vic Health-funded program, which is expected to start later this year, will help family day care workers introduce activities that promote greater movement in children aged three to five.

Dr O'Connor, who created the Active Care program with Dr Vivienne Temple from RMIT's School of Medical Sciences, said it was impor-

tant to get children moving and exploring physical activity from an early age.

Active children, he explained, were more likely to become active adults, lessening the likelihood of developing diseases such as those associated with obesity.

"About 20 to 25 per cent of Australian children and adolescents can be classified as significantly overweight, and this number is rising rapidly," he said. "This is a particularly disturbing health trend, and we need to address it at all levels."

In his preliminary study, Dr O'Connor found that many carers in

family day care centres saw a need for more activity but did not know how to set up programs.

He said that because carers looked after children of all ages, structured physical education sessions like those run in primary schools were often inappropriate.

But informal activities such as jumping, throwing crumpled-up paper, tumbling and skipping could be introduced in "an activity-rich home environment".

"When we examined the family day-care environment, we found barriers that discouraged activity-seeking behaviour. For example, inappropriate children's clothing and restricted access to outdoor play areas and equipment presented challenges to carers," he said.

"Instead of coming up with ideas that promoted movement, it was often easier to allow children to adopt sedentary activities such as watching television."

Under the program, which is being trialled through the Latrobe City Council, carers will be taught to promote and foster an enjoyment of movement and motor skill confidence.

Dr O'Connor said American guidelines indicated that toddlers and preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours per day, of structured and unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes, except when sleeping.

"Through this initiative, those responsible for the well-being of toddlers and preschoolers will become more aware of the importance of physical activity and help facilitate children's movement skills," he said.

Diane Squires



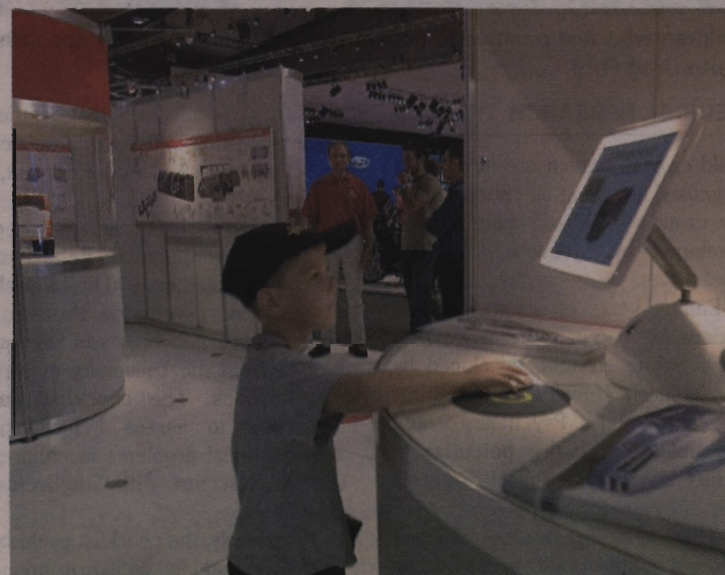
Dr Justen O'Connor puts play into action with a group of preschoolers at a day-care centre in Gippsland. Photo Delwyn Hewitt.

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### Forecasting the future of cars



Thousands of motor enthusiasts and industry representatives visited 'Forecast Motors', a display of futuristic vehicle models by Monash students at the Melbourne Motor Show recently. Teams of students and staff from Monash's industrial design and visual communications degree programs ran the display, which included design sketches of the vehicles on interactive computer terminals. According to industrial design course coordinator Mr Mark Wilken, interest from both the media and the public was "very encouraging". A keynote speech by former Formula One world motor racing champion Jackie Stewart acknowledged the impact of the Monash display.

# Four calves lead the way to better dairy products

## ANIMAL SCIENCE

The birth of Australia's first genetically modified calves this month signalled an important milestone in the development of Australian animal breeding technologies.

A group of Victorian researchers, including a team from Monash University, has produced four genetically modified female calves, each with an additional gene for milk protein production. The calves were cloned from the same cell line and genetically modified.

Holly the Holstein, and her sisters Molly, Lolly and Jolly, are the result of collaborative research involving the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development's expertise in assisted reproduction and cloning techniques, the Victorian Institute of Animal Science's understanding of gene technology and Genetics Australia's experience in cattle breeding.

In the past two years, the team has also been responsible for Australia's first cloned cows, Suzi and Mayzi, and the first cloned bull, Rameses II.

The goal of this latest research project, principally funded by the Dairy Research Development Corporation (DRDC), is to establish the technologies to ultimately produce

more nutritious dairy products. The extra gene will hopefully increase the protein content in the milk from these cows.

"This is an important step in our long-term quest to produce better dairy products at a better price," said Dr Ian Lewis, the senior scientist at Genetics Australia who coordinated the project. "Our aim is to develop new and improved dairy products that will add value for the consumer, for dairy farmers and for the Australian economy."

However, these potential dairy products are several years away from being commercially available.

Holly and Molly, 'twins' born from the same surrogate cow on 7 January, were Australia's first cloned genetically modified calves. Lolly and Jolly were born about seven weeks later and are genetically identical to the first two.

"Cows normally carry four protein genes. We increased this to five during the cloning process in the laboratory before implanting the cloned embryo in the surrogate cow," Dr Lewis explained.

The deputy director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, Professor Alan Trounson, said the expansion of

Australian cloning expertise in this field was significant for medical research.

"Being able to add specific genes to cloned calves will provide us with the potential to produce milk containing human vaccines and medicines for diseases such as haemophilia," Professor Trounson said. "These would be produced much more cheaply than using current pharmaceutical manufacturing systems."

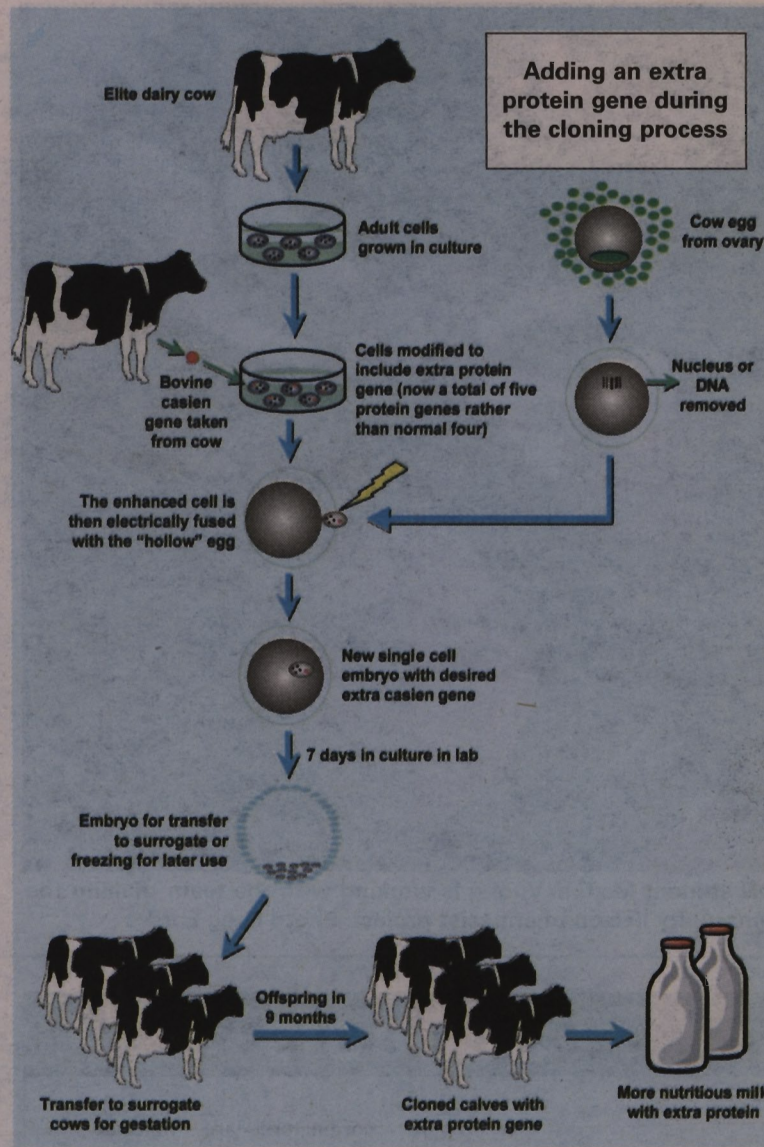
Mr Rob Morton, from the Dairy Research Development Corporation, said the birth of the calves was an important step for the Australian dairy industry.

"It brings the possibilities just one more step - and an important step - closer. Developments of this kind will help ensure our dairy industry remains competitive in world markets," he said.

Other genetically modified animals, such as pigs, have previously been produced in Australia for medical research purposes.

The research partners said they were looking forward to the birth of more genetically modified calves over the next few months.

To view photos of the calves, visit [www.monashinstitute.org/news/media.htm](http://www.monashinstitute.org/news/media.htm)



# Surviving orientation



South Africa students having fun Monash-style.

Monash's own version of 'Survivor' was just one of the many events organised to welcome new students to Monash campuses during orientation activities held over three continents in 2002.

While orientation at each campus always has its own distinctive feel, the aim is the same across all campuses - to introduce first-year students to the academic and social aspects of university life.

At the South Africa campus, about 100 students took part in a series of challenges in Survivor - the Real African Outback, including riding a mechanical bull, a blind water run and a hula hoop contest.

At the Caulfield campus, Aboriginal elder Ms Joy Murphy Wandin performed a smoking ceremony with fire and water to cleanse the land and celebrate a new beginning.

New students at the Berwick campus had the chance to enjoy water games and get caught in a human fly-trap, as well as participate in computer and library classes and a mock lecture.

Gippsland campus students were treated to guided tours of the campus and a magical mystery tour of the region, while students at Clayton

campus enjoyed a festival of live music and stalls hosted by almost 100 student clubs.

More than 500 students attended events at Monash Malaysia, which introduced students to various aspects of the university's administration and academic procedures to assist their integration into uni life.

Monash Transition Program coordinator Ms Tanya Kantanis said considerable thought and planning went into academic programs and social activities organised by faculty staff, Student Support Services and campus-based associations.

"Starting university can be an overwhelming and alienating experience for first-year students," Ms Kantanis said. "We hope orientation makes our students feel welcome and integral to the university."

This year, Monash became the first university in Australia to have its orientation program recognised as the official start of the university year, with first-year students required to attend academic orientation programs.

Diane Squires

# IT project to provide breast cancer answers

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Monash University IT researchers are developing a portal of breast cancer resources that will provide women with tailored information about the disease.

Monash's Enterprise Information Research Group (EIRG) is working on the Breast Cancer Knowledge Online Project - an initiative that aims to help women with breast cancer find reliable facts about the disease that kills 2500 Australian women each year.

Funded by the Australian Research Council's Linkage Program, the web-based portal would allow users to select the type and format of information they needed according to factors such as geographic location, age, literacy level and stage of the disease.

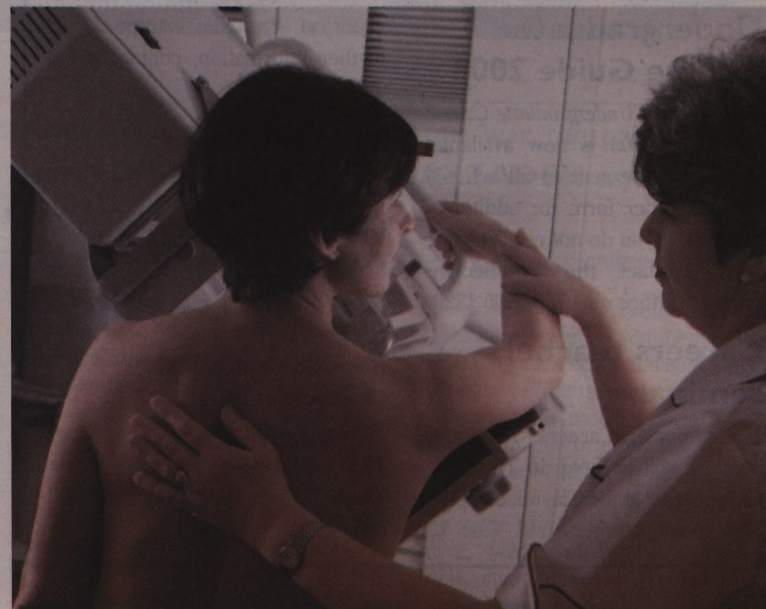
One of the chief investigators, EIRG researcher Dr Kirsty Williamson, and research fellow Ms Rosetta Manaszewicz have interviewed 42 women with breast cancer, in focus groups and individually, as part of a user-needs analysis for the portal.

The sample includes women in various age groups and with different stages of the disease, times since diagnosis, education and marital status, urban and rural locations, and ethnic backgrounds - all of whom have varying information needs.

"An overarching aim of this analysis has been to identify the groups of people and types of information which should be specifically targeted in an online resource," Dr Williamson said.

The researchers have also interviewed 11 breast care nurses and have further plans to interview the families of breast cancer patients.

"We want to cater not just for people who have breast cancer but



Giving women the information they need to make informed choices is one of the aims of the innovative Monash breast cancer portal. Photo Getty Images.

also for those who have an interest in the disease," she said.

Project leader Professor Sue McKemmish said it was often difficult for women to know if a particular information resource was reliable.

"One of the issues is that the resources themselves need to be evaluated and rated for quality. We will let people know who put the information online - whether it was a drug company or a research team," she said.

"We don't want to limit the type of information in any way - some people are looking for alternative medicine treatments, some are looking for leading-edge research and others want what's tried and tested."

"But a lot more information about the origins of the resources will become available."

The project has two industry partners - the Breast Cancer Action Group and BreastCare Victoria - and brings together a multidisciplinary team of chief investigators with expertise in user needs, resource description and discovery, and portal development.

The team includes Associate Professor Frada Burstein, Associate Professor Julie Fisher and Ms June Anderson from Monash University, as well as Ms Sue Lockwood from the Breast Cancer Action Group.

The new site can be found at [www.sims.monash.edu.au/research/eirg/bcco.html](http://www.sims.monash.edu.au/research/eirg/bcco.html)

June Yu



PhD student Ms Tam Vuong is working with the team trialling the community liaison pharmacist project. Photo Greg Ford.

## Trial to curb drugs confusion

### PHARMACY

As the focus on health care in Australia becomes acute, a new Monash University project is aiming to solve one of the system's most vexing problems.

A six-month trial in the Alfred and Austin hospitals is about to tackle 'medication misadventure', the potentially life-threatening result of a discharged patient's confusion over an altered medication regimen.

During hospitalisation, a patient's medication is often changed; doses are reduced or increased, new medication is prescribed and old medication stopped.

According to trial supervisor Dr Jennifer Marriott, a lecturer in clinical pharmacy at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, the problem is one of continuity of care.

"Patients often become confused following discharge from hospital," she said.

"They come home with a lot of information and sometimes get into trouble.

"They either take the wrong dose, start taking medication they were taking before they went into hospital or take a double dose of the old and new medication."

Under the trial funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services, a community liaison pharmacist (CLP) at each hospital will help ensure that patients at risk take the correct medication in the prescribed doses.

The CLP will form a bridge between the hospital and all the community services, including the patient's GP and their pharmacist, Dr Marriott says.

"The idea is to send the CLP to the patient's home in the first few days following their discharge from hospital to sort out any problems, and to ensure the patient has appropriate information.

"The CLP will also communicate with the community health practition-

ers, so everybody then knows what is meant to be happening with the patient's medication."

In the past, many patients who had just left hospital simply fell through the cracks in the system, Dr Marriott says.

"Many ended up in hospital again because they had not taken their medication as intended," she said.

The CLP service is designed especially to benefit the elderly and chronically ill, but can help anyone who takes a lot of medication and is at risk of medication misadventure, Dr Marriott says.

"The project is being conducted not only to show that it is economically viable, but also to develop a model that could see the service implemented more widely throughout Victoria and the rest of Australia."

Ms Tam Vuong is investigating the issues associated with implementation of the CLP as her PhD project.

John Clark

## Schools



coordinators are welcome to attend this university-wide event. Programs and booking forms have been sent to schools. For further information, contact Ms Val Foster on +61 3 9905 4164.

### New courses 2003

Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry - three years full-time, with first year at Clayton campus and subsequent years at Parkville campus. For further information, contact +61 3 9905 3300.

### Monash Open Days 2002

Gippsland, Parkville and Peninsula campuses:  
Saturday 3 August  
10 am - 4 pm

Berwick, Caulfield and Clayton campuses:  
Sunday 4 August  
10 am - 4 pm

Monash Open Day programs will be sent to schools in July.

### Undergraduate Course Guide 2003

The Monash Undergraduate Course Guide for 2003 is now available. Copies will be sent to all schools with an order form for additional supplies. If you do not receive your copy, contact the Prospective Students Office on +61 3 9905 1320.

### Careers teachers' seminar

The Monash Careers Teachers' Seminar will be held on Thursday 13 June 2002 at the Clayton campus. All careers teachers and Year 12

## Students give advice to death row inmates

### CRIMINAL LAW

A third-year Monash law student undertaking a three-month internship in Louisiana helped get a stay of execution for a man just 27 minutes before he was to die.

Mr Nick Button was one of three law students who went to Louisiana earlier this year to help provide legal representation and assistance to inmates facing the death penalty.

He said it was not yet known whether the inmate would be granted a retrial or whether another execution would be ordered, but he said to have contributed to the stay of execution was "an amazing experience".

Mr Button, Ms Olivia Henderson and Ms Marissa Dreher undertook their internships at legal assistance centres in New Orleans under the RepriveAustralia intern program, which provides legal assistance to impoverished death row prisoners in the US and the Caribbean.

Ms Henderson and Mr Button worked at the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center on trial and direct appeal cases. Ms Dreher was based at the Capital Post Convictions Project of Louisiana, working with clients who had been convicted of a capital offence and had lost their direct appeal.

The students were involved in trial preparation, appeals cases and advocacy for prisoners who were facing or were already on death row.

Their work included interviewing witnesses and juries, visiting clients, records collection, court attendance and legal research.

Mr Button said that while witnessing the death penalty system was confronting, it had been an invaluable experience.

"It was a shock to see it at first glance, but it was very rewarding volunteering to help these people," he said.

Fifth-year law student Ms Henderson conducted research into grand jury discrimination and found that while juries were meant to

represent a cross-section of the community, women, black people and former inmates were discriminated against.

She said if it was found that a juror had been discriminated against, a trial could be quashed, buying more time for the defence.

Monash's Castan Centre for Human Rights Law signed on to assist

Reprive in recruiting student volunteers after a visit by Reprive founder Mr Clive Stafford Smith to the Law School in May last year.

The students received generous support from the Monash Law Dean's Travel Fund and the Monash Abroad program.

Fiona Perry and Diane Squires



From left: Ms Olivia Henderson, Ms Marissa Dreher and Mr Nick Button spent three months providing legal assistance in the US.

Student Accommodation Available at Bayview

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# Peace and security in the Middle East?



Photo AAP.

## OPINION



As the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians degenerates into an all-out war, the prospects for a lasting ceasefire seem bleak. But Middle East expert **DR SHAHRAM AKBARZADEH** says there is a way forward that would require new thinking to end an age-old problem.

**I**N 1947, the United Nations adopted a resolution on the creation of two states: Israel and Palestine. The decision was justified in terms of national self-determination, an emerging intellectual framework for international relations in the post-WWII period.

All subsequent events – wars and peace efforts – have taken for granted and reinforced the ‘natural’ relationship between national pride and the exercise of state sovereignty. The two were/are seen by the Israelis and the Palestinians as mutually dependent. Here lies the most intractable challenge to peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

How can the state of Israel, it is argued in Tel Aviv, be worthy of the name if it is unable to control its borders and protect its citizens? How can Israel allow the return of displaced Palestinian refugees if that would dramatically affect the demography of Israel, undermining the Jewish nature of its population and, as a consequence, the Jewishness of the state? How can this be conceivable, when Israel was created to uphold Jewish sovereignty?

The Palestinian grievance is the mirror image of the above: how can the Palestinian people hold their heads high when their every move is controlled by the Israeli army? How can they be proud of themselves as a nation when a large number of their

compatriots have lived in refugee camps for nearly 40 years, with no real prospects of reunion with their families? Only a Palestinian state, a sovereign entity to embody and represent the aspirations of the Palestinian people, is seen by the Palestinian leadership as being able to restore national pride. The imperatives of national pride and self-determination have placed the two peoples on a collision course.

There have, of course, been efforts to resolve this protracted conflict. The

### The imperatives of national pride and self-determination have placed the two peoples on a collision course.

latest was the Saudi offer to normalise relations with Israel, if Israel withdrew from the territories it occupied in the 1967 war with the Arab states. The idea is supported by many Arab leaders and was discussed at the Arab League summit late last month. The initiative is also welcomed in Washington and in European capitals. The Saudi initiative is, of course, far from a blueprint of action. There are many practical issues and ambiguities that need to be discussed and negotiated. But the proposal has a clear goal: two legitimate states living side by side. There is hardly anything new or original about this goal. A Palestinian state in the West Bank and

the Gaza Strip, which effectively coincided with the 1967 borders, was the implicit goal of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accord. Some form of limited Palestinian self-rule was also the subject of negotiation between Israel and Egypt in 1979.

Yet the formation of a sovereign Palestinian state may not be the ideal solution for peace in the Middle East. Given the degree of mistrust and animosity between the two peoples, the two states of Israel and Palestine are very likely to engage in familiar secu-

another war is too hypothetical to contemplate now, but one thing is certain. The two states would be at loggerheads with each other and that cannot be good for regional security.

Other issues that are sure to remain troublesome include the status of Jerusalem and the question of repatriation for the Palestinian refugees. Jerusalem’s symbolic and spiritual importance for both people is unquestionable, and its importance is repeatedly reiterated by leaders from both sides. Their argument is very simple: how can they truly call them-

self a sovereign people when their most revered holy city is beyond their control? This argument allows next to no room for a compromise, and any deal, including international jurisdiction over Jerusalem, is likely to be a short-term solution. The same is true of the complex question of refugees, mentioned above.

The proposal for the creation of a national state for the Palestinians shares an underlying assumption with the Israeli Right Wing idea of constructing a Berlin-style wall. Although their points of departure are diametrically opposed, the consequence is the same: physical separation of the two people. This would reinforce the

belief that the Israelis and the Palestinians cannot live together without killing each other and conforms to the idea of linking state sovereignty with a specific nation that is defined by religion and/or ethnicity.

But the severity of the issue and prospects of ongoing regional insecurity in the Middle East call for a much more radical solution. It is time to think outside the box. The separation of the Israelis and the Palestinians is not the solution, but their integration in a truly representative state could be. This hypothetical state would not be a Jewish state, or a Palestinian one. Instead, it would be multicultural and multi-faith. It would be a genuine democratic state that confers equal rights and opportunity to its citizens (Jewish and Palestinian), perhaps with carefully elaborated authority for local governments to empower communities. The idea of decoupling national pride and state sovereignty is not likely to be welcomed by many Israelis and Palestinians. But it may be the best chance for peace and security for both people and the region.

■ *Dr Shahram Akbarzadeh is a postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University. He is the co-author of Historical Dictionary of Tajikistan (Scarecrow, 2002) and co-editor of Muslim Communities in Australia (UNSW Press, 2001).*

# Local art goes global in new exhibition

Artwork by Thai and Australian artists will be showcased at a new exhibition this month at the Monash University Museum of Art.

*No Worries! Mai Pen Rai!* brings together artists who work in either the Melbourne or Bangkok art scenes and whose art presents highly personal interpretations of the issues faced by local artists working in a globalised world.

The exhibition will include new work by Australian artists Kate Beynon, Jane Trengrove and Daniel Von Sturmer as well as artworks by Sutee Kanavichayanont, Sakarin Krue-On and Michael Showanasai from Thailand.

Exhibition curators Ms Tessa Dwyer and Ms Sarah Tutton hope the collection will highlight similarities and differences between the two groups of artists, whose work deals with issues such as racism, sexual politics and the impact of western cultural symbols on local communities.

According to Ms Tutton, one of the most striking differences is that Thai artists, unlike their Australian counterparts, are often influenced by a single dominant culture.

"While the artists based in Australia come from a variety of backgrounds, a result of Australia's multi-



Michael Showanasai's 'Untitled' 2001 photograph.

cultural heritage, the Thai artists are working within a pervasive culture with strong traditional roots," she said.

"Though the Thai artists do not work exclusively using customary techniques, the artistic traditions of Thailand do inform the artist's work – by influencing either colour choice or subject matter."

But while the cultural differences are apparent, Ms Tutton believes there are also many similarities.

"I think the exhibition shows that all the artists, whether they are Australian or Thai, are using their art to comment on the impact that global elements have on local situations or, more simply, explore the importance of the local to everyday life," she said. "From photographic collages of Buddhist imagery to a film on everyday experiences of racism in Australia, many of the works on show display a common tension between traditional and contemporary culture."

A forum has been organised in association with Melbourne University's Asialink to accompany the exhibition. It will be held on 1 May at Melbourne University's Asia Centre and will include presentations by critics, academics, and visiting and local artists.

**What:** *No Worries! Mai Pen Rai!*

**When:** 30 April to 15 June

**Where:** Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton campus

**Who:** For more information, contact the Monash University Museum of Art on +61 3 9905 4217

Derek Brown

## Diverse Australia on show



A picture of friendship and a diverse land: Davida Allen's engaging work 'Davida and Queyen', part of the *We Are Australian* exhibition.

Australia's artistic and cultural diversity will be showcased in an exhibition opening this month at the Switchback Gallery on Monash's Gippsland campus.

The exhibition includes artworks from 294 Australian artists who were asked to contribute work based on the theme 'We Are Australian'.

The resulting collection represents a cross-section of Australian culture reflecting the diverse backgrounds of the artists involved – including Italian, Greek, Indigenous Australian, Torres Strait Islander, Indonesian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, English and American.

Originally opened to celebrate the 1999 Melbourne Festival, *We Are*

*Australian* has since travelled to venues in both regional and metropolitan Australia and was used as visual support for the Australian Government at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban last year.

According to Ms Julie Adams, head of Monash's Gippsland Centre for Art and Design and coordinator of the Switchback Gallery, the show highlights the rich artistic heritage that artists working in multicultural Australia are able to draw on.

"The breadth of creativity and artistic skill on display in the exhibition is a great example of the vibrancy and energy of our multicultural

society. It's something we can all be proud of," she said.

*We Are Australian*, sponsored by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, has been brought to Monash University by the Gippsland Centre for Art and Design and the Laroche Regional Gallery.

**What:** *We Are Australian*

**When:** Opens 7 pm, 24 April; until 16 May

**Where:** Switchback Gallery, Gippsland campus

**Who:** For more information, contact the Switchback Gallery on +61 3 9902 6261

Derek Brown

## ARTSCENE

### Birthday concert for Australian composer

Monash University will host a musical celebration this month in honour of the 80th birthday of Australian composer and critic Felix Werder.

As part of the celebrations, musicians George Dreyfus and Trevor Barnard will perform an upbeat version of some of Werder's compositions.

Werder was born in Berlin in 1922 but fled Nazi Germany in 1935. He came to Australia in 1940 with his father and soon came to be regarded as being at the forefront of the Australian music avant-garde.

His music was widely performed both in Australia and overseas, and in 1976 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to music.

The concert will be held on Thursday 11 April from 1.10 pm to 1.50 pm at the Music Auditorium on Monash's Clayton campus. The performance is free, but seats are limited. For more information, contact +61 3 9905 4698.

### New show turns up the heat

The CLOC Music Theatre will turn up the heat at the Alexander Theatre on Monash's Clayton campus this month with *Hot Mikado*, a modern interpretation of a Gilbert and Sullivan classic.

*Hot Mikado* combines vibrant costumes with dynamic and upbeat songs to create an entertaining new slant on the classic tale of love and loss set in a fictional 'topsy-turvy' kingdom in Japan.

Since its initial run in 1885, *The Mikado* has been performed more than

any other Gilbert and Sullivan work and, in recent years, *Hot Mikado* has had its own share of rave reviews.

The CLOC Music Theatre season of *Hot Mikado* will run from 10 to 25 April. For bookings and further information, contact +61 3 9592 2897.

### Bach and the four seasons

The music of Bach and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* will be performed in a concert at Monash's Robert Blackwood Concert Hall at the Clayton campus this month.

The concert, which will feature an orchestra and a choir, is part of a series supported by the Monash School of Music – Conservatorium.

It will be held at 8 pm on 20 April. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 concession. For bookings and further information, contact +61 3 9905 1111.

### Let's get physical

A night at the theatre will get physical when the Melbourne circus-theatre company Dislocate takes to the stage this month at the Alexander Theatre on Monash's Clayton campus.

From 8 to 20 April, Dislocate will present *Risk Reduction*, a unique performance incorporating multimedia, acrobatics and aerial stunts.

Set within a surreal physical world, *Risk Reduction* uses an expertly choreographed performance to explore both the subtleties of human emotions and the lengths we go to to protect ourselves from perceived risks.

For bookings and more information, contact +61 3 9905 1111

## Film festival gives an international perspective

International filmmaker and director Ms Clara Law was at Monash University last month to present her film *Floating Life* – one of nine films screened during the Travelling Film Festival held at the university in March.

The three-day event, organised in collaboration with the Melbourne International Film Festival, featured highly acclaimed films from around the world.

*Floating Life*, which explores the experiences of an Asian family immigrating to Australia, was shown in the festival along with such films as *Bread and Tulips*, the story of a disaffected Italian housewife, and *Princess Mononoke*, a Japanese tale of gods and angry spirits.

Ms Law, who immigrated to Australia from Hong Kong several years ago, was on hand to introduce her film and answer questions from the audience on issues it had raised.

She said meeting the audience face to face was a great opportunity for her to get feedback on her work.

"My films are a form of communication between myself and the audience. Meeting the audience and seeing the reaction they had to my film was very helpful as it allowed me to assess how my work is coming across," she said.

According to Ms Law, the Monash event provided local audiences with the chance to see a wide variety of foreign films – something she believes is missing from the Melbourne film scene.

"There is not enough variety in the films shown in Melbourne, and foreign films are often not very well exposed," she said.

"When I was working in Hong Kong there were a lot of foreign films in the cinemas, and when I came to Melbourne I thought there would be even more variety. Unfortunately, American films occupy most of the film market here."

Mr Ian Rae, marketing and events manager of Monash University Performing Arts, said this was the first time Monash had hosted films from the Melbourne International Film Festival.

"This was the first year Monash University Performing Arts had been fortunate enough to be selected as a venue for the Travelling Film Festival. It was a great opportunity for Monash staff and students and the local community to see foreign films produced and directed by some of the world's best," he said.

Derek Brown

# A history of Yallourn

Yallourn was a town built for a mining community but was eventually swallowed by the very industry it supported. How it felt for former residents of Yallourn to watch the destruction of their town is told in a moving book, launched at Monash University's Gippsland campus recently.

*Digging People Up For Coal*, written by the director of Monash's Centre for Gippsland Studies, Dr Meredith Fletcher, is about the birth, life and loss of a community.

It's a beautifully written history about Yallourn, designed in the 1920s as a picturesque town of gardens laid out on hygienic and aesthetic principles. It became a thriving and close-knit community and was home to several generations of State Electricity Commission workers and their families.

By the 1960s, however, the town was surplus to requirements – it had become an area "to be cleared", because it was found to be sitting on good coal.

The Save Yallourn Campaign was long and bitterly fought, but the residents' efforts were in vain.

Local historian Dr Fletcher brings to life a community that still exists vividly in memory and imagination. She also examines the intense grief that people feel for lost places and at the creativity that grief can release.

*Digging People Up for Coal* is the first book to investigate the process of deconstruction, demolition and detachment of an Australian town.

Dr Fletcher's other books include *Avon to the Alps: A History of the Shire of Avon* (1988) and *Strathfieldsaye: A History and Guide* (1992). She is also



Monash historian Dr Meredith Fletcher writes about the loss of a town and the people who were displaced in the quest for coal.

editor of the innovative *Gippsland Heritage Journal*.

Professor Graeme Davison, professor of history at Monash University, was on hand to launch *Digging People Up For Coal*, an event attended by many of Yallourn's former residents.

Copies of the book are available at local bookshops or by contacting the publisher, Melbourne University Press, on 61 3 9342 0360 or at [www.mup.com.au](http://www.mup.com.au)

Mark Edmondson

## Hat show reveals art in the ordinary



'The Striped Fez' by Glyn De Williams.

Sometimes even familiar, everyday objects can be a source of artistic inspiration.

And for Monash artist and lecturer in fine art Glyn De Williams, it was the shapes and sizes of various hats that provided the motivation for his latest exhibition, now on show at the Switchback Gallery at Monash's Gippsland campus.

De Williams said *The Hat Show*, which includes more than 20 paintings, explores the theme of hats and what they can represent visually.

"While we use hats for decoration and social statement, as an artist I am more interested in the different kinds of shapes that can be found in hats," he said.

"Clearly, a top hat has a very different shape from a bowler hat, which is different again from a felt hat. Through my work, I'm trying to explore this difference."

De Williams's interest in working with shapes found in his immediate environment has also inspired a series of artworks based on industrial components such as bolts and pieces of machinery.

*The Hat Show* will run until Thursday 18 April.

Derek Brown

## INPRINT



### The Boyds:

A Family Biography

By Brenda Niall

Published by Melbourne University Press

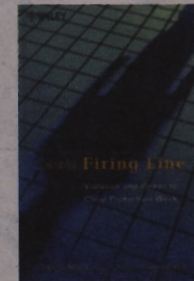
RRP: \$49.95

While most people are aware of the great Australian artist Arthur Boyd, this new book by Brenda Niall traces the artistic lineage of his remarkable family.

The Boyd dynasty, which began with Arthur Merric Boyd and his wife Emma Minnie a Beckett, a landscape painter, included potter Merric Boyd, painter Penleigh Boyd and novelist Martin Boyd. Other artistic descendants are architect and writer Robin Boyd, sculptor Guy Boyd, painter and potter David Boyd, ceramic artist Lucy Boyd Beck and painter Mary Boyd.

This story reads with the ease of a novel and is complemented with family papers, letters, diaries and illustrations.

Brenda Niall is one of Australia's best-known biographers and has won several major literary awards. She has degrees from Monash University, the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University. She was recently a reader in English at Monash and currently writes full-time.



### In the Firing Line:

Violence and Power in Child Protection Work

By Janet Stanley and Chris Goddard

Published by John Wiley & Sons

RRP: \$55.95

The re-abuse of children and the safety of the child protection workers who are sent to look after them are examined in this first collaborative work of Stanley and Goddard.

The book proposes that by recognising the violence faced by protective workers, protection of children under the care of protective services will be increased.

Parallels are drawn between the traumatised protection worker and the traumatised re-abused child. The book looks at case studies, the deaths of innocent children and the failure of the child protection service.

Associate Professor Chris Goddard is the head of social work at Monash University and the author of many books on child welfare. His research into child protection has prompted a government inquiry into and major reform of child protection services. Dr Janet Stanley has conducted research into maltreatment and family violence and has been published in leading international and Australian journals.



### Singapore 1942:

Britain's Greatest Defeat

By Alan Warren

Published by Hambledon and London

The surrender of Singapore on 15 February 1942 was the greatest and most humiliating defeat in British history. It was also the day Japan became a super force within Southeast Asia.

Based on new information that emerged in the 1990s, *Singapore 1942* is a comprehensive account of the defeat in Malaya which sealed Singapore's fate. The weakness of the British Navy and a failure to take the Japanese seriously led to a string of defeats and, inevitably, the capture of more than 120,000 men, changing Britain's imperial destiny and the course of the Second World War.

Author Alan Warren, a lecturer in history at Monash University, published the book to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the defeat. Warren is also the author of *Waziristan, the Faqir of Ipi and the Indian Army*.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming book, contact [monashnews@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:monashnews@adm.monash.edu.au)

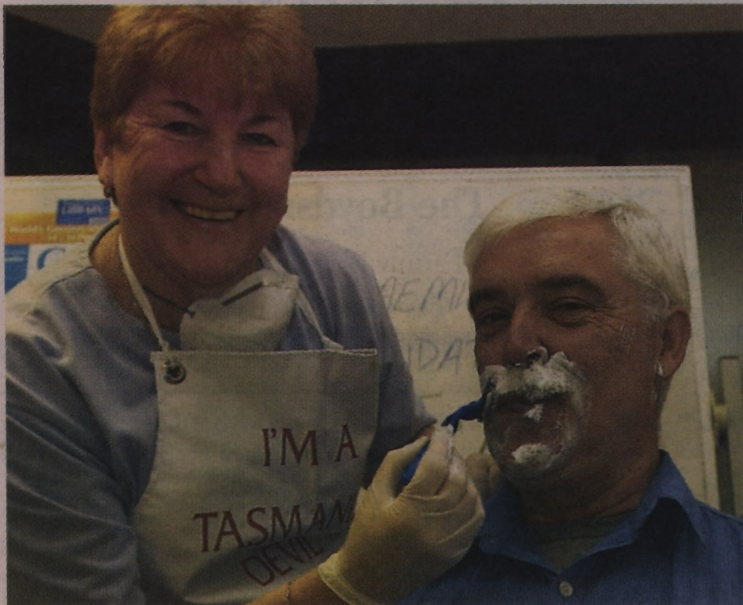
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# Beard today, gone tomorrow



Monash University library attendant Mr Tony Lorento has shaved his beard for the first time in 33 years – all in the name of charity.

Mr Lorento agreed to the shave on 14 March by his colleague of 16 years Ms Lavena Bligh after more than \$400 was raised for The World's Greatest Shave for a Cure for Leukemia charity.

On the same day, Monash library attendant Mr Duncan Wingrave had his head shaved after more than \$100 was donated as an incentive to have him drop his locks.

# Spanning the educational divide



From left: Baxter Primary School student Sean Wilson, Monash student Adelene Poh and Sam Scoble, also from Baxter Primary, at the launch of Maths Crash. Photo Greg Ford.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

An interactive maths game for primary school students has drawn on the talents of a group of secondary school students and university students in an innovative venture between the three education sectors.

The Maths Crash game was developed as a teaching tool for primary school students by a group of Year 7 students at Frankston's Mount Erin Secondary College in conjunction with network computing students from Monash University's Peninsula campus.

The educational game follows the adventures of a pilot whose rocket

crashes on a strange planet in outer space. While repairing the rocket, the pilot meets various characters who are prepared to provide repair materials in exchange for correctly solving a number of mathematical problems.

While the secondary students were able to develop the storyline, characters and types of problems required for the game, they hit a snag with the computing expertise needed to further advance the program.

Enter final-year computing students from Monash's School of Network Computing, who were able to use their theoretical skills to develop the program into a working

model as part of their industrial experience unit.

Ms Ainslie Ellis, director of the Facilitated Learning for IT Education (FLITE) centre within the Information Technology faculty at Monash, said the partnership afforded both groups of students opportunities they would not otherwise have had.

"For the tertiary students, the project provided a unique opportunity to work with clients much younger than themselves and a chance to share some of their computing expertise with those who might become future IT professionals," she said.

According to Mount Erin mathematics teacher Ms Kylie Dwyer, the project gave the secondary students a chance to work in a collaborative environment.

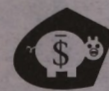
"The two groups were actively engaged throughout the project. The Monash students took the model away with them and would report back to the Mount Erin students about any problems or issues they had every couple of weeks. They would then work together as a team to fix problems and make changes," she explained.

The program was trialled at Baxter Primary School in late February.

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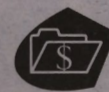
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