

MONASH NEWS



NEWS FROM THE CAMPUSES OF MONASH UNIVERSITY
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MONASH
UNIVERSITY

Grand launch for Monash Centre in Italy

BY MELANIE GARDNER AND
DAVID BRUCE

Monash University launched its new centre in Prato, located in the heart of Italy's Tuscany region, with a grand opening ceremony on 17 September.

The Monash Centre in Prato will be a gateway into Europe for staff and students from Monash University. It will combine with the Monash Centre at King's College in London to forge links between the academic and professional communities of Australia, Italy and wider Europe.

More than 120 people attended the function held in the Grand Salone and were entertained by a quartet from the Monash University Music Ensemble. In adjoining rooms were displays of the first European exhibition of *Dinosaurs of Darkness* from the Monash Science Centre and contemporary art from the Monash University Museum of Art collection.

Monash vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson thanked the major benefactors, the Melbourne-based family of Mr Rino Grollo and

Mrs Diana Grollo, for their continued support of the university's drive to develop a global network of campuses and centres that enable Australian students, researchers and professional and industry groups to become actively engaged in international communities.

Speaking on behalf of the Grollo family, who were unable to attend the ceremony, Mr Tom Hazell said the family was committed to the development of tertiary education in Australia and, through partnerships like those with Monash, to promoting greater links with Italy.

"This is something we are committed to both morally and financially. We are sure that only good can come from this venture in Prato," he said.

Professor Robinson said the centre provided Monash with a significant presence in Europe.

"Our centres in Prato and London will enable us to engage with other universities, governments, cultural organisations and industry, and provide our students and staff with opportunities to

study and share research developments with their peers across Europe," he said.

"Monash University aims to be actively engaged with the diverse regions, communities and industries that it serves across its campuses in Australia, Malaysia and South Africa and its centres in Italy and the United Kingdom."

The ceremony was attended by Italian and Australian dignitaries, including patron of the centre Sir James Gobbo and the Australian ambassador to Italy, Mr Murray Cobban.

The director of the centre, Professor Bill Kent, said the centre was the Italian expression of Monash's vision to be a leader in the worldwide advance and application of knowledge.

"Monash Prato will bring Australia and Italy closer together by showcasing achievements and promoting understanding," he said. "It will provide a venue for learning, teaching and research in the service of both the Australian and Italian communities."

The local Prato population has been invited to join the opening activities at the centre. These include the



Opening night: From left, Monash University chancellor Mr Jerry Ellis, local official Mr Giuseppe Vanucchi, patron of the centre Sir James Gobbo AC, Grollo family spokesman Mr Tom Hazell AO, deputy chancellor Dr June Hearn, vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson and director of the Monash Centre in Prato Professor Bill Kent.

Dinosaurs of Darkness exhibition, assembled by a team of Monash palaeontologists. A sample of the exhibition that has toured the world shows the beasts that roamed the polar regions between 70 and 120 million years ago.

Also on show is *Our Place*, an exhibition of contemporary art from southern Australia, from the Monash University

Museum of Art collection. Featured are paintings, photographs, sculptures and installations by 17 leading contemporary Australian artists that together reveal the diverse histories of present-day Australia.

The Monash Centre in Prato is located at Palazzo Vaj, Via Pugliesi, 26, 59100 Prato, Italy. Visit the website www.monash.edu.au/staff/prato



Ms Rachel Hine and Ms Laura Mar, graduates of the Faculty of Art and Design, with their work 'Alone in the Bush', part of the Federation Tapestry. Picture: PETER SMITH

Stitching the nation's federation fabric

BY JOHN CLARK

If a picture paints a thousand words, imagine the stories a 44-metre tapestry could tell.

The answer, according to the creative forces behind the soon-to-be-unveiled Federation Tapestry, is about two centuries' worth.

One of Australia's biggest public art projects, the \$1.6 million tapestry traces over 10 large panels the evolution of the

nation since European settlement. It will go on permanent display at the Melbourne Museum in December.

Inspired by the pictorial narrative of the Bayeux tapestry in France, the Federation Tapestry is a work of vast proportions, in both scale and vision. When completed, it will have taken about 20,000 weaving hours and contain nearly 250 kg of fine Corriedale wool, specially spun at a mill in Mt Gambier in South Australia.

Among the contributing artists are Murray Walker, Bruce Petty, Mirka Mora, Martin Sharp, Reg Mombassa and Ginger Riley. And among the 15 artist-weavers are six recent graduates from Monash University's Faculty of Art and Design, one of the few places in the world to teach tapestry as a major study.

The challenge facing the weavers, says Monash fine arts lecturer Ms Kate Derum, is to turn the designers'

artwork into a strong and enduring tapestry image.

"The weavers have to make decisions on how to approach colour," Ms Derum said. "The scale is something that really makes a difference. They have to imagine how it will look in the museum, so have to choose and mix the colours to make them come alive."

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Turning the office green

BY JUNE YU

Victorian business and industry will soon benefit from the 'green' skills of Monash University environment change management students under an innovative new training program.

The program, now in its second year, is a joint venture of the Monash Environment Institute and MSA Green Steps, the Monash Student Association's environmental training and consultancy group.

Program coordinator Mr Elya Tagar says this year's program will see nine students combine training sessions with a work placement to gain on-the-job experience.

"The program offers unique exposure to the most current developments in environmental practice in the workforce," he said. "The students emerge with a very good understanding of the issues involved in greening organisations."

"The combination of training, critical reflection on the issues and 'getting their hands dirty' with actual experience in areas such as waste auditing

and workplace communication produces very good results."

According to Mr Tagar, the 2000 pilot program saw eight out of the 10 participating students gain employment as a result of their involvement in the program.

"The employability of the students and the success of the workplace projects they were involved with testify to the program's success," he said.

Hosts have included KPMG Consulting, VISY Board, Origin Energy, Chisholm Institute of TAFE, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, Lonely Planet Publishing and several smaller environmental consultants.

Student Mr Zafi Bachar undertook a six-week placement at Origin Energy as part of the 2000 program and is still working for the company in a contract position.

"I was responsible for implementing a green office program in the Melbourne office and facilitated and led a team of volunteers," he said.

"This meant improving all aspects of environmental practice such as

reusing paper, improving energy efficiency and buying environmentally friendly products."

He is now working on introducing the green office program into two other Origin Energy locations.

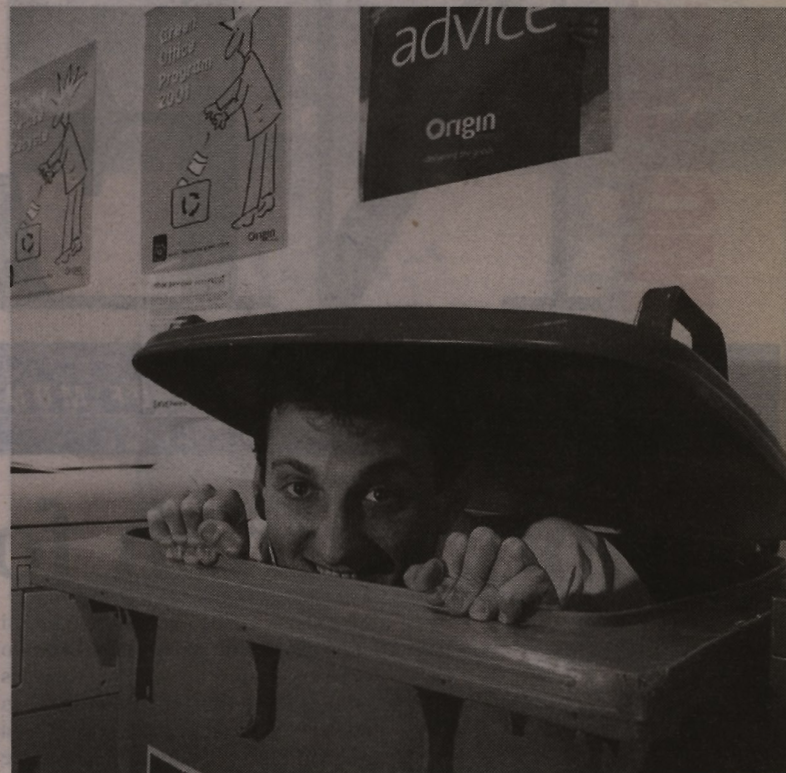
Mr Bachar said the experience would be invaluable for his future career in improving environmental sustainability practices in business.

Origin Energy marketing associate Mr Michael Dadour said Zafi's input in boosting the company's green office practices had been of great benefit to the company.

"Employing a person with the credentials to assist with the boosting of the company's green office practices sends a powerful message that the company is committed to improving its environmental practice," he said.

Other employers reported significant cost savings through waste reduction and recycling programs.

Organisations wishing to offer a work placement or anyone wanting further details about the program should contact Mr Tagar on +61 3 9905 0260.



Binned: Recycling taken seriously by Mr Zafi Bachar at Origin Energy. Picture: PETER SMITH

Graduation first for Monash Malaysia

BY MELANIE GARDNER

History was made last month with the graduation of the first students from Monash University Malaysia.

A total of 116 students graduated at the ceremony held on 20 September in Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel, Bandar Sunway. Also graduating were 134 students who had completed their degrees in Australia.

Monash has held graduation ceremonies in Malaysia since 1991, but this was the first time the ceremony included Monash students who have completed their degrees in Malaysia.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Monash's chancellor, Mr Jerry Ellis, Monash vice-chancellor and president Professor David Robinson, pro vice-chancellor of Monash Malaysia Professor Robert Bignall, senior academic staff from other campuses of Monash, senior Monash alumni and other VIPs.

The graduating Monash Malaysia students were awarded degrees in business and commerce, biotechnology, environmental management, computer science and nursing. The nursing students had completed a two-year post-registration degree conversion program. Students taking the four-year engineering degree program will be graduating next year.

The occasional address was delivered by Y B Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Minister of Defence for Malaysia, who was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

More than 500 people attended a celebratory dinner on the evening before the graduation. A number of speeches were given, including one from Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee, chairman of Monash Malaysia's Board of Directors, who said the



Honorary graduand Y B Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Minister of Defence for Malaysia, centre, with Monash chancellor Mr Jerry Ellis, left, and Monash vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson.

event represented an important milestone for the seventh campus of Monash University.

"Tonight we have some 100 pioneering and brave students who ventured into the unknown when they first enrolled themselves at this new institution three years ago. In less than 24 hours, we will be witnessing their convocation. Tonight's dinner is to celebrate their success," he said.

His theme was echoed by Professor Bignall, who warmly congratulated the first graduates for the spirit and initiative they had shown as the first students of Monash Malaysia.

Other speakers included Mr Ellis, Professor Robinson and the founder and chairman of the Sunway Group, Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah. The latter spoke about the background to the establishment of Monash Malaysia and the particular advantages that its students enjoyed.

Monash Malaysia was established in February 1998 and now has a student population of 1500, 13 per cent of whom are international students.

Asian corporate gender roles come under research scrutiny

BY JUNE YU

Japanese corporate managers working in Malaysia have struggled to translate their strict work ethics into the local culture, according to Monash Centre for Malaysian Studies director Dr Wendy Smith.

Dr Smith will discuss differences in corporate masculinity and family roles between Japanese managers and their Malaysian counterparts in a paper for the International Symposium on Malaysian Masculinities early in November.

Her paper is based on field research on the cultural aspects of Japanese management when transferred to Malaysia as part of the boom in Japan's foreign investment that began in the early 1970s.

She interviewed expatriate Japanese managers and spent two years observing corporate behaviour in a Japanese company in Malaysia.

"I talked to everyone from cleaners to managers, sat in on meetings, visited their homes and went to bowling nights and company dinners," Dr Smith said.

She said various communication problems arose between Japanese managers and local managers and

employees due to cultural differences in work behaviour.

"Male corporate behaviour in Japan itself, such as drinking after hours with colleagues, does not always transfer easily into the Malaysian context," she said.

"The Muslim religion of Malay Malaysians forbids alcohol, and after-work activities centre around the family. The Chinese Malaysians would go out drinking, but they also tend to be more family-focused and don't necessarily want to spend their after-work hours with work colleagues."

She said the 'corporate warrior' mentality, largely responsible for much of Japan's economic success, was often at odds with the Malaysians' more relaxed lifestyle.

Moreover, Western society could learn much about handling diversity from the Japanese-Malaysian context.

"The West has already gained a lot from the Japanese management concepts of just-in-time and enterprise bargaining. Now we can learn a lot from societies such as Malaysia that are looking at diversity as a potential for growth," Dr Smith said.

She pointed to how managing the Malaysian multi-ethnic workforce

required sensitivity in handling religious holidays, dietary prohibitions and religiously based dress codes.

"When employees see that managers are prepared to give respect to their cultural needs, they become loyal workers who are reluctant to leave the company despite offers of better pay," she said.

"In this way, patron clientage which is a carry-over from pre-industrial society, is used to maximise employee satisfaction and productivity. Australian managers are increasingly having to manage workplace diversity, based on religious differences and social origins."

Dr Smith said her conference paper would highlight these differences and examine the corporate relationships and personal lifestyles of Japanese managers in Malaysia.

Dr Smith is convenor of the Malaysian Masculinities Symposium, to be held from 3 to 4 November at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

For more information or a registration form, contact Dr Smith on +61 3 9905 9250 or visit www.arts.monash.edu.au/mai/mmprogram.html.

Multimedia centre for Berwick campus

BY MARY VISCOVICH

The Federal Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, last month announced the allocation of \$2 million in 2004 to build a new multimedia centre at Monash University's Berwick campus.

The centre, which will be part of the School of Multimedia Systems, will comprise multimedia laboratories, design studios, staff accommodation, two tutorial rooms and a 220-capacity lecture theatre.

The funds will come from the DETYA Capital Development Pool, with the minister indicating that the department would look favourably on approving a further \$2 million towards the project in 2005.

Berwick campus director Mr Bob Burnet said Dr Kemp's announcement was a vote of confidence in the future of the campus and would facilitate its development in such a way as to ensure that it added real value to the region.



From left: Monash vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson, Berwick campus director Mr Bob Burnet, federal MP Mr Bob Charles and DETYA Minister Dr David Kemp.

"Closer working relationships with Chisholm Institute of TAFE and the proposed location of a senior secondary college on the campus will result in an education precinct with an urban feel," Mr Burnet said.

"It will also provide the City of Casey with a university campus which it can be proud of and which will be accessible to its residents."

He pointed out that it was important and logical that the development of the campus continued, as it was part of the fastest-growing municipality in Victoria.

Mr Burnet added that the support of local federal MP Mr Bob Charles had been invaluable in helping Monash obtain the capital grant, as had the continuing support of the project by the City of Casey.

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Music helps protect the body from stress

BY DEREK BROWN

Relaxing music may protect the body from the adverse effects of stress such as high blood pressure, anxiety and cardiovascular disease, reveals Monash University research.

Dr Nikki Rickard and her student Ms Wendy Knight, from Monash's Department of Psychology, have completed studies showing that subjects who listen to a certain piece of relaxing music while in a high-stress situation experience none of the physical responses normally expected.

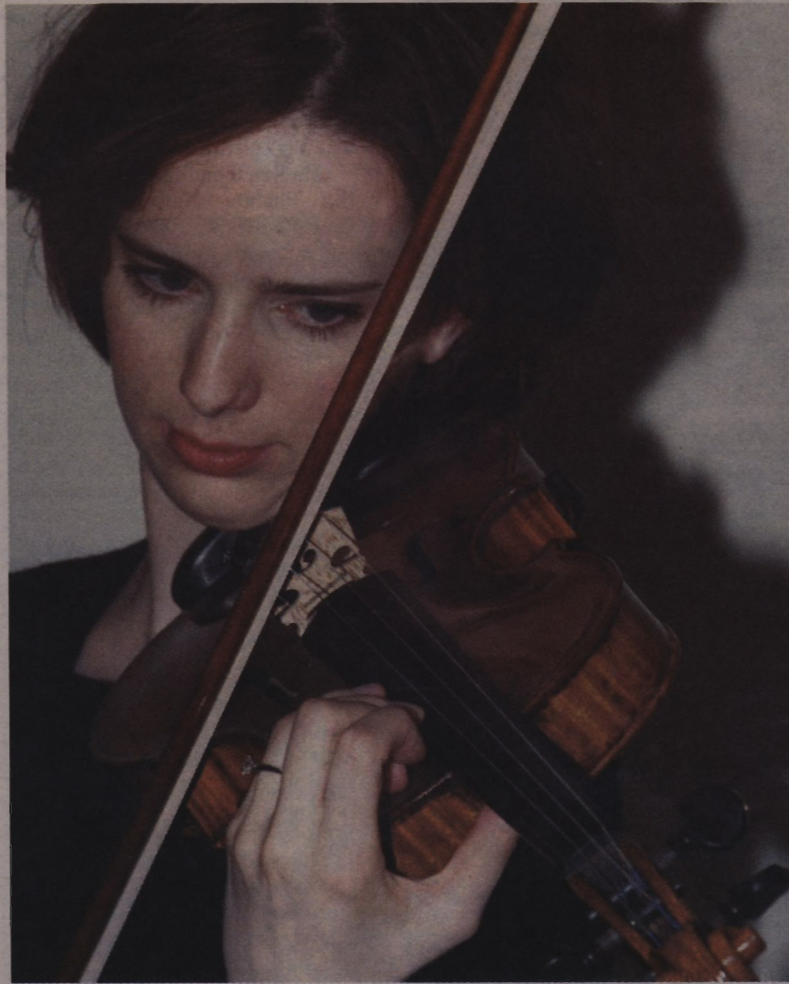
The study, recently published in *The Journal of Music Therapy*, involved university students who were told to give an oral presentation on a difficult topic with minimal preparation. To increase stress, they were informed that the presentations would be taped and judged by at least two academics.

Dr Rickard said half the students did not listen to music during the presentation while the other half were played Pachelbel's Canon in D major, a traditionally relaxing piece.

"It was found that the students who didn't hear any music during the presentation experienced an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and the release of a hormone related to stress," she said.

"The group of students who listened to relaxing music did not show any of these effects. We found, by monitoring a number of measures, that the music significantly prevented the expected stress response."

While Dr Rickard acknowledged that past studies had shown relaxing or sedative types of music - involving slow tempos, gentle melodic contours and strings - reduced people's feelings of anxiety, up to now there had been little proof of a direct physical impact.



Calming: Music soothes the savage beast. Picture: AAP

"This research shows the link between the emotional response to music, which most of us experience, and actual changes in the physiological processes of the body," she said.

Dr Rickard believes music therapy has not had widespread acceptance among health professionals mainly due to a lack of clear evidence that it actually influences the body's processes.

"This study helps legitimise the use of music in various forms of therapy to

reduce anxiety and lessen the chance of developing stress-related disease," she said.

While the findings of the study were not affected by gender, musical training or predisposition to anxiety, Dr Rickard said further studies were needed to ensure subjects' familiarity with the piece did not influence the result, and to determine what other music, or even sounds, may also produce this effect.

BRIEFS

Jewish Centre

The vision for the future of the Australian Centre for the Study of Jewish Civilisation was reaffirmed last month with a major function that attracted prominent members of Melbourne's Jewish community.

Guests including former governor-general Sir Zelman Cowen and Dr Henry Krongold CBE AM and Mrs Dinah Krongold attended the Faculty Gallery at the Caulfield campus to hear speakers including the recently appointed centre director, Professor Andrew Markus.

Other speakers at the event were Arts faculty dean Professor Homer Le Grand, centre chairman Emeritus Professor Louis Waller AO, and a major benefactor of the centre, Mrs Lorraine Topol.

In a heartfelt address to guests, Mrs Topol said the centre, established

in 1992, would become a beacon in the landscape of Jewish civilisation in Melbourne, in Australia and beyond.

Cook Islands visit

Monash teachers-in-training recently visited the Cook Islands. More than 20 third-year students from the Peninsula campus spent three weeks on teaching rounds at primary schools in Rarotonga.

The opportunity enabled them to practise their teaching skills in a different setting and to compare how, and if, their teaching styles were compatible to such environments. They were also able to review their ideas of teaching and learning in another cultural situation.

Dr Ian Walker and Dr Julie Edwards, from the Faculty of Education, also conducted a joint one-day workshop for the Cook Islands Teachers College trainees and Monash students during the visit.

New bone coating may help medical implants

BY DEREK BROWN

Monash University research into calcium phosphate coatings may lead to improved techniques for fastening medical materials such as hip and knee prostheses and dental implants to existing bone.

Current cements and coatings containing calcium phosphate are designed to slowly dissolve, releasing elements that encourage bone to grow over the implant.

But according to Dr Karlis Gross from the School of Physics and Materials Engineering in the Faculty of Science at Monash, occasionally the cements and coatings dissolve too quickly.

"Coatings contain calcium phosphate particles embedded in binding material. As the calcium phosphate is absorbed by the bone, the binding material in which it is held rapidly dissolves. This process is important for stimulating bone growth, but the rate at which the material dissolves is often unstable," he said.

"If the dissolution occurs too quickly, the bone loses hold of the implant, and implant integration is lost. The bone attaches to particles within the coating that come loose from the binding material, weakening the overall connection."

Dr Gross, who presented a paper on coating degradation at the

14th International Symposium on Bioceramics in Bologna, Italy, last November, is researching methods for creating a more stable coating.

He believes there are many applications within the medical field for a compound with a stable rate of dissolution. Dental implants in particular could benefit from an improved calcium phosphate coating.

"Traditionally, calcium phosphate substances don't work well in the jaw, and the dental industry has been reluctant to use the substance," Dr Gross said.

"There is more chance that infection will develop in the mouth around the site of an implant than there is with hip and knee replacements. If infection does develop, the area becomes more acidic and, as the acidity increases, the calcium phosphate dissolves more quickly, leading to loose implants."

Dr Gross presented a paper on his new developments in the analysis of calcium phosphate coatings at the Engineering Materials Conference in Melbourne last month. He will also speak at the 15th International Symposium on Bioceramics in Palm Springs, California, next month.

He said future applications for bioresorbable compounds that exhibit a controlled dissolution rate could include drug release within the body and tissue engineering.

Counting the homeless

BY KAY ANSELL

Monash University is helping to map the extent of homelessness in Australia as part of a new three-year project using this year's census and other sources.

The August census was just the beginning for the researchers working on 'Counting the Homeless in 2001'. The multi-pronged program is led by Monash sociology head Dr Chris Chamberlain and RMIT lecturer Mr David McKenzie, working in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Dr Chamberlain's earlier analysis of the 1996 census had revealed that more than 100,000 Australians were homeless, double the previous estimates.

This time, backed by funding from every state and territory government, qualitative research will be combined with statistical analysis, aided by the ABS's efforts to include homeless people in the 2001 census. It will provide Australia with the most accurate picture yet of the extent of the crisis.



Picture: AAP

"When we get the census data this time we're going to do a proper geographical analysis - getting down to looking at local areas, particular cities and the number of people homeless on census night," Dr Chamberlain said.

But long before the census analysis is ready in 2003, the project will have results early next year about youth homelessness through its own national census of homeless students.

Researchers working from a special call centre are surveying every high school in the country.

Dr Chamberlain said the project was also gathering information from 1200 hostels and refuges funded

by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

Case history information from both the schools and SAAP services would provide a much fuller understanding of how people become homeless and for how long they remain so.

"What we're trying to do is get a qualitative data base to help us interpret the census data more effectively," Dr Chamberlain said. "We can put the different bits of the jigsaw together to try and make more sense of things."

The overall results will provide a better basis for policy and resourcing decisions by both state and federal governments, he said. The next SAAP review in 2005, for example, will be able to use the project's findings.

Dr Chamberlain's analysis has helped to humanise the statistics. In his 1996 report, for example, he demonstrated that homelessness now affected people of all ages - including 17,000 children. This time he hopes to explore further how homelessness splits families.

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'Hazel' helps doctors improve surgical skills

BY SUE McALISTER

Monash University is celebrating the birth of a gynaecological simulator – a technological breakthrough both in terms of what it can do and its realism. The simulator even has a name, 'Hazel'.

"Hazel has taken five years to arrive – quite a bit longer than the usual human gestation period, but she was well worth waiting for," says Professor David Healy of Monash's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Professor Healy leads the Monash team that developed and operates the simulator, the primary purpose of which is to teach and monitor laparoscopic, or keyhole, surgery.

Hazel is one of only a few gynaecological simulators in the world and is unique in its purpose of not only objectively assessing a surgeon's laparoscopic skills but also, crucially, of measuring improvement – or lack of improvement – in those skills over time.

Professor Healy says Hazel was partly inspired by aviation industry flight simulators, which test a pilot's professional competency.

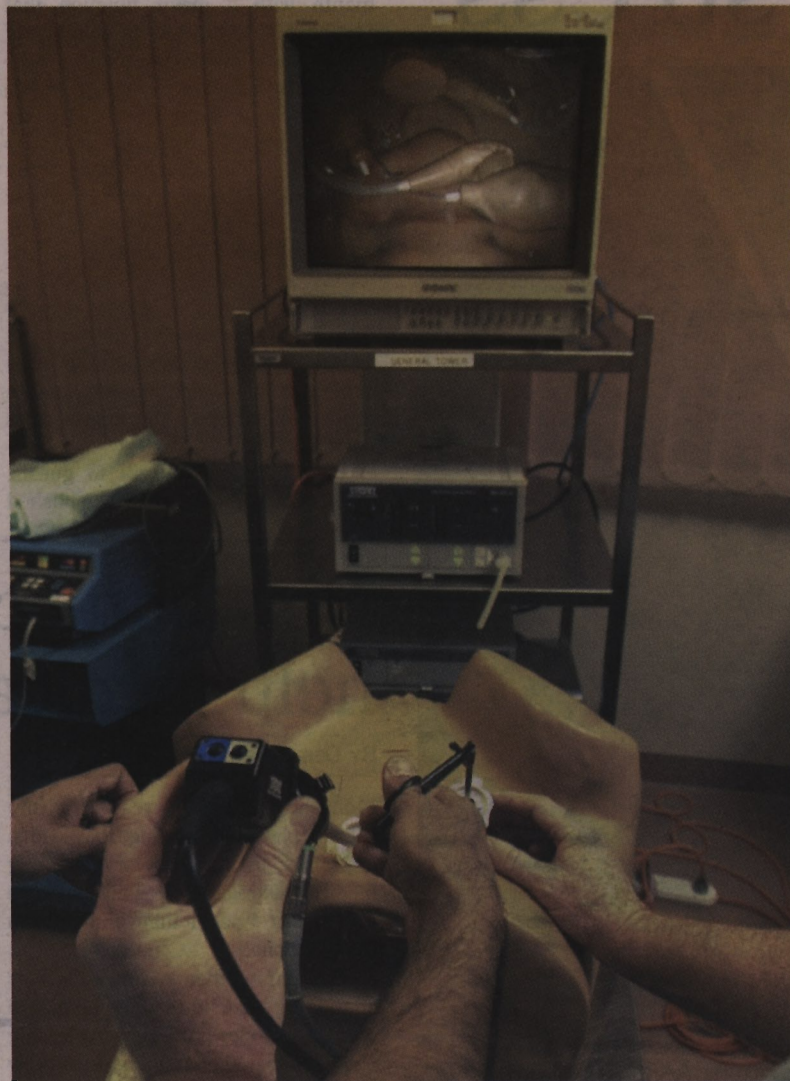
"Just as a passenger boarding a jet expects the pilot's skills to be equal to the task, a patient about to undergo laparoscopic surgery has the right to expect the surgeon's skills to be of the highest standard, constantly updated and objectively assessed," he says.

"Many surgeons, especially older ones, are not adequately practised in using laparoscopy, which represents a complete medical revolution – their 20th century surgical skills may be excellent, but they don't apply to this new 21st century surgical technique."

Laparoscopic gynaecological surgery entails making a small cut in the navel, into which gas is introduced to inflate the abdomen, followed by an endoscopic light and camera at the end of a pencil-thin fibre-optic cable. Two further small cuts are usually made to admit long, slender operating instruments, including a diathermic (hot) knife in the form of an electrode or laser. The surgeon operates by watching a television monitor.

Laparoscopy has several advantages over older surgical techniques. It is minimally invasive, is less likely to produce complications and bleeding, causes less post-operative pain, requires less time for patient recovery and is less expensive – with no big scars as an added bonus.

However, unlike in other countries, the use of gynaecological laparoscopy in Australia is not increasing. Gynaecological procedures can be daunting – they take place in the pelvis,



Breakthrough: Keyhole surgery performed on 'Hazel' and watched on screen. Picture: GREG FORD

a confined space packed with organs and blood vessels. If an artery is cut, the patient can die in three minutes.

So training and practice in laparoscopy are vital, but the use of cadavers and animals has practical as well as ethical drawbacks. Using Hazel, by contrast, has neither.

This is why Professor Healy sees the simulator helping promote the use of gynaecological laparoscopy throughout Australia. Although based at Monash Medical Centre (Moorabbin), it can visit other metropolitan hospitals and rural health centres.

The simulator comprises two stacks of laparoscopic and electro-coagulation diathermy equipment, each about a metre high, and an artificial pelvis/abdomen on an operating table. The surgeon or trainee operates as normal, by watching a television – though this one displays computer-created, real-time virtual images of the abdomen's

interior. Another realistic touch is that only the area of Hazel to be operated on is visible – the rest is modestly draped.

"In conjunction with Monash's Faculty of Education, we've tested 20 gynaecological specialists and 20 trainees," Professor Healy says. "The basic requirement is that candidates successfully and safely complete 10 surgical stations within an hour. These could progress from treating an ectopic pregnancy to performing a hysterectomy and on to even more complex procedures."

Monash's Centre for Biomedical Engineering helped develop the simulator with financial backing from two surgical equipment companies, Tyco Healthcare in the United States and Stenning-Storz in Germany. Professor Healy says further research and development is needed, which requires additional funding.

Pharmacy website helps teething troubles

BY ALLISON HARDING

Health professionals will have immediate online access to new developments in health issues for older Australians through an innovative website launched this month by the Victorian College of Pharmacy (Monash University).

The Improving Oral Health for Older People online project, which identifies ways to help carers and older people achieve better oral health, is hosted on the college's education website at www.PharmaCE.vic.edu.au

The project particularly targets community pharmacists, especially those in remote and isolated communities, and allied health professionals and carers, particularly those who serve aged-care facilities.

The director of the college's Centre for Continuing Education, Mr Paul Loughran, said dental treatment for

people aged over 55 years cost \$520 million in Australia every year.

He said that although more older people were keeping their teeth longer, the prevalence and severity of gum disease increased with age.

"Problems with teeth, gum and dentures impact adversely on the nutritional status and general health and wellbeing of older people," Mr Loughran said.

"Pharmacists are increasingly the first port of call to provide advice on a range of health issues, particularly pharmacists in remote and isolated communities which have experienced reductions in health services.

"Improvements in oral health of an older person will result in an improvement to their general health."

Common oral health conditions that affect older people include dental decay, gum disease, mouth ulcers and

dry mouth (xerostomia). The website will provide ready access to information and advice on various oral conditions.

The program is being run in collaboration with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch), Dental Health Services Victoria, Australian Nursing Homes and Extended Care Association, and the Department of Human Services (Victoria).

The oral health program was launched by the Victorian Minister for Housing and Aged Care, Ms Bronwyn Pike, and is just one of many programs to be hosted on the PharmaCE website.

The site also hosts the Recent Developments in Drug Therapy program, and forthcoming programs include Methadone – A Harm Minimisation Approach in November and The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in December.

Worming her way to success

BY STEPHEN NG

Not many women would be thrilled to have a worm named after her – but Monash University Malaysia researcher Ms Ashleigh Kua is an exception.

A fourth-year Faculty of Science biotechnology honours student, Ms Kua is making a name for herself in the scientific world of marine and freshwater biology, after discovering a new species of freshwater worm.

Ms Kua found the new species of the Phylum Nemertea (ribbon worm) by chance while she was looking for new species of freshwater invertebrates in the rivers of Endau-Rompin Park in the State of Johor.

"We were attending a seminar by Professor Ray Gibson, a world-class expert on Nemertea, at the research centre in Endau-Rompin Park. Later, when I went out sampling dragonfly larvae, I came across this tiny worm. I handed it over to Professor Gibson and he was thrilled," she said.

Ms Kua said her carnivorous discovery is only one centimetre long and has a proboscis which it shoots out to catch its prey.

Dr Catherine Yule, who led the group of Monash students and a team of world-renowned scientists on a taxonomic workshop expedition at the park in July, said the species was the first record of a freshwater specimen of this phylum to be recorded from Malaysia.

She said Professor Gibson was undertaking taxonomic analysis of the worm, which entails microscopic analysis of the internal anatomy.

"Although these are common worms in the marine environment, particularly coral reefs, they are



Ms Ashleigh Kua and, below left, the team in action.

uncommon in freshwaters, with only about 20 species recorded worldwide from rivers, streams and lakes," Dr Yule said. "On maturity, Nemerteans can reach great lengths, with one specimen 30 metres long having been recorded."

Dr Yule, an expert in freshwater ecology and lecturer in the Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) at Monash University Malaysia, said the expedition had been very successful overall.

"We managed to discover more than 20 new species of freshwater invertebrates," she said. "We also found new evidence of animals never before recorded here."

Dr Yule, who has worked as an environmental consultant in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Malaysia for more than 20 years, says the expedition was part of research for a 600-page guide, *The Freshwater Invertebrates of Malaysia and Singapore*, which she is writing in collaboration with the University of Malaya's Professor Yong Hoi Sen.

"The freshwater fauna of Malaysia and Singapore is becoming increasingly well known. However, there are no guides available that can enable people to identify animals they find in lakes and rivers in the region," she said.

The book will carry contributions from some 50 specialists from all over the world and will be published by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia.



Schools



Enhancement Studies information evening

The Monash Enhancement Studies Program is the largest and most comprehensive extension studies program in Australia. It allows high-achieving secondary students to study a Monash subject as part of their Year 12 program.

To find out more about the program, including subjects available, class locations, costs and benefits, current Year 11 students, parents and teachers are invited to attend an information evening, to be held on Wednesday 17 October from 7.30 pm to 9 pm at Monash's Clayton campus.

For more information or to register, contact Philippa Brown in the Prospective Students Office on +61 3 9905 5859.

Camp Monash

Camp Monash is a residential program for Year 11 students aimed at introducing students to university life. The program, which includes academic, social and sporting activities, will run this year from 26 November to 28 November at the university's Clayton campus.

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

Direct entry course

A new course, Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Social Work, will be introduced in 2002 at Monash's Caulfield campus.

This four-year double degree can be studied full time or by off-campus distributed learning. Interested students can apply directly to Monash (not through VTAC).

Prerequisites include a study score of at least 25 in English (any units 3 and 4) and a study score of at least 20 in any other three VCE studies.

To apply, contact the Social Work department at Monash on +61 3 9903 1120 or +61 3 9903 1136, or email social.work@arts.monash.edu.au for an application form. Applications close on 21 December 2001. Applications received after this date will be considered only if places are still available.

Free trade: the way forward

OPINION

The terrorist attacks on the US diverted attention from Prime Minister John Howard's original purpose in visiting the US last month – free trade agreements. Chairman of Monash University's Australia Pacific Economic Cooperation Study Centre **ALAN OXLEY** explains the background.

THE TERRORIST attack on the US has reminded us that Australia has defence ties with the US through the ANZUS Treaty.

The Prime Minister John Howard, was in the US on the eve of the 11 September attack to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty and to seek to broaden relations between Australia and the US for the next 50 years.

The Prime Minister proposed to US President George W. Bush that Australia and the US negotiate a free trade agreement (FTA). This proposal is of vital importance to Australia's capacity to prosper in the world economy in the future.

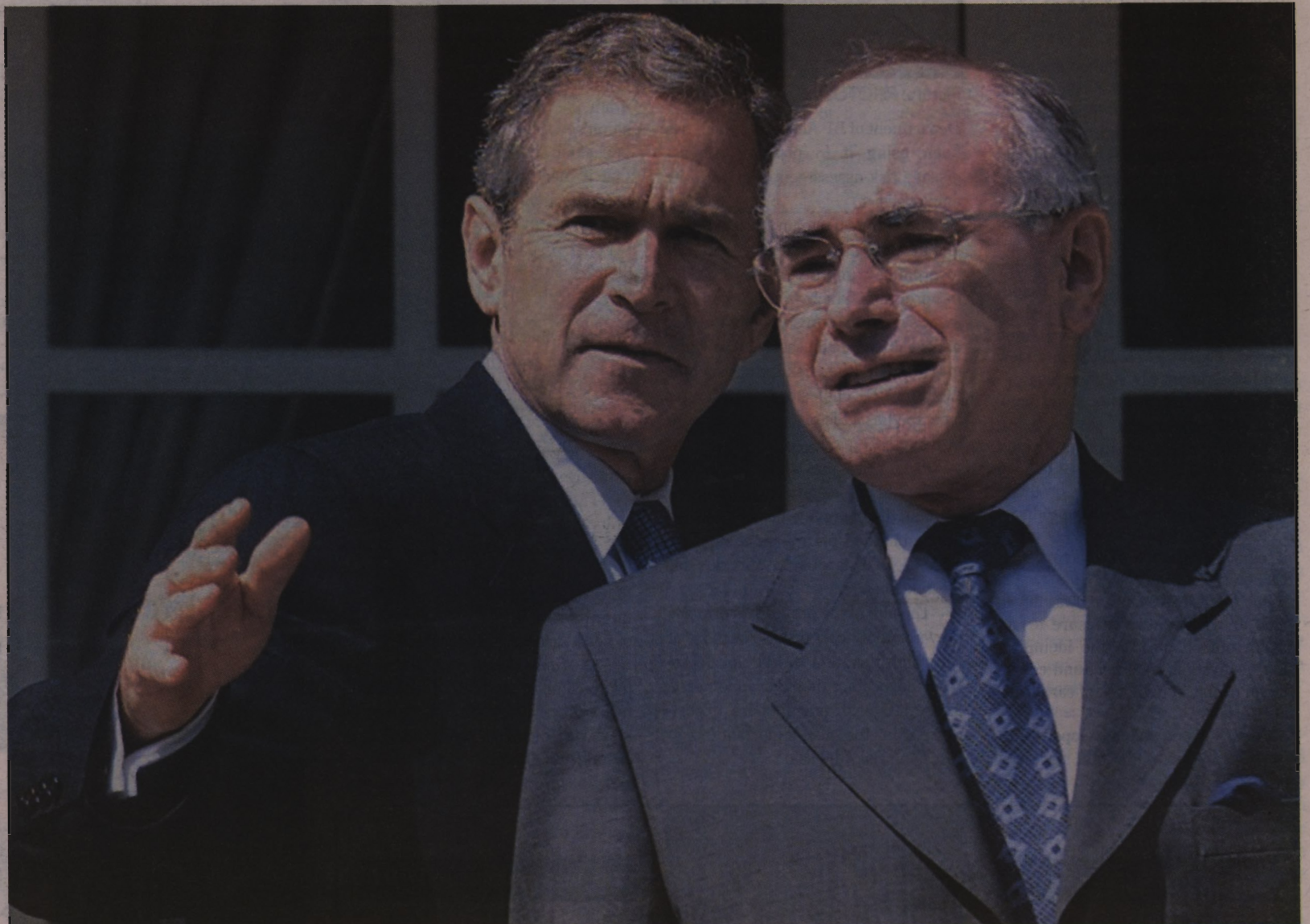
While the idea of an FTA was well received in the US, the Prime Minister did not secure unqualified public support from the President. This was because the Bush Administration was engaged in highly delicate negotiations with Congress to secure approval to negotiate trade agreements in general. Its political advisers considered that consent by the Administration to negotiate another agreement before those negotiations were completed with a Congress controlled by the Democrats, many of whom are unsympathetic to trade, jeopardised that endeavour. Australian and US trade ministers are to revisit the idea before the end of the year.

The Monash APEC Centre has been active on this issue. It mounted a national conference, opened by Monash University vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson in Canberra in June, to consider the implications. Trade Minister Mr Mark Vaile, Shadow Trade Minister Senator Peter Cook, former minister Mr Michael Duffy, and a range of experts addressed the conference. US participants included Professor John Higley from the University of Austin, Texas, Dr Charles Morrison, director of the East West Centre in Hawaii (a US APEC study centre) and Mr Paul Drazek, a consultant and former US government agriculture negotiator.

The Australian Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade also commissioned the Monash APEC Centre to prepare an analysis of the implications for Australia of an FTA. Papers from the conference and the report, which was released in late August, are available on the centre's website at www.apec.org.au

There have been two streams of criticism of an FTA with the US. The Federal Opposition has said it supports the idea in principle but is critical of the government for committing to the idea before comprehensive analysis and discussion of the issues. The release of the centre's report provides a basis for a full review of all the issues.

The second broad criticism is that intensifying relations with the US jeopardises the broad strategy of strengthening ties with Asia. Professor Ross Garnaut and Professor Peter Drysdale from the Australian National University Australia-Japan Research Centre consider it a strategic error. They also argue that Australia should give priority to multilateral trade liberalisation through the World Trade



Talking trade: US President George W. Bush and Australian Prime Minister John Howard. Picture: AAP

Organisation rather than bilateral agreements.

Former prime minister Mr Malcolm Fraser claims that the US will require Australia to support the Bush Administration's Ballistic Missile Defence program as a *quid pro quo* for an FTA. There is no evidence the Bush Administration will take this tack.

The Monash APEC Centre report found that the economic relationship with the US has intensified substantially in recent years. Taking imports and exports together, the US accounts for about 15 per cent of Australia's trade. This makes the US – and Japan with trade at virtually the same level –

export sector. In the medium to long term, this broadening of the economic relationship means that agricultural issues will no longer dominate the economic relationship with the US in the way they have for the past 20 years. Australia's modernised economy means this expansion of trade and investment with the US is likely to be a long-term trend.

The issue of the impact on Australia's relations with Asia was considered in the Monash APEC Centre report. There is no question that Australia must continue to build strong relationships with Asia. However, foreign policy and trade policy interests

immigration and of course is leading the world economy into the information age. It is clear that once the current recessionary phase is past, the US economy will continue to be the world's economic standard setter.

A FREE trade agreement will bring valuable, albeit modest increases in trade. Trade barriers in both economies are low. This is one reason the economic argument that multilateral trade liberalisation delivers better benefits than bilateral liberalisation does not apply in the case of a free trade agreement between Australia and the US. With few barriers there is little risk of trade diversion.

The defence relationship has been the core of the relationship between the US and Australia since World War II. The importance of this to Australia will relate directly to instability in Asia. We cannot take regional stability for granted.

Quite independently, the onset of the information age is laying down new precepts for the way states deal with each other. Intensifying the economic relationship with the US would give Australia very valuable instruments to manage and prosper in the information age.

Finally, a free trade agreement between Australia and the US would serve as an exemplar for wider economic integration among APEC economies. With several East Asian economies struggling to rebuild effective frameworks for economic management in the wake of the Asian currency crisis, FTAs such as these serve to demonstrate how benefits can be derived from closer economic integration.

■ *The Australian APEC Study Centre is a unit of Monash University in Melbourne. Its role is to research, inform and promote discussion on issues related to Asia Pacific economic cooperation. Chairman Alan Oxley led the team that prepared the report for Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*

The US is the most important source of foreign investment in Australia and is the largest destination for Australians investing outside Australia.

Australia's equal largest trading partner.

However, when investment is also considered, the US is Australia's largest economic partner. The US is the most important source of foreign investment in Australia and is the largest destination for Australians investing outside Australia.

In the past five years, the US has also been Australia's fastest growing major export market. More importantly, it now takes about one quarter of Australia's exports of manufactures, Australia's fastest growing

must be separated. For the past 25 years Australia has been a global trader. This will continue.

It would be contrary to our national interest to turn our back on economic relationships that would be beneficial for political reasons. Delinkage of foreign policy and trade policy is a long-established principle in international relations and is even more widely recognised in today's globalised world.

Over the past decade, the US re-emerged as the world's leading economy. It had record growth, record improvements in productivity, record

Free trade agreements are not just about trade but about closer economic relationships. An FTA would stimulate greater US investment in Australia by drawing attention to Australia in US business circles. It would foster adoption by Australian business of US benchmarks for business, particularly productivity, excellence and utilisation of IT. Australia will acquire the global standards needed to excel in the information age. Australia also needs to adopt standards of global excellence in business to compete in world markets, including in Asia.

Getting to the heart of coronary disease

BY MELANIE GARDNER

An innovative computer program being designed at Monash University uses a mathematical formula to assess a person's risk of developing and dying from coronary heart disease.

The interactive *Take Heart* program should be available by mid-2002 to clinicians, particularly GPs, as a vital tool for assessing patients' risk of developing the disease.

Factors that affect the potential for developing heart disease – the leading cause of death and disability in Australia – include age, sex, blood pressure and cholesterol levels and whether or not a person smokes.

Take Heart is being developed by the Epidemiological Modelling Unit of the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Program designers include Professor John McNeil, Dr Anna Peeters, Dr Theo Vos, Dr Danny Liew and PhD student Mr Stephen Lim.

The program involves blood pressure and cholesterol levels being measured and stored, then producing graphical and text reports that detail a person's risk of developing or dying from heart disease. It also produces scenarios that assess the likely effect of reducing particular risk factors such as cholesterol levels.

Mr Lim said *Take Heart* was developed as a preventive measure to aid health practitioners in the identification, motivation, treatment and education of people at high risk of cardiovascular disease.

A prototype was developed with the Occupational Health Services



Picture: PHOTODISC

Department of BP Australia, which has been using it to provide a heart disease risk assessment service to its employees.

The Monash team is currently negotiating with a software company to produce a more robust version of the program, which will include information specific to Australia on the risk of developing the disease, and will take into account other risk factors such as LDL and HDL cholesterol and whether a person has a history of heart disease or diabetes.

Mr Lim says that while the 'GP version' is still in the early stages of development, it will provide doctors with an understanding of a patient's future risk, as well as offer a stimulus for lifestyle change.

"The aim of the program is primary prevention of heart disease in those at very high risk, and we are not necessarily advocating that everyone needs to use it. Health practitioners' expertise remains the most important tool in assessing risk," he said.

Ms Felicity Minchin, the national health promotion coordinator at BP Australia's Occupational Health Services Department, found *Take Heart* to be an invaluable initiative, which increased participants' awareness of their risk.

"About 900 employees have participated in *Take Heart*, with the majority having at least two assessments in the past two-and-a-half years," she said.

BP corporate medical adviser Dr Catherine Hamilton stressed the program was useful only if health professionals were able to recommend behaviour likely to reduce risk, and that it made it difficult for people to evade uncomfortable truths.

"The program has a terrific 'what if' capacity that can show people how a change or a series of changes (often small ones) can make a big difference to both their life expectancy and quality of life," she said.

Mr Lim said *Take Heart* could also be an important tool for better targeting cholesterol-lowering medication, estimated to cost the Federal Government more than \$600 million annually.

"These drugs, called statins, reduce the risk of heart disease by about one third, but because of their high cost they need to be given to those patients who will benefit the most, that is, those at the highest risk of heart disease," Mr Lim said.

"As *Take Heart* provides a relatively simple method of calculating heart disease risk, it could prove an ideal way of using statins in a more cost-effective way."

28 years ago – 1973

Players to travel

The Monash Players and the director of Student Theatre, Nigel Triffitt, will bring theatre to the streets of Tasmania and Adelaide next year.

The troupe will perform throughout Tasmania at schools, parks, swimming pools, shopping centres and camps. They will present two children's plays, a street theatre piece and *Fortune in Men's Eyes*.

Another 15 members of the group will then participate in the 'Fringe Festival' section of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts.

■ *The newly formed Monash Graduate Players have performed to rave reviews at the 2001 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The group, which includes current students and graduates of performing arts at Monash, staged Pandora's Box at the festival before going on to Monash's centre in London.*

19 years ago – 1982

Computer design increases productivity

The computer is revolutionising the design and manufacture of components in aircraft, automobile and other industries.

In Monash's Mechanical Engineering department, Dr Sarath Gunasekera, a senior lecturer, has pioneered teaching and research in

40 YEARS

1961–2001

In 1961, 363 students arrived at a new university in Melbourne's south-east. Today, more than 44,000 people are studying at Monash University. We look back through the years.

computer-aided design and manufacturing in recent years.

In conventional design, the process of trial and error plays a large role. The computer holds the key to the elimination of much of this time consuming procedure, says Dr Gunasekera.

■ *A computer cluster named after the epic hero Beowulf, one of a number of computer clusters at the university, has been used by Monash academics over the last two years to investigate the formation of planets, discover how mountains are formed and investigate the properties of binary stars.*

10 years ago – 1991

International research project to combat SIDS

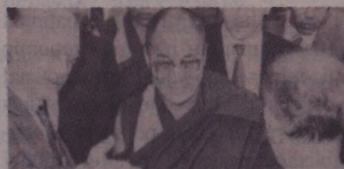
Monash will lead an international research effort to uncover the causes of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), which kills 20,000 babies worldwide every year.

The National SIDS Council has given \$830,000 to a three-year, multicentre research project involving four universities.

Led by Associate Professor Adrian Walker, they will study infants' protection mechanisms in sleep and the effects of stress.

"If we knew how SIDS happened, the medical community would be able to make recommendations based on a true understanding of the problem," Dr Walker said.

■ *The Paediatric Sleep Disorders Unit at Monash Medical Centre has been researching SIDS for more than 20 years. The unit has uncovered a number of likely contributing factors to SIDS including maternal smoking, sleeping position and infant breathing patterns.*



Flashback: His Holiness the Dalai Lama visits Monash University's Bioethics Centre in 1982.

ARTS SCENE

Views of emptiness

Three Views of Emptiness: Buddhism and the Art of Tim Johnson, Lindy Lee and Peter Tyndall is opening at the Monash University Museum of Art at Clayton campus on 9 October.

Emptiness (*sunyata*) is an idea central to Buddhism, a way of life of profound importance to the three artists and one of increasing importance within Western culture generally.

Curated by Linda Michael, this exhibition includes new works by the artists, all of whom have come to Buddhism from a background within Western culture and art history. All three are prominent practitioners whose careers have spanned conceptual art, appropriation and postmodernism.

The exhibition will run until 24 November. For more information, contact +61 3 9905 4217

Artefact

Artificial life gives computer programs the capacity to learn, grow and evolve. As the distinction between what is 'real' and what is 'virtual' blurs in computerland, our own lives have become more programmed, structured and artificial.

Digital media artist and Monash University lecturer Troy Innocent explores the world of video and computer games in *Artefact*, an exhibition

of interactive objects and spaces at Monash's Faculty of Art and Design Gallery at Caulfield campus.

The exhibition sees two large-scale installations take over the gallery. 'Mixed Reality' is an interactive installation in a computer-controlled light/multi-speaker environment. 'Semimorph' is an immersive environment/game system which includes video projection, surround sound and a computer interface.

Artefact will run until 3 November. For more information, contact +61 3 9903 2882.

Bank on it

Sessional staff from the Faculty of Art and Design have contributed works to a photographic book inspired by the production of the recently released Australian film, *The Bank*.

Ms Danielle Thompson, lecturer in photomedia in the Department of Design, and Mr Matthew Sleeth, from the Department of Fine Arts, have both contributed more than 15 photos to the book, which will be released next month.

Titled *The Bank Book*, the publication features photographic works from four of Australia's best known photographers and includes behind-the-scenes shots of the film's actors, locations and crew.

Published by M.33, the book will be available from late October.



Ms Rachel Hine and Ms Laura Mar work on part of the Federation Tapestry. Picture: PETER SMITH

Stitching the nation's fabric

Continued from page 1

For more than two years, the Victorian Tapestry Workshop has been home to the woven work in progress.

A few statistics: the width of the looms used ranges from two metres to a giant eight-metre model, one of the largest looms in the world; a dye shop on site supplies weavers with a range of 368 colours; and on a typical day a weaver completes a section measuring about 18 cm by 20 cm.

It can be demanding work, says Monash graduate Ms Laura Mar, who has been working on the tapestry full-time for 16 months. Her favourite panel is Reg Mombassa's *Alone in the Bush*.

"It's a round design based on a Staffordshire plate, with floral artwork on the border and Jesus Christ sitting alone surrounded by Australian animals. It's quite mad but great fun."

The symbolism throughout the tapestry's warp and weft is inescapable. The panel by Martin Sharp depicts First Fleet sailing ships, the Sydney Opera House and the Southern Cross. Floating above the scene is the word 'sorry' and a quote from Patrick White's *Riders in the Chariot*: "because a moment in time becomes Eternity, depending on what it contains".

The tapestry also includes an Aboriginal triptych incorporating the works of three 19th-century Aboriginal artists, an evocation of the artists' camp at Heidelberg by Bruce Petty, and state and territory floral emblems by Monash botanical artist Ms Celia Rosser.

The work has been funded by a grant from the Commonwealth Government Federation Fund, and can be seen at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, 262 Park Street, South Melbourne, telephone +61 3 9699 7885. Tours are conducted on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Never too late to surf

By MELANIE GARDNER

Navigating the internet can be intimidating at the best of times, but for older people who have had virtually no contact with computers it can be positively overwhelming.

But a new course being offered at Monash University's Berwick campus is helping senior citizens overcome their uncertainty and meet the challenge of becoming computer-literate.

Seven senior citizens in the Berwick area enrolled in the free course, which runs for two hours each week for six weeks.

Run by multimedia lecturer Ms Pauline Koppel with the help of first-year students, the course aims to teach older people unfamiliar with computers

how to surf the net, use email and even scan photos.

The seniors, who will 'graduate' this month, will receive a certificate of attendance from the School of Multimedia Systems.

Ms Koppel explained that the idea for the course originated at a weekend teaching retreat organised by school head Dr Kathy Blashki.

"But the idea also took shape as a result of my own experience with my mother, who was involved with the University of the Third Age. I witnessed the difference it made in her life," she said.

According to Ms Koppel, the program has been a rewarding experience not only for participants but also for those who had run the course.

"Our students' help has been absolutely invaluable to the success of the course. The students, who are all volunteers, are thoroughly enjoying helping the seniors and are extremely patient," she said.

"I have been privileged to meet an enthusiastic group of people who have appreciated using our facilities and who have been grateful for the opportunity."

Those attending the course are all over 65, with the oldest being 80.

Mrs Claire Van Noppen, who is in her seventies, joined the course to learn how to use email. She said it was the best way to communicate with her children overseas.

"I have six children who live all over the world. Email is the perfect way to keep in touch with family news. I would now like to learn how to scan and send photos, as my granddaughter has just married and I want to send the photos to everyone," she said.

First-year student Richard Perdriau said the experience had been as rewarding for him as it had been for the participants.

"This has been a great opportunity for me to improve my skills in this area, as I plan to tutor in the future. I have been really impressed by the participants' eagerness to learn something totally new. It has been great fun and extremely rewarding," he said.

The success of the course has resulted in another being planned for the start of first semester next year. For more information, contact Ms Pauline Koppel on +61 3 9904 7157.



On the net: Mrs Claire Van Noppen learns to surf with Mr Richard Perdriau. Picture: GREG FORD

Arctic conditions change climate

By SUE McALISTER

A Monash University meteorologist says his unique research into changes in Arctic vegetation strengthens the theory that human activity is contributing to global warming.

Dr Jason Beringer also warns there is mounting evidence that biological and environmental feedback could exponentially accelerate worldwide atmospheric warming and climate change.

Dr Beringer, of the Climate Research Group in Monash's School of Geography and Environmental Science, collaborated with scientists from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in measuring heat generated by the transition from one form of tundra vegetation to another on Alaska's Seward Peninsula.

In a significant breakthrough, the project did not concentrate only on trees.

"Past projects revealed Arctic forests as gradually advancing," Dr Beringer said. "But they omitted another important component of

atmospheric temperature change - shrubs. Until our study, they'd been treated like the poor relations of trees."

Dr Beringer's research depicts an unexpectedly fast, vicious circle.

"As Earth's temperature heats up, shrubs, which grow faster than trees, will rapidly replace Arctic tundra grass. We estimate that 20 to 30 per cent of the tundra has been colonised by dwarf willow shrubs in only half a century," he said.

"Shrubs will generate more heat than grass, further warming the atmosphere. Next, forests will replace the shrubs, generating still more heat - local warming from increased forestation will be greater than if the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was doubled. Eventually, increased warming may thaw the permafrost and release large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, further boosting global warming."

Dr Beringer is now examining the annual burning by graziers of about 30 per cent of northern Australia's tropical savannah grass and wood-

lands. Before European settlement, Indigenous Australians burned the savannah only about once every 25 years.

He says atmospheric heating occurs above the burned vegetation, which, if extended to the entire Top End, could influence the strength and timing of the monsoon. He is also attempting to model the effects of ending annual burning.

Dr Beringer says research into global warming needs to be more thorough and wide-ranging.

"Arctic vegetation is as significant as tropical vegetation in determining the causes and rate of global warming, and the whole process is extremely complex," he said.

"Models of global warming need to take many more factors into account than they do at present, including even the humblest of plants. For example, mosses are also recognised as major components of climate change, yet they haven't been incorporated into climate models."

Distinguished alumni honoured

Monash University has awarded Distinguished Alumni Awards to four of its outstanding graduates:

The Reverend Tim Costello BJuris, LLB, DipEd Monash, *BD IBTS* (Rüschlikon), *TheoLM* Whitley, *director of the Collins Street Baptist Church Urban Mission Unit, Melbourne*

Mr Costello is widely recognised as a champion of local democracy, a community activist and an advocate for the socially disadvantaged and the homeless.

Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit MEd Monash, *PhD* Cantab, *chairwoman, Chulalongkorn University Political Economy Centre, Bangkok, and member of the research committee of Thailand's Counter-Corruption Commission*

Professor Phongpaichit's investigations into the Thai illegal economy exposed the extent to which institutionalised

corruption and intimidation affect the poor.

Dr Margaret Leggatt, AM, BA(Hons), PhD (Arts) Monash, *immediate past president of the World Fellowship for Schizophrenia and Allied Disorders*

Dr Leggatt has helped to address and ameliorate the situation of people with mental illnesses and raised community consciousness of their needs.

Mr Teo Ming Kian BE(Hons) Monash, *MSc* MIT, *chairman, Economic Development Board, and co-chairman, National Science and Technology Board, Government of Singapore*

Mr Kian is highly influential in public administration and economic development and has played a key part in sustaining Singapore's role as a world leader in science, technology and entrepreneurship.

Monash University distinguished alumni medals are presented each year to Monash graduates or diplomates who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievements, inspirational leadership or exceptional human qualities.

The awards are traditionally presented at the university's graduation ceremonies. Mr Kian received his award in Singapore last month, and Dr Leggatt and Mr Costello will be honoured during the Arts and Law graduation ceremonies to be held at Clayton campus later this month. A date for Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit's award will be announced shortly.

Ms Jane Harris, Monash's alumni relations manager, said the recipients would be an inspiration to future graduates and the wider community.

INPRINT



Worrying About Our Land:

Conceptualising Land Rights 1963-71

By Julie Fenwick

Monash Publications in History

RRP: \$11 plus postage and handling

In 1963, the Yolngu, the Indigenous people of Gove Peninsula in Northeast Arnhem Land, presented the Australian federal parliament with a petition presented on bark and surrounded by painted symbols. The petition protested the encroachment of mining developments onto the peninsula.

In *Worrying About Our Land*, author Julie Fenwick explores how the petition and the ensuing campaign to protect the peninsula helped develop the notion of Indigenous land tenure and allowed a conceptualisation of land rights. The text also addresses the previously neglected role of non-Indigenous activists in early claims of Indigenous land rights.

Julie Fenwick completed a BA honours degree in history in the School of Historical Studies at Monash University. Books published by Monash Publications in History can be purchased by contacting +61 3 9905 2164.

Fetal Growth and Development

Edited by Richard Harding and Alan Bocking

Published by Cambridge

RRP: \$53.96



Fetal life is a critical and sensitive phase of human development. It is a time when the body systems needed to support us throughout our lives are formed. Disturbances to our environment during this crucial stage can have repercussions well into adulthood.

Fetal Growth and Development provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the major factors involved in fetal development from blood flow and lung development to hormone secretion and nutrient supply.

Contributing authors, including Monash academics Dr Stuart Hooper and Dr David Walker from the Department of Physiology, also investigate the processes used by the fetus to respond and adapt to a stressful environment.

The text has been designed for undergraduate and postgraduate biomedical students, healthcare professionals and clinical trainees.

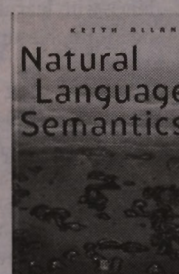
Co-editor of the book Richard Harding is a professor in the Department of Physiology at Monash University.

Natural Language Semantics

By Keith Allan

Published by Blackwell Publishers

RRP: \$225



Language plays an essential role in cementing human bonds and displaying those bonds to others. Semantics, the study of language, attempts to unravel the influence society and human interaction has on language meaning.

Natural Language Semantics offers a general introduction to the field of semantics. It provides insight into some of the main perspectives of formal, cognitive and functional semantics - from the internal structure of nouns to the use of metalanguages to represent meaning components and relationships.

The text has been designed as a tool for people interested in conducting original research in semantics. It includes a number of exercises which aid, complement, and test learning and understanding.

Dr Keith Allan is a reader in linguistics at Monash University.

POSTscript

Savage Imaginings: Historical and Contemporary Constructions of Australian Aboriginalities, a new book by Dr Lynette Russell, acting director of the Monash Aboriginal Program, will be launched on 8 October in Building 55, Clayton campus.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming book, contact monashnews@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 report targets hospital emergency departments

BY DEREK BROWN

A new report and training package released last month by Monash Medical Centre promises to deliver improved practices in the Victorian public hospital system, especially in the area of emergency care.

'Consistency of Triage in Victorian Emergency Departments', prepared by the Centre for Nursing Research, part of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' Institute of Health Services Research, involved staff from 29 emergency departments across metropolitan and rural Victoria.

The report was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Human Services because inconsistencies in the delivery of triage between different hospital emergency departments were suspected to be a contributing factor to delays in patients receiving treatment.

Triage is a classification system used by nurses to assess patients presenting for emergency care. The system is used to gauge the severity of the patient's illness or injury and to decide whether immediate action is needed or if treatment can be delayed.

According to the report, assessments made during the triage process have a direct impact on the health and recovery of a patient, and an incorrect decision can mean life-saving treatments are delayed.

A number of factors, including a nurse's gender, age, and whether or not they had an undergraduate degree, influenced their triage decision-



Vital step: Assessments during triage directly affect the recovery of a patient. Picture: PHOTODISC

making process, the report revealed, but could not be isolated from environmental factors such as the use of hospital guidelines and protocols or activity levels in the emergency ward.

The report made it clear that while some inconsistencies in triage are inevitable because of the diverse nature of the emergency environment, important similarities exist that can be improved on with consistent guidelines and continuing education.

It also argued that triage decision-making is based on many verbal and visual clues that cannot be reproduced in print form and discovered that triage

nurses consistently tested better with visual computer-based scenarios when compared to paper-based scenarios.

Director of the Institute of Health Services Research Professor Chris Silagy said there was strong evidence that the development of guidelines with appropriate support such as audit tools and continuing education could lead to improvements in practice and, ultimately, better outcomes for patients.

Copies of the summary report are accessible from the Department of Human Services website at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/pdpd/edcg

Adult education in mathematics

BY DEREK BROWN

Australians who lack mathematical skills may miss out on tertiary education and be passed over for promotion, according to a Monash University academic.

Dr Gail FitzSimons, a researcher in the Faculty of Education at Monash and co-editor of two new books looking at adult education in mathematics, says mathematics often acts as a barrier to higher paid employment or further study.

"To get into some jobs, people are expected to have a certain level of numeracy, even if the level demanded is beyond that required," she said. "Without a basic mathematical knowledge, employees may find they cannot move into the job they would like or are not eligible for promotion."

Dr FitzSimons believes there are a number of reasons why some adults

have not developed adequate mathematical skills.

"Many adults have trouble with mathematics because they were not given sufficient access to this kind of education when they were young or because their experience with learning mathematics has been unpleasant," she said.

"In particular, girls who went to school in Australia during the 1940s and 1950s weren't always given the chance to do the same mathematics as the boys. Instead they were given subjects to prepare them for domestic and family responsibilities. This obviously restricted the choices available to them after they left school."

According to Dr FitzSimons, adults' experiences of maths education colours their reaction to mathematics as a whole.

These reactions are often negative and can be linked to traumatic experiences, such as a teacher who punished

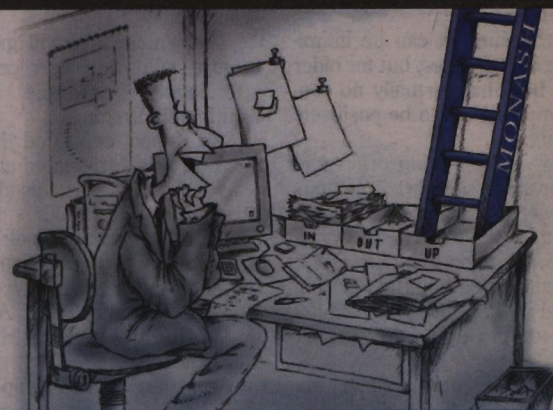
them or told them they were stupid when they made a mistake.

But despite strong sentiments against mathematics, many adults are returning to study to develop and expand their mathematical knowledge, according to Dr FitzSimons.

"Adult students are working on gaining mathematics skills in order to take on a more fulfilling career or tertiary study. However, one of the strongest incentives is for people who want to help their children with homework," she said.

Dr FitzSimons hopes the books, *Adult and Lifelong Education in Mathematics*, published by Language Australia, and *Perspectives on Adults Learning Mathematics*, from Kluwer Academic Publishers, co-edited with prominent academics in the field, will help raise awareness of the importance of adult learning in mathematics.

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