Smart solutions for business
Research Forum
Welcome to a new academic year, a new decade, millennium etc. I am sure that you were as fascinated as I was to see the clock tick over into the year 2000 without the dreaded Y2K bug, bringing chaos to everyone. A special thank you to all of those staff who prepared us for the new year, especially those who monitored our operations in the early hours and days of this year. We can now proceed with our academic activities in 2000 with some security and confidence in the services provided to and by the university.

The period prior to Christmas was a busy one for DETYA and very significant in terms of policy advice for the higher education sector overall. On December 22, the Minister released the White Paper on research and research training, entitled "Knowledge and Innovation". This is seen as a major improvement on the Green Paper, "New Knowledge, New Opportunities", which was flawed in a number of respects, particularly in its conclusion that the prime functions of a university as a research provider is research training. The fundamental issue of additional funding for higher education research and research training has not, however, been addressed, which leaves Australian universities in some danger of being left behind, in comparison to overseas institutions. In terms of key research performance indicators, we remain at ninth among Australian universities based on research quantum allocations which takes account of achievements in competitive grants, publications and research student completions – this is a good result, although a move into the 'top eight' would be most welcome.

On Christmas Eve, DETYA loaded the Higher Education Report for the 2000-2001 triennium onto their website, and you will have seen a number of press articles arising from this report. Of particular significance to this university were the following policy developments announced by the Minister:

- the introduction in 2001 of a quality assurance process, which will be an external audit based on self-assessment and conducted every five years on a rolling basis;
- no introduction of vouchers for undergraduate or research postgraduate student places and no changes to the current HECS system;
- salary supplementation over and above the normal safety net adjustment will be at the discretion of the Minister and conditional on 'fundamental improvements to work practices'.

Government also announced a relaxation of the 25 percent cap on the proportion of non-overseas undergraduate students who may be charged full fees, although this is not particularly relevant to this university, given our current practice and policies in this area. Performance based funding policies in areas of research and research training are consistent with the White Paper, and involve several elements:

- the Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS) absorbs the funding previously allocated for Research Quantum and the Small Grants Scheme. The Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG) scheme is retained. Funding will be allocated from 2001 using a formula based on research grants (60 percent), research students (30 percent) and research publications (10 percent);
- funding for research training places (scholarships) will be based on another formula comprising research student completions (50 percent), research (40 percent) and research publications (10 percent), based on the preceding two year average. PhD and research Masters students may hold scholarships (funded places) for four years and two years, respectively, of equivalent full-time study.

Modelling is underway to determine our position for 2001 and we are awaiting specific details from DETYA concerning IGS and the new scholarship allocation for 2001. I am hopeful that we will at least hold our present allocations under the new arrangements. Moreover, regional universities have been advised that there will be no reduction in their research funding in the first three years of these new arrangements as a result of these new policies.

Finance statistics for 1998 were also released by DETYA on Christmas Eve, and these revealed that the Commonwealth's share of university income has reduced to 50.8 percent, as compared with 53.8 percent in 1997. It is therefore likely that Commonwealth funding went into a minority position during 1999, based on increases predicted from HECS and fee paying students income over this period.

I remain very confident about our capacity to deal with these changes in policies – we are one of Australia's most successful and innovative research universities, which will continue to play its role in teaching, research and service, particularly for the Hunter and Central Coast regions.

May I wish all of you, as students, staff and supporters of the University of Newcastle, an enjoyable and prosperous 2000.
Top students choose Newcastle

Newcastle and the Hunter’s brightest students are increasingly opting to study at the University of Newcastle, with increased demand seeing the cut-offs for Newcastle’s 2000 courses rising.

In what promises to be a bumper year, the University ranked fourth most popular for first preferences among NSW students this year and has offered 5,340 HECS-paying places (60 more than last year). Of the 96 courses offered by the university, 39 have a University Admission Index (UAI) of 90 or more and another 20 have a UAI of 80 or more.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian English, said the demand for Newcastle’s courses indicates the university’s reputation for offering quality public education.

“Newcastle is living up to its reputation as being the most competitive university outside the metropolitan area and the most research-intensive,” he said. “It is increasingly becoming seen as the university of first choice for people who want to get a good education through public courses.”

How we’re doing...

The University of Newcastle

Student Enrolments - Bachelor

Figures for 2000 will be available in May 2000

How they’re doing....

1999 NSW Student Enrolments - Bachelor

Data supplied by the Institutional Research Unit. Contact David Marr ext 8600.

Students win national scholarships

Newcastle students have won two of only eight $15,000 Federal Government scholarships awarded across Australia to study honours and undertake work placement this year.

21-year-old Matthew Doyle who last year completed a combined undergraduate degree in mathematics and economics, and 22-year-old Ben Barry, who has just finished a Bachelor of Commerce, have each won a Sir Otto Niemeyer Scholarship from the Treasury Department.

The scholarships are part of a government strategy to develop Australia as a centre for global financial services. They are open to third year undergraduate students seeking to do honours in 2000 in the area of economics and finance, and allow the students to work for two months with a selection of relevant policy and regulatory agencies.

Matthew will study honours in either mathematics or economics and will undertake his work placement at the Treasury Department in Canberra. Ben, who completed his degree part-time while employed at Price Waterhouse Coopers, will study honours in finance and complete his work attachment at the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority.
Major cultural event to spring from Aboriginal centre

A large cultural event that will capture statewide attention is planned to coincide with the opening of a new centre that will bring together the three major elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support and education at the university.

The event, which it is anticipated will draw Aboriginal people from around New South Wales to Newcastle for the 2001 launch, is planned to include projects to resurrect oral storytelling, a corroboree dance-off, contemporary and traditional art exhibitions and indigenous drama and poetry.

Director of the university's Ummulliko Indigenous Higher Education Centre and Head of the Department of Aboriginal Studies, Professor John Lester, said that Aboriginal people from around NSW have come together readily as nations for football carnivals but had so far not done so for a cultural event.

"We would hope that the event would be the start of a regular significant cultural event in NSW," John said, "and that it would provide a stimulus for resurrecting oral history and storytelling among Aboriginal people. We look forward to working with the local Aboriginal community in planning such an event."

Tenders will be called this month for the new multi-million dollar centre, which will be built at the southern end of No 4 oval, behind the Chancellery building. The centre will bring together Ummulliko, Wollotuka Aboriginal and TSI Education Centre, and the Aboriginal Medical Liaison Unit.

"The centre will provide us with the opportunity to centralise support in a spectacular building that makes a significant statement about the university's commitment to Aboriginal higher education," John said. "An exciting part of the process has been the involvement of the university's three centres in the collaborative design of the building, which has as its basis the nesting of an eaglehawk."

The 1600 square metre building represents the wings of an eagle nesting over the three centres. Sydney-based architect, Richard Leplastrier, won a competition run by the university to select a designer for the three million dollar centre. Leplastrier, who was recently awarded the Royal Australian Institute of Architects' prestigious gold medal, will work in association with Peter Sutchbury (a conjoint Professor in Architecture at the university) and Sue Harper, who last year won Bell's House of the Year award and who has worked with Aboriginal groups on projects in the Northern Territory.

University architect Philip Pollard said the building design works very well environmentally. "There is a double roof system, with a minimum of 16 millimetres void between the main internal roof and the external," Philip explained. "The building has been modelled using the latest sophisticated software for optimal air movement by environmental consultants, Advanced Environmental Concepts."

At the centre of the bird shape will be a large communal meeting area looking north up the oval, which will completely open to the outside using a glass, hinged fire-station style door.

Professor Lester said the design of the building enhances opportunities for community involvement in the centre. "We hope the community will feel very welcome there," he said. "The community aspect will be highlighted by a rammed earth story wall that runs throughout the building and by generous communal areas including a big open fireplace."

The story wall will incorporate glass cases to store more precious cultural artefacts as well as spaces for hands-on items such as music sticks that people can use. The centre will also include a resources centre that will be both a library and house artefacts, an administrative area, computer room, three tutorial rooms, and staff rooms that allow academic staff access to external verandas. It will have full disability access, with a lift and ramps.

Plan of Level One of the Aboriginal and TSI Centre and (above) a cross-section view
Faculty structure promotes togetherness

The creation of four new schools to replace the previous departmental structure will help the Faculty of Science and Mathematics work together as a team, according to the Dean, Professor David Finlay.

"The primary aim of restructuring is to promote togetherness and break down departmental barriers," David explained. "While this sort of paring is in some ways an inevitable result of the threat that science and mathematics faculties are finding themselves under to survive, I see it as a new beginning to a positive future for our faculty."

With enrolments in many traditional science and mathematics subjects dropping and a marked decline in the past decade of students studying the foundation sciences for the Higher School Certificate, university faculties around the country are feeling the pressure for change. The restructuring at Newcastle will see the demise of the nine departments that previously made up the faculty and the creation of the following schools:

- The School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences - headed by Associate Professor Philip Smith;
- The School of Biological and Chemical Sciences - headed by Professor John Atikian, Deputy Head Professor Geoffrey Lawrence;
- The School of Geosciences - headed by Professor Eric Colloun, Deputy Head Associate Professor Phillip Seccombe;
- The School of Behavioural Sciences - headed by Professor Philip Seccombe.

Professor Finlay says the schools have made decisions about how they will be structured and have set targets and begun to examine ways in which they can take advantage of interdisciplinary links.

There are a number of people in the chemistry area, for instance, who are anxious to move into biological sciences, which will be supported by the new school. The links between maths and physics made the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences an obvious marriage and this school will also incorporate the Department of Statistics, which was previously part of the Faculty of Economics and Commerce. The Research Institute for Gender and Health will also move into the faculty and a Centre of Life Sciences is being created to form a bridge between biological science and medicine.

A chair in a Centre for the Environment is expected to be advertised this month.

While the human geographers resisted the name of the School of Geosciences, the dean said the group was valuable to the school and would provide a strong link to other faculties in the university.

The faculty already has strong links to other faculties, the dean said. "We have a long service relationship with the rest of the university and large amounts of our funding come from our service teaching to other faculties," he said. "We see ourselves as a hub providing that service as well as other research support. In the research area, we have strong links with engineering through the areas of physics, maths, chemistry and biological sciences and we want to strengthen and extend these."

There are no change management implications in the restructuring, which aims to make better use of available staff. "In fact, a subsidiary aim of the new structure is to open possibilities for wider career paths for general staff members," the dean said.

Focus - and win a weekend away

Uninews will this year run a photographic competition. The competition is open to all staff of the university who are not professional photographers and the best entry will win a weekend for two at Barrington Guest House. Photographs may be in any format and in black and white or colour but must relate in some way to the university. They may be recent or historical but must have been taken by a current member of staff.

Entries will be published in Uninews each month, with the winner to be announced in the December edition.

Uninews schedule 2000

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People come first

Peter Boyd's main priority is people. As the Manager of the university's Security Service, Peter puts the safety of the staff and students first and his other responsibilities follow.

"Our mission statement is 'People first, property second'," he explains. "Property can always be replaced or repaired but you can't always repair what happens to people when they are raped or assaulted."

Safety is often one of the first considerations of students and their parents when choosing which university to attend. Peter is frequently asked how safe the Callaghan campus is by anxious parents about to send their son or daughter here, particularly when they are considering residential accommodation.

"The university is a safe place to be, probably safer than many of Newcastle's suburbs," Peter says. "You are more likely to see security officers patrolling the campus than you are to see a policeman in the suburbs."

The Callaghan campus runs like a small town, with the Waratah police command that is responsible for policing the campus treating it as a distinct suburb. While Peter says that offences on campus tend to mirror those being committed in the wider community, such as motor vehicle and bicycle thefts, we run a long way behind other Newcastle areas in the crime stakes.

"People from the surrounding communities like to come onto the campus to walk because they feel safe here," Peter said. "With 800 odd students living here, we have people coming and going at all hours of the day and night without incident."

A lot of the credit for Callaghan's safe environment must go to Peter, who has managed the security service for the past 10 years.

When Peter joined the university's security patrol, known in those days as 'Dad's Army' to staff and students, morale was low and patrol staff distrusted management. The section was located in premises under the Auchmuty Library and had a very low profile on campus.

Under Peter's leadership, the section has been reinvigorated and found new direction. It has been renamed Security Service, staff numbers have increased and the officers' uniforms have been modernised. Their transport and communication has been upgraded and the service has relocated to a more prominent position in the McMullin Building.

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"Our new premises have given us a higher profile that has helped people to find us for assistance or for information," Peter said. "It also provides a deterrent to would-be thieves and bandits to know we are here."

The security premises are located at the University Drive end of the McMullin Building in the former University Printery. The printery was gutted and refurbished to accommodate security with the premises now including male and female change rooms, toilets and showers, a lunch room, radio and communication room and offices.

Security operates at the Callaghan campus 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year (366 this year) and also looks after the central business district precinct (University House, the Conservatorium and Northumberland House). In addition, they are contracted to provide security services to Pacific Power's Advanced Technology Centre and Wirra Crescent premises as well as the childcare centres, University Union premises, Coop Bookshop, residential halls and facility hire.

Peter has introduced a computerised incident reporting system that allows him to track trends. Property offences are the most common incidents, with a trend towards petty theft occurring towards the end of last year. Peter believes that people may sometimes create a thief by leaving valuables openly on display and unattended.

"A person may have temptation put in their way when they are down on their luck and steal for the first time - often for the last time," he said. "We are into prevention rather than apprehension, which is why we counsel staff to keep valuables out of sight or locked away."

Peter, who has been in the security industry for over 30 years, holds a Master Licence and all the staff in the university service have personal security licences as well as first aid certificates. He says that a good officer isn't necessarily aggressive but needs to be confident and sure of what their job entails.

"You have to be even-handed and honest with yourself and others," he said. "I try to be firm but fair and treat people as I'd like to be treated."
A change in programming on the university’s radio 2NUR-FM will be the catalyst for a change in fortune for the community station, according to newly appointed Manager John McGahen.

The new format, quietly introduced on January 17, will incorporate easy listening music aimed at baby boomers and will feature programs, news and information in a magazine style. John, who took over as Manager of the station on January 4, believes that an opportunity exists in the Newcastle marketplace for a station targeting the 45 to 55 year old demographic.

“We need to perfect a consistent, coherent and saleable product before we can sell it to the corporate and retail sectors,” he said. “While we won’t be accepting high intensity retail commercials, we will continue with the quieter style of sponsorship announcements. It is my priority to endeavour to pay back the outstanding debt owed by the station to the university.”

John joins 2NUR with 30 years experience in the radio industry, after beginning his career as an announcer with 2NM in Muswellbrook. He is no stranger to challenges, having come to the then-2SM owned Hunter Broadcasters in 1973 before transferring to its Newcastle station, 2NX. John ended up running KO and NX as rival stand-alone stations and the dual-station FM operation for four owners.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations), Professor Jenny Graham, says John possesses excellent communication skills, management skills and leadership and team-building abilities. “He has a strong empathy with community radio, the University of Newcastle and the development needs of 2NUR-FM, coupled with an excellent track record in the industry,” she said.

The new program format for the station will retain all the feature programs, including ethnic, university and country music programs, but may change their forms. The music content will be upgraded to a more acceptable product highlighting popular artists such as Neil Diamond and Barbra Streisand and music from the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s. The highly successful national news program, which is currently broadcast through 56 stations around the country, will be retained.

“Radio as an information package is facing an increasing amount of competition, not just from the mainstream press but from the Internet and from cable television services,” John said. “Radio needs to rebuild itself as a community resource and I will be working very closely with the dedicated staff and volunteers at 2NUR to try and achieve that goal.”

Another priority for John is to continue to offer opportunities for students to experience working in radio. “There is very little commercial radio training for young people and it is terribly important to the community that they are given the chance to gain an insight into working in the media.”

While admitting that he has some difficult financial goals to achieve, John is optimistic that the new program will provide him with the basis of an attractive top product to sell to potential sponsors.

“It’s going to be fun for everyone,” he enthused. “We live in a world of change and if we’re not prepared to move with it, we could be left behind.”

Stuart piano brings in New Year worldwide

Millions of New Year revellers around the world heard the University’s Stuart and Sons grand piano featured in a global television program, 2000 Today. Broadcast in Australia by ABC Television as part of the program that involved 60 international broadcasters, the performance involved Australian pianist Michael Kieran Harvey playing a piece by Australian composer Cathie Travers.

Commissioned by ABC Classic FM, the composition combined the Stuart Piano and electronic sounds programmed by the Faculty of Music’s Computing, Recording and Technical Officer, Nigel Kentish. Recorded by ABC Television and ABC Classic FM at the Conservatorium in late December, the piece (Alyx-er) demonstrated the leading edge technology being utilised in Newcastle. Travers’ piece was one of four Australian compositions recorded on the Stuart piano in December, with all of them being premiered nationally on ABC Classic FM on New Years Day.
Taking skills to Bangladesh

Central Coast Campus academic, Dr Salim Momtaz, has been awarded an important grant, which will see him travel to Bangladesh at the end of the year.

The 'Rotary International Grant for University Teachers', valued at $16,000 AUD, is awarded for university teachers working in developed countries to teach and conduct research in developing countries. It has been awarded by Rotary International under the auspices of Mayfield Rotary District and is designed to foster the transfer of skill knowledge and technology to developing countries.

Salim, who lectures in sustainable resource management and coastal ecology within the School of Science and Technology at the Central Coast Campus, is excited and honoured to have been chosen for the prestigious grant.

The funds will allow him to teach at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh between November, 2000 and February 2001 where he has been requested to develop and teach at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

"I have been invited to teach 'Environmental and Social Impact Assessment' and I will also be conducting research. I will be looking into the status of impact assessment in Bangladesh in collaboration with the World Bank's local office there," Salim says. "There is an increasing awareness in Bangladesh of the general environment and the impact of human activities on the natural environment. Government initiatives have placed Bangladesh as one of the developing countries that are involved in protecting their environment and managing sustainable resources.

"As well as teaching and research, I will also be involved in community service. One of the responsibilities of the grant is to act as a Rotary Ambassador of Goodwill. As such I will be visiting local Rotary Clubs in Dhaka and getting involved in their community service activities. That is something I am looking forward to," he says.

Strong demand for new IT course

The newly developed Bachelor of Applied Information Technology, offered exclusively at the Central Coast Campus, has proved to be popular with applicants for university places.

The degree, which incorporates Information Technology subjects together with a major study in another discipline, is in response to the growing demand from the private and public sectors for qualified IT professionals.

Head of the School of Business at the Central Coast Campus, Professor Catherine Smith, said the new degree had created a lot of interest with more than 240 people lodging UAC applications for the course.

Professor Smith said the Student Advisory Centre at the Campus had also received a large number of phone and personal enquiries about the course.

"Obviously the demand for this type of qualification is there. Even though it is a newly approved course and we had little time to promote it, we are very pleased with the level of interest," Professor Smith said.

"It is something quite different in that it will be delivered by both TAFE and university faculty staff," she said.

The degree major can be chosen from any university discipline offered by the Central Coast. This can range from Human Resource Management, Accounting, Marketing or Hotel Management through to English, Fine Art or Psychology to name just a few. The IT component has an emphasis on practical content and has been designed to develop a broad range of applied IT skills.

One of the first students enrolled in the new course is Information Resource Centre staff member, Fiona Neville.

Fiona, who already holds a Bachelor of Arts and has completed Level 3 TAFE studies in Information Technology, said she was attracted to the course because of the opportunity to incorporate a university degree major.

"Primarily I want to develop my IT skills and knowledge, but the aspect that sold me was the opportunity to do a Fine Art major. This way I can combine IT with graphics and digital imaging which is just what I was looking for," said Fiona.

Strengthening ties with Singapore

The University strengthened its links with Singapore late last year with the signing of an agreement with the Singapore Institute of Engineering Technologists (SIET) and discussions of further international education initiatives with polytechnics.

SIET is the national professional institution for engineering technologists in Singapore.

A university group, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations), Professor Jenny Graham, and including deans and senior academics from the faculties of Architecture, Building and Design; Science and Mathematics; Engineering; and Economics and Commerce, visited Singapore in December.

"The University of Newcastle has a number of Singaporean alumni who have distinguished themselves as leaders in government and private enterprise," said Jenny. "We plan to enhance our partnerships with polytechnics, enabling us to jointly apply our resources and expertise."

The group met with representatives from the Nanyang, NgeeAnn, Temasek and Singapore Polytechnics, and also with the TMC Educational Group.

"We looked at the possibility of expanding our collaboration across distance learning, and offshore delivery," Jenny said.

The group also hosted a public information seminar for prospective students and their parents, on study opportunities available at the university.
Staff achievements recognised

From removing birds and possums from offices to moving whole departments, the Campus Services Attendants go quietly about their business. Sometimes they are almost invisible. But their efforts, crucial to the smooth functioning of the university, have been recognised by the Vice-Chancellor in the latest round of Awards for General Staff Excellence.

The three-man team of Neil Gundry, Phil Baxter and Remigio D’Andrea, were nominated by their supervisor David Heggart from Physical Planning and Estates and won one of two team awards.

Neil, who began working at the Newcastle College of Advanced Education 23 years ago, said the team worked on a variety of tasks including setting up facilities for examinations, graduations and functions of all types, relocating offices, maintaining a fleet of 10 university vehicles, and various porterage tasks.

“It sometimes seems like musical offices at Callaghan,” Neil said. “When someone moves out of an office it has a snowball effect and you know that you’ll be back to help someone else move in.”

The group services all the buildings the university manages around the city including the central business district precinct and the David Maddison Building, as well as making trips to and from the Central Coast Campus with furniture and goods. They were delighted to have their efforts rewarded with the $3,000 group prize offered in the Vice-Chancellor’s awards.

“Sometimes you feel like a small link on the end of a chain and you don’t realise that anyone knows you’re down there,” Phil said. “It’s nice to be recognised.”

Twenty members of staff were nominated for the awards, which were offered for the second year. The award scheme was established by the Vice-Chancellor to encourage and reward outstanding and exceptional service or work performance among general staff, with up to six available annually.

The other group to receive a team award are Louise Hermann, Louise Dixon and Ingrid Proud from the Scholarships and Prizes Unit. Individual awards (valued at $1,500 each) went to Eleanor Huber, Technical Officer in the Department of Psychology; Sue Graf, Medical Undergraduate Practicum Coordinator in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences; and Judy McHugh, Secretary in the Department of Communication and Media Arts. Karyn Asher from the Department of English and Elizabeth Dezelak from the Department of Building were both highly commended.

Academic wins major architecture award

Dr Michael Ostwald, a Senior Lecturer in architectural theory and design in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Design, has been awarded a $35,000 scholarship to travel to the United States and Canada.

The Byera Hadley Post Graduate Scholarship is a prestigious award, administered by the Board of Architects and Michael is the second Newcastle graduate to win the award. The 1999 winner, Melanie Crick, has recently completed studying the inspiration behind the top 25 architects in the world.

The 2000 scholarship will allow Michael to take up post-doctoral research at Harvard University in Boston, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, in late 2000 and 2001.

“I plan to focus on the recent architectural fixation with irregular building forms,” he said. “To do this, I’ll be looking at the relationship between historic Baroque architecture which surfaced after the Renaissance – with a focus on very rich and detailed surface treatments – and the new baroque of today.”

With post-doctoral studies in architecture extremely rare, Michael says the chance to pursue his research interests overseas is an honour.

“Without financial support, it is almost impossible to accept post-doctoral research positions,” he said. “For this reason, the Byera Hadley scholarship is wonderfully timed for my research and career, as it will enable me to work at the highest international level in architecture.”

Michael has held previous lecturing positions in Hong Kong, Italy, New Zealand, Thailand and the United States, and has published more than 150 works.

He has also received more than $500,000 in competitive research funding from the Australian Research Council.

He received his scholarship from the New South Wales Minister for Public Works and Services, Morris Iemma, in a ceremony in Sydney in December.
University provides smart solutions for business

Doing business with the University of Newcastle is a smart move for companies competing in the national and international marketplace, according to Dr Richard Goodridge from locally-based and internationally-renowned explosives firm, Orica.

Dr Goodridge and his team have been collaborating with the university's departments of chemistry and chemical engineering for the past five years on a number of key research projects in the area of 'colloid science'.

"The University is seen as a potential source of new ideas for Orica," he said. "Accessing that intellectual horsepower is expected to lead to new opportunities for both Orica and the uni."

"Through various Government grants and funding schemes we have been given the opportunity to pursue research projects and work closely with students who have the potential to become future employees."

Dr Goodridge outlined his company's involvement with the university at the Research Linkages Forum staged at the Industry Development Centre (IDC) on December 7, last year.

Doing business with the University of Newcastle is a smart move for companies competing in the national and international marketplace
Secrets to industry success revealed at forum

A Research Linkages Forum organised by the Research Branch and held at the Industry Development Centre (IDC) last December was attended by more than 80 business people. Designed to inform regional industry representatives on how to do business with the university, the forum showcased some of the university's collaborative partnerships to demonstrate some of its research and development capabilities.

Among the guest speakers were Carol Hugginson, Human Resources Manager for the Hunter Area Health Service; Richard Goodridge, Open Cut Technology Manager for ORICA; and George Voss, Marketing Manager for Industrial Automation Services.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Ron MacDonald, said the forum gave the company representatives who attended a greater insight into the ways in which they can do business with the university.

"It was an excellent opportunity for us to show industry the range of options which are available, to discuss funding and grants, as well as the tax effective aspects of these collaborative partnerships," Ron said. "The university has a great deal to offer to industry. While many people tend to think of science and engineering when they think of research and development, every faculty has research capabilities and expertise."

Each of the faculties mounted a display in the foyer of the IDC, staffed by people able to field enquiries. Interest was shown in the areas of psychology, accountancy and graphic design, to name a few.

Director of the Research Branch, Peter Farley, said attendance at the forum reflected the high level of interest in doing business with the university in a range of different areas. He attributed much of the success of the forum to good planning and promotion of the event.

"The areas in which the university can help business include product and services innovation, access to testing facilities and high value infrastructure and employee training," he said. "These things provide opportunities for growth that can lead to future profits. In planning the forum, we were careful to focus on industry needs and to build our program in terms of value to those we invited."

The forum, which was held from 11am to 3pm on December 7, forged some valuable links and generated numerous enquiries for the Research Branch.

"The secret of success is to know something nobody else knows" (Aristotle Onassis)
SIDS families sought for study

Australian families who have lost a child to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) are being asked to take part in an international study to determine if there is a genetic predisposition to these tragic deaths.

Dr Caroline Blackwell from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, said the study aimed to identify genetic factors that might result in an ‘over reaction’ of the body’s natural (and usually helpful) responses to bacteria and virus.

“We have identified very powerful toxins produced by bacteria in over fifty percent of the SIDS infants we have examined. These include infants from Britain, France, Germany and Australia. The toxins are the ones that cause toxic shock syndrome. The purpose of the study is to use blood samples to find out if parents who had a cot death have stronger reactions to the toxins than families who have not suffered this tragedy,” she said.

Preliminary studies in Scotland have been promising, and Dr Blackwell is extending her work in Australia after establishing research links with the University’s Dr Maree Gleeson, who is looking at babies who have had an acute life threatening episode or ‘near miss’ SIDS.

“We know that many factors contribute to the conditions that result in a SIDS death. If we can identify the reasons why the risk factors make babies susceptible to SIDS, we might develop new strategies to reduce further the risks of these deaths,” Dr Blackwell said.

The average incidence of SIDS in Australia is now about one in a thousand live births - around 250 babies each year. All participants in the study will be asked to give a small blood sample, a gentle scraping of cells from the inside of the mouth and answer some questions about their family. Families who haven’t had a SIDS death and families in which a child or young adult has had meningitis are also being asked to help as comparison families in the study.

The study is being funded by the Scottish Cot Death Trust, Babes In Arms, the Royal Society of London and the Meningitis Association of Scotland. For further information contact Dr Maree Gleeson or Dr Caroline Blackwell on 4923 6188.

Health care: what do people want?

The challenge of delivering health care that people need and want is the subject of an extensive study by Newcastle researcher David Newby.

David, from the Discipline of Clinical Pharmacology in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, has been investigating public opinion on what medicines should be included on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as part of his PhD.

“I have been looking at what people think of the current spending on medicines in Australia, and how they think medicines should be assessed to be included in the scheme,” he explained.

Initial findings indicate that the people surveyed preferred qualities such as safety and affordability as criteria for determining which medicines should be part of the scheme.

“More importantly, though, our initial results have highlighted problems with gauging public opinion on national health issues,” he said. “It appears that getting broad-based opinions on national issues such as spending on medicines is difficult because people seem to be uninterested, need more time to think about their answers than that allowed in the research, and tend to draw on personal experience alone,” he said.

The challenge is getting an accurate system of measuring public opinion which can be applied to all areas of health spending.

“Further analysis of our research may allow such a system to be developed. At a time when health care delivery and funding is highly controversial, the model may offer a more accurate means of giving people what they expect and want,” he said.
Professor Steve Easton
Faculty of Economics and Commerce

Background
I grew up in Adelaide and went to Adelaide University. My working class parents stressed
education as the route to a secure life and both my brothers, my sister and I are all teachers and
academics. I was attracted to studying finance because of the mathematical rigour behind quality
financial research and at that time there was far greater rigour within
the universities than outside them. I was also keen to get out of
Adelaide, so I went to Monash University in Melbourne to do
my Masters and ultimately my PhD.

After a brief stint back in
Adelaide, I returned to Monash as a lecturer in 1989 and stayed there
until I was offered the position as
head of the Department of
Accounting and Finance at
Newcastle in 1996.

Challenges
The immediate challenges for
the faculty are to achieve greater
focus and direction with respect to
both our international student
profile and our postgraduate
coursework activity. Another nice
challenge is to ensure that the
students that have taken up the
new Bachelor of Finance degree
have their needs and wishes
fulfilled and basically ensure that
the course goes well.

The Department of Statistics
has moved into the Faculty of
Science and Mathematics, taking
with it a strong research group and
it is important that we fill that
research gap. We have established
some very robust research
groupings in the faculty including
in the area of the economics of full
employment and in electronic
commerce.

Another challenge is to
complete the review of our courses
that we began last year. I think the
three undergraduate degrees that
were reviewed in 1999 have
significantly improved and we
want to continue that process with
the remaining courses. The faculty
will also be subject to external
review this year and the fact that
we have largely completed our
internal review puts us in a good
position.

Over the last decade, there
has been a considerable shift in the
demographics between the various
disciplines in the faculty. There's
been a move away from
accounting and economics and
towards finance, information
technology and particularly to
combined degrees. It is a challenge
in terms of this year's faculty plans
to ensure that both new and
existing combined degrees are
given continuing focus.

Strengths
The diversity of our
disciplines and our capacity to
adapt over recent years are both
strengths of the faculty. Our
teaching and research interests
cross a range of areas where both
applied vocational and knowledge­
based training can be taught in
conjunction with rigorous
theoretical background. That's
clearly the direction that
Australian tertiary education is
going and what students are
looking for. I don't believe
universities will become entirely
vocationally focused however.
There will continue to be a balance
between the theoretical constructs
of a discipline and the vocational
skills. I have always found the real
world to be an attractive and
interesting place and have twice
ventured into private industry
before returning to academia. That
indicates the cusp on which we
work.

Another of the faculty's
strengths is the high regard it is
held in by employers and
professional associations. I was
very taken when I arrived in
Newcastle by the ease reception
that the business community gives
to university staff when they make
overtures to connect with them.
Our reputation is extremely good
in the local area. The links with the
professional bodies -
important to students who are
looking for employment - have
been built up in recent years due to
the efforts of staff.

Work
As a relatively young dean
[Steve is 40], a significant
challenge for me is maintaining a
balance between my role as dean
and my other roles given my need
to ensure a fulfilling career for
myself post-deanship. I am
continually mindful of the need to
maintain active teaching and
research activities.

My first year as dean has
involved a considerable learning
curve as I discovered the nuances
of the organisation's operation and
established close working
relationships with the people who
support the faculty's activities. I
was very pleased with the support
that I was shown and the extent to
which I was able to rely on senior
colleagues, some of whom hadn't
had significant administration
tasks allocated to them in the past.
I like teaching and have
always found it relatively easy but
I miss the outside training work in
companies that I used to be able to
do, although the faculty has
developed some and I'm happy to
be involved in them. I supervise
research students and carry out my
own research looking at how the
options and futures markets work.
My publishers tell me that the
eighth edition of my textbook
needs to be completed by June.

I also have an active outside
role with the Australian Society of
Certified Practising Accountants
and sit on the Universities
Committee for that body.

Leisure
My wife and three children
take up virtually all of my leisure
time and I wouldn't want it any
other way. I'm blessed with three
wonderful children who love sport
so much of my time is taken up
watching cricket, Aussie rules,
network, basketball and swimming.
When I'm not with the kids I
unwind by cycling which I've done
for relaxation since I was 10. At
the age of 13 I cycled with my
older brother from Perth to Albany
and I remember that as one of the
best holidays I've had.

Future
Predicting my future more
than four or five years out is
problematic for me. I hope there
will be other things in my future
career beyond being a dean.
Whether it is as a financial
researcher or inside or outside the
university system, I'm unsure. My
future has to involve life after
being a dean, given that I have no
intention of being a dean when I
am 65, but I don't have any firm
goals for the long term.
The gift of clear speech

A revolutionary new voice processor is helping a Newcastle PhD student to communicate. The speech enhancer is a portable voice prosthesis that clarifies and amplifies speech making it more intelligible.

Minae Inahara, from Nabari-city in Japan, who is doing her postgraduate research in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, has athetoid cerebral palsy, which makes it difficult for her to speak clearly and to sustain her voice over a long period or over a distance.

"I have many difficulties due to my disability," Minae said. "For example, communicating with my supervisor and presenting my own papers at conferences."

The speech enhancer, one of the few in Australia, has been provided to Minae by the Department of Linguistics for the duration of her studies at Newcastle.

A support team will assist Minae in learning to utilise and maintain the speech enhancer. They are Dr Berenice Mathiesen, Lecturer in Speech Pathology; Trevor Wilks of the Adaptive Technology Centre; and Colin Slattery of the Assistive Technology Centre of the Spastic Centre of NSW.

Berenice says the use of adaptive technology, especially for communication, is well established in the US and rapidly developing in Australia. "We are involved in research using the speech enhancer in the Speech Pathology Clinic at the university with other clients," Berenice said. "It also provides students with experience of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices."

Minae has been studying at the university for seven years. Her research involves exploring new ways of seeing and considering physical disability and its (self and body) image in cultural studies.

She used the speech enhancer for the first time in December when she delivered a paper at a cultural studies conference at the University of Western Sydney.

"The speech enhancer worked well and really saved my energy," Minae said. "Normally I am very tired after I speak in public."

Achieving full employment

Australia could achieve full employment while still maximising the benefits of domestic production and foreign trade, according to a keynote speaker at the Path to Full Employment Conference held in Newcastle in December.

The conference was hosted by the University's Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CofEE) in collaboration with the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, at the Radisson Hotel in Newcastle.

Warren Mosler, founder and Director of III Finance, told the conference how full employment can be achieved in Australia, maximising the benefits of both domestic production and foreign trade.

Mr Mosler built on the 'Job Guarantee Model' put forward by Professor Bill Mitchell, Director of CofEE.

"The 'Job Guarantee Model' works with governments acting as employers for people who cannot find work in the private sector," said Warren. "This policy approach could help Australia through stabilising and strengthening the currency, and giving business in the country a substantial competitive advantage in world markets."

Other papers presented at the conference included an examination of the effects of the Work For The Dole scheme and the Common Youth Allowance by Dr John Burgess and Doug Biddle from CofEE and a discussion of the recommendation to freeze award wages by John Neville from the University of New South Wales.

International scholars looked at the latest research into the consequences of unemployment in capitalist economies, focusing on the development of strategies designed to eliminate unemployment and maintain price stability.

Other leading authorities in the field of labour and monetary economics to present papers at the conference included Professor Bill Mitchell, Director, CofEE; Randy Wray, Centre of Full Employment and Price Stability, University of Missouri-Kansas City, USA; and Joan Mayskop from the University of Maastricht, Netherlands.

The Second Annual Path to Full Employment Conference was held on December 2 and 3, last year.
‘Real’ women dissatisfied

A study undertaken to provide a portrait of the ‘real Australian woman’ has revealed that women are heavier and taller than they were in the 1920s, and suffer from poor body image.

The research project, commissioned by lingerie company Hestia and carried out by the University’s Research Institute for Gender and Health, has shown that average female heights have increased by 2.8 cms, weight by 4.4 kgs and bust sizes by 6.3cms. The average woman’s waist measurement has increased by 3.4cms and her hips by 3.5cms.

Research assistant, Dr Amanda Patterson, said the changes could be attributed to improvements in health care, hygiene and nutrition. But almost half of the 450 participants in the study considered themselves overweight and 34.4 percent of them were overweight using body mass index categories, she said. More than half were more than slightly dissatisfied with their shape and 42.1 percent were trying to lose weight.

The study, carried out in association with the University of Queensland and Deakin University, was compared to a similar one undertaken by Hestia’s parent company Berlei in 1926 involving more than 6000 Australian women. Hestia, which last year launched a lingerie advertising campaign featuring a cross section of women of different sizes and looks, will use the results to help them design clothing that fits.

“Being able to buy well-fitting clothes could improve women’s self-esteem,” Amanda said. “We hope our research will help to influence media and manufacturing companies to adopt more realistic images.”

International appointment for education lecturer

Dr Roy Killen of the Faculty of Education has recently been appointed as Extraordinary Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. This rare appointment is in recognition of his outstanding contribution to education in South Africa over the past four years.

Dr Killen’s links with South Africa began in 1991 with a chance meeting with a South African teacher educator at a conference in Armidale. That meeting led to a joint research project into children’s perceptions of their learning in science with data being gathered in Australia, South Africa, USA and Finland. In 1996 Dr Killen was invited to work at the University of South Africa and conducted a series of workshops on Reflective Teaching and Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). These workshops were the beginning of an ongoing program of staff development activities that Dr Killen has conducted at universities, colleges, technikons and schools in South Africa.

Following the democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, there was a strong move for educational reform. This resulted in the adoption of outcomes-based education as the guiding principle for all education (school, further education and higher education). As part of these educational reforms, all post-school education (including university courses) has become part of a National Qualifications Framework. The curriculum for each course has to be rewritten to conform to guidelines from the South African Qualifications Authority. Dr Killen’s assistance in this process has been extensive and during his last visit in 1999 he conducted a total of 43 seminars and workshops on OBE.

In 1997, Dr Killen developed a successful proposal for an AusAID funded Institutional Links Project in South Africa. This project enabled the Faculty of Education to work in conjunction with the Open Training and Education Network (the external studies arm of NSW TAFE) to assist Vista University and M.L. Sultan Technikon to redesign their science and mathematics programs. During the course of this project, Dr Killen spent five months as a Visiting Professor at Vista University in Port Elizabeth. One result of Dr Killen’s work in South Africa has been the establishment of strong links between our Faculty of Education and the Faculties of Education at the University of South Africa and the University of Pretoria. There are now formal Heads of Agreement with these two institutions.

Dr Killen’s next visit to South Africa, his seventh in the past four years, will be to work at the University of South Africa for three weeks during February assisting their mathematics faculty to redesign their external studies materials. He will then work at the University of Pretoria for a week, presenting several seminars on assessment in higher education and continuing his supervision of a doctoral student. An important part of his luggage on that trip will be the manuscript of a book which has been accepted for publication by Juta, one of South Africa’s leading educational publishers.
Indigenous tourism opportunities missed

Australia has failed to promote the Indigenous tourism experience to domestic and international tourists, a three-year study has concluded.

Dr Heather Zeppel from the Department of Leisure and Tourism Studies has compiled an index of Aboriginal tourism sites and operations around Australia as part of an ARC Postdoctoral Fellowship. This index, titled “Aboriginal Tourism in Australia: A Research Bibliography”, has recently been published by the CRC for Sustainable Tourism.

“Australia falls well short of providing adequate promotion of its Aboriginal culture through tourism, and there is an urgent need for resources to be committed to allowing Aboriginal people to take ownership of their own tourism ventures,” Dr Zeppel said.

“Demand from international visitors for Indigenous experiences is high,” added Professor Terry DeLacy, CEO of the CRC for Sustainable Tourism. “Tourism has the potential to provide much-needed community development and Indigenous employment but to achieve this there needs to be a concerted effort from governments and the private sector in funding, training, research, marketing and investment into joint ventures.”

Dr Zeppel said that despite finding more than 4,500 references to Aboriginal tourism around the country, most of these focused on northern and central Australia.

“The southern states and urban areas are sadly lacking when it comes to promoting Aboriginal-based tourism. Research reports and travel articles usually focus on large-scale Aboriginal tourist attractions or sites, mainly in Northern Australia,” she said.

She said greater Aboriginal input and consultation is needed for the sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism in Australia.

“It was only last year that an Aboriginal person was appointed to the Australian Tourism Commission to develop Aboriginal tourism at an international level,” she said.

With the number of international tourists coming to Australia for the Olympics, Australia has missed the opportunity to promote to the rest of the world the cultural products and tourist attractions owned and operated by its Indigenous peoples.

The research found there is a lack of data and information about consumer demand and barriers to developing successful Indigenous tourism enterprises.

“Despite this, I’m confident that the broader tourist marketing of Aboriginal cultures to reflect contemporary Aboriginal life will increase as Aboriginal groups pursue Native Title claims and new tourism ventures,” Dr Zeppel concluded.

Summer school attracts best and brightest

Top science students learn about a solar-powered car at the Science and Technology Summer School

Kye is in the top two percent of Year Nine science students in central and northern New South Wales, and spent five days undertaking a number of hands-on activities, ranging from computer simulations, designing and building, testing and measuring, working on a solar car and astronomy viewing.

The Science and Technology Summer School is the premier annual high school science and technology event for northern and central New South Wales, with applications invited from Year Nine science students across the region. Enrolment is limited to participants in the top two percent for science in their school.
Rough ridin’ for research

Rough riders and camp drafters from the previous two Stroud Rodeos have raised a total of $16,000 for local research into spinal injuries and multiple sclerosis.

The Stroud Rodeo Association donated the funds to the University’s Discipline of Human Physiology ($11,000) and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of NSW ($5,000) at a special presentation on December 14, 1999.

“In the 26 or so years the rodeo’s been run we’ve supported a range of local charities,” explained Secretary of the Stroud Rodeo Association, David Gorton.

“Support from local organisations like the Stroud Rodeo Association contributes to the university’s reputation for research excellence and helps develop links between the university and the community,” explained Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Brian English.

Such support for local medical research also adds to the Hunter’s efforts to become the centre for medical research in Australia – something the university and Hunter Health are jointly fostering through Hunter Medical Research. Proceeds from the next Stroud Rodeo – on September 16 and 17, 2000 – will go to the university’s Mothers and Babies Research Centre based at John Hunter Hospital.

A national first for university

The University of Newcastle is the first university to become a corporate member of the Australian Science Communicators (ASC).

The achievement follows the recent formation of a Hunter branch of the ASC, to promote interest in science for all age groups. The Hunter branch is supported by 18 science societies, two tertiary institutions (including the University of Newcastle), 2NC-ABC radio, and 2NUR-FM.

ASC National President Robyn Williams has welcomed the university as a corporate member.

“The university played a lead role in National Science Week in 1999 and out of that activity has sprung the new Hunter branch. The momentum that has been generated in the Hunter bodes well for the future of science communications in the region,” he said.

Associate Professor John O’Connor from the Department of Physics, says corporate membership of the ASC is a recognition of the growing need to promote science to the public and of the university’s commitment to the task.

To further this goal, the university is planning subjects in science communication.

“We need to show the relevance of science, promote the exciting careers which can be achieved by studying science and showcase the top research conducted in the field,” John said.

“We have already been successful in gaining funding for a project which will explore the relationship between science and sport.”

The Faculty of Science and Mathematics and ASC (Hunter) have been awarded $7,000 from the Department of Industry Science and Resources, to fund the “Sport? - Fun Science” project as part of National Science Week next year.

“We will look at the role of traditional science disciplines in sport,” John said. “Physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology are all part of sport, and we will use demonstrations to show this. For example, science is at work in high jumping. How can the athlete get over the bar when their centre of mass doesn’t? We will demonstrate how changing the centre of gravity affects the sport.”
Corporate wardrobe

The 2000 corporate wardrobe order will take place on Wednesday 9 February 2000.

Come along and see the range for 2000 - some new colours will add variety to your wardrobe!

Please note: all orders will be taken on this day only! Order forms will be provided (please contact the committee to make a special arrangement if you will not be available on the day).

Orders will be taken from 8.30am to 6pm in the Great Hall Foyer.

If you know what you would like to order and just need some help finalising your order, you won't need an appointment.

If this is your first corporate wardrobe order, or you need to check the sizing of a number of garments, you will need to make an appointment. It is essential to book in advance by phoning Jean Bas on 4963 6444 from Monday 31 January 2000.

Remember, this is the last order before the GST. Payroll deductions are available for orders up to $540.00.

Karyn Asher ext 5175
Eileen O’Donoghue ext 5906
Bette Saillard ext 5848
Lyn Sinclair ext 6419
Linda Tracey ext 5313

For sale

Bodytech Treadmill, good condition. $100.00 ono. ph Annette on ext 6318 or (ab) 49 335006.

Quality, as new, cot and bassinet with mattress, protectors and sheets $60; baby clothes all as new sizes 00 to 1 (winter and summer) prices negotiable, ext 6543 Wed/Thu/Fri

Daftasu Charade, 1992 manual SG sedan, power steering, air conditioned, rust-proofed, original owner (full service history), very good condition, low kms, white - $6950, phone ext 5045.

Wanted

Start up packages

We are presently putting together packages to help students who are setting up house for the first time. These packages will be lent to students for a nominal fee.

Any staff who may have household items such as cutlery, glasses, crockery, pots, pans etc. they may no longer require, are asked to donate them for these packages.

For information call Pat Healion at the Chaplaincy Centre ext 5571 or Ruth Gresham in Community Services for International Students ext 5767.

World Sports Science Congress

University staff from the areas of physical education, sports science, health and coaching are invited to take part in a major pre-Olympic event, the World Sports Science Congress. The congress will be held at Rydges Capricorn International Resort at Yeppoon (via Rockhampton) from September 2-5 and is hosted by the International Association for Physical Education at Central Queensland University. Details are available on (07) 4930 9813, via k.rodd@ccu.edu.au or at www.aha.ccu.edu.au/aisep2000.

Olympic transport volunteers wanted

The Olympic Roads and Traffic Authority (ORTA) needs 9000 people to help with the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Of these, 6000 drivers are needed to drive athletes, team officials and others in a fleet of 2000 cars and 3000 others are required in non-driver roles. Volunteers will be trained and will be given an official uniform to wear during the games and to retain as a memento. People interested may volunteer by calling 1800 182 818 or visit the ORTA website at www.ort.nsw.gov.au.

Australian Press Council Prize

Tertiary students are invited to submit a 2,500 word essay on the following topic:

Principle 5 of the Council’s Statement of Principles states in part that newspapers should disclose “any commercial or other interest which might be construed as influencing the publication’s presentation of news or opinion”. In the light of the recent revelations of the possibility that commercial interests may have influenced some radio personalities, to what extent is the press obliged to reveal any conflict of interest which may have influenced the reporting of news and the publication of opinions?

A prize of up to $2,000 will be available on the day.

Let us know about your forthcoming events for inclusion in What’s On. Send your details via email to the editor (pklh@cc.newcastle.edu.au) or to Rose Roohan (prr@cc.newcastle.edu.au) with What’s On as the topic.

January 19 – February 6


Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute Seminar Series

February 5 - Update Series i: “Review of Hard Drugs, Methadone or Naltrexone - A Hard Choice?”

February 24 - Women’s Health Meeting “Urinary Incontinence/ Prolapse”

March 7 - Update Series ii: “Domestic Violence - Family Law”

March 21 - Teleconference “Geriatrics”

April 8 - Update Series iii: “Sport”

A series of meetings which are part of a paediatric diploma course can be attended on an individual basis on the following Tuesdays:

February 1 - “Introduction & Principles for Research”

February 15 - “The Context of Child Health”

February 29 - “A.D.H.D.”

March 14 - “Behavioural Problems”

March 28 - “Children & The Media”

April 1 - “ENT, Allergy, Migrane”

April 11 - “Child Sex Abuse”

For information contact Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute on 4923 6173 or 4923 6163.
Health, Safety and Development

Breathe easy

Over the last decade, the adoption of smoke-free policies in a wide range of workplaces and areas accessed by the public has been a direct result of the recognition that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (that is, passive smoking) is a significant health hazard. The environment has had a non-smoking policy in place since 1990. As part of a process of review and communication, the Vice-Chancellor circulated the current version of this policy in August 1999. This is available at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/oustr/hrm/policy/non_smoking.htm.

To control the risks associated with this health hazard, the university has chosen, where practical, to eliminate smoking. Thus, under the policy, smoking is not permitted within the confines of university buildings, vehicles and other designated non-smoking areas under its control. A similar policy may apply in places on the university’s campuses that are managed by other employers, such as the Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre.

Eliminating the hazard requires everyone’s cooperation. Whether or not people smoke is obviously a matter of personal choice. Where they smoke, however, has the potential to impact on the health of others. Smokers aren’t being discriminated against, but rather are being asked to consider the risk implications for everyone concerned.

For the health and safety of all it is important that smokers respect the designated non-smoking areas. These include areas where cigarette smoke might accumulate or drift back into a building, such as doorways, open windows and air-conditioning intakes. Smoking is also prohibited around flammable goods. Non-smoking areas are designated by appropriate signs.

All staff, students, visitors and contractors must abide by this policy whilst they are on university premises. In addition, staff and students may play a part in encouraging other people to abide by the policy. If you see someone smoking within a smoke-free zone, politely direct him or her to an area outside the zone. Where there are problems eliminating the hazard, these should be referred to the persons directly responsible for the area concerned.

Another component of the policy relates to supporting those who choose to eliminate the hazard presented by their need to smoke. In the area of treatment for nicotine addiction, research has demonstrated similar levels of success for self-help programs when compared to the more intensive interventions. For example, relapse percentages after 12 months are the same whether participants undertake the eight-week Quit for Life Program, or use a self-directed, self-paced Quit Kit. The current national quit-smoking campaign is funded only for the use of self-help programs. This campaign (http://www.quitnow.info.au) is supported by the 24 hour National Quitline Counselling Service (131 848).

If you have already thought about quitting, but find the prospect too difficult to consider or don’t know where to start, Health, Safety and Development are offering an information and education session at both Callaghan and Central Coast campuses for staff and students. This session promotes a self-help program and encourages participants to access services designed to support their efforts to quit smoking.

Staff unable to attend either of these sessions can contact the Health, Safety and Development Team in the Human Resource Management Branch (ext 6543) for information on steps to take towards stopping or reducing the need to smoke.

The University of Newcastle is committed to a smoke-free working environment. Your help is needed to achieve this.

Local student wins London experience of a lifetime

Commerce student Clare O’Neill has beaten hundreds of entrants to win a once-in-a-lifetime work experience opportunity in London, in a competition sponsored by the Australian Society of CPAs.

Clare, who has completed the second year of her Bachelor of Commerce, flew to London in January to take up the three weeks all expenses paid experience with Village Roadshow. The assignment was the ultimate prize in the Australian Society of CPAs Passport Work Experience Program which finds work experience for accounting students nationally and internationally. Clare is one of three winners from New South Wales, and twelve students nationally out of a field of approximately 1200 candidates.

“I never imagined that I would be selected to go to London,” Clare said. “It is a great opportunity to work for a major corporation in an international environment. I think most professionals realise that they need to understand the international business environment to succeed in this millennium. It is great to be able to gain this understanding so soon.”
Voices and vision

Many factors have contributed to the growth of church music resources, studies and performances in Newcastle. A recording of church music featuring the University Chamber Choir will be released as a CD by the Faculty of Music. Most of the performers on the recording are enrolled in undergraduate courses at the university, mostly studying at the Faculty of Music, while many are also involved with music at Christ Church Cathedral. The students perform a wide range of church music, both traditional and modern. Much of the music on the CD, called Voices and Vision, consists of recent arrangements and compositions, which have been recorded for the first time. Many factors have contributed to the growth of church music resources, studies and performances in Newcastle. Links between the Faculty and Conservatorium of Music and the Cathedral have long been in place. From the 1950s, Conservatorium teaching positions and Cathedral appointments have been held concurrently. These have included Keith Noake and Professor Michael Dudman. These links are supported by the Dean of the faculty, Professor Robert Constable, and the Dean of Newcastle, the Very Reverend Graeme Lawrence. The Faculty of Music's two organs along with the Cathedral's organ are heard on the recording. Director of the Chamber Choir and cathedral organist, Philip Matthias, said the CD featured a variation of sounds from unaccompanied singing to instrumental accompaniment and some arrangements using the plucked strings of guitars, mandolins and harp.

"Every track has a different sound, with the textures constantly changing," he said. "Most of the music was recorded in the Cathedral because the acoustics and the organ suited the style of music, and some were recorded in the Conservatorium Concert Hall and the organ studio." The CD costs $20 and will be available at the Conservatorium and through selected bookstores and music stores. For information call Philip on ext 8928.

unibriefs

Congratulations to newly appointed members of the University Council - Amie Grierson (student member) and Convocation members, Professor Trevor Waring, Emeritus Professor Godfrey Tanner, Jill Scott and Khalil Kharwa. Professor Frank Clarke has had the title of Emeritus Professor conferred upon him by the University Council on his retirement from the university. Norman Talbot, poet, writer and former lecturer in English at the university, has released a book of poems, The Book of Changes, in response to and incorporating the 41 full-colour plates of John Montefiore's Life Series. The book is available at Pepperina's Bookshop in Bolton Street, Newcastle. Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Adrian Page, has been awarded an Australian Research Council Large Grant of $198,000 over three years, to look at the role moisture plays in establishing the bond between mortar and bricks. More than 40 inner-Newcastle eateries are taking advantage of an offer by Newcastle City Council for free collection of their food scraps to feed to worms at the university. The trial vermiculture project being undertaken by Physical Planning and Estates involves 70 kgs of waste from the university's food outlets and from the city being converted into fertiliser each day. University employees, Hamish Lithgow from Records Management and Emma Blair from the Faculty of Law, were nominated in the NSW Employee of the Year Awards. Organised by the Employers Federation, the awards recognise commitment, determination and team work. Emma and Hamish were among only three Hunter people nominated.
GroupWise Update

Did you know that the Information and Education Services Division (IESD) are in the process of implementing Novell's GroupWise application across campus?

What is GroupWise?
GroupWise is a fully integrated, easy-to-use messaging system that offers a wide range of powerful communication and collaboration capabilities. Features of the product include e-mail, calendaring, scheduling, imaging, automated workflow, task management, document management, and electronic discussions.

Why do we need GroupWise?
GroupWise simplifies communications by providing the Universal Mailbox - a single access point for all types of messages including e-mail, calendar information and documents.

GroupWise will replace your current email and scheduling applications (Meeting Maker and Lotus Organiser), and make your day easier to organise.

Further down the track when document management is implemented, you will never again lose track of that important document. GroupWise contains libraries where documents can be stored, and all relevant staff can be granted access. There will no longer be any confusion over which version is the correct one.

Where is the Project up to?
The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences along with IESD will participate in the pilot phase. Each user will attend a half-day training course (commencing early March) and then have the application installed on their computer. Once the pilot phase has been completed, other Faculties and Divisions will be able to participate in the implementation, and the more advanced features of the product will be introduced.

Eventually, all users within the University will have access to the GroupWise application. The end result will be an on-line campus-wide e-mail address book, with all addresses at your fingertips, and the ability to schedule meetings and appointments with all staff within the University.

For more information, visit the University’s GroupWise web site at www.newcastle.edu.au/services/iesd/groupwise or contact Neroli Masters, the Project Manager on x7148 or via email on neroli.masters@newcastle.edu.au
GroupWise Update

Did you know that the Information and Education Services Division (IESD) are in the process of implementing Novell's GroupWise application across campus?

What is GroupWise?
GroupWise is a fully integrated, easy-to-use messaging system that offers a wide range of powerful communication and collaboration capabilities. Features of the product include e-mail, calendaring, scheduling, imaging, automated workflow, task management, document management, and electronic discussions.

Why do we need GroupWise?
GroupWise simplifies communications by providing the Universal Mailbox - a single access point for all types of messages including e-mail, calendar information and documents.

GroupWise will replace your current email and scheduling applications (Meeting Maker and Lotus Organiser), and make your day easier to organise.

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