Staff efforts recognised – Vice-Chancellor’s awards
Susannah York performs at Drama Theatre
Japanese scientists visit Space Physics Group
Convocation honours outstanding graduates
Research and research training are ‘core activities’ of the University, and will remain so well into the future.

We are indeed fortunate that our researchers have been successful in the past, and it is appropriate to remind everyone that it is our strategic goal to remain an internationally competitive research university. Our placement in the ‘top 10’ of Australian universities is not only a source of pride for us all, but also a challenge to continue to be successful in the key areas of performance, namely research output through our publications; research postgraduate patents and graduations; research income from grants, consultancies, centres, scholarships, fellowships and from partnerships with industry and other agencies.

The Federal Government is taking major interest in the research and research training activities of Australian universities, particularly following the announcement of the Innovation Action Plan, Backing Australia’s Ability, in January 2001. The Plan was designed to strengthen our ability to generate ideas and undertake research, to accelerate the commercial application of these ideas, and to develop and retain Australian skills (www.arc.gov.au/nccgp/LPCOE.htm). The Government announced an additional $736.4 million over five years for the Australian Research Council (ARC), doubling the funding for the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) by 2005-6. In addition, it was announced that there would be an emphasis on areas of priority, in which Australia enjoys, or is seeking to gain, competitive advantage.

Earlier this year, the Federal DEST Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson, announced how this program was to be implemented, at least initially, through priority areas of research. No less than 35 percent of the NCGP total funds allocated to research projects in the 2003 funding round will be allocated to four priority research areas:

- Nano-materials and bio-materials
- Genome-Phenome research
- Complex/intelligent systems
- Photon science and technology

Consequently, up to $170 million of $510 million to be announced in the 2003 funding rounds, will be allocated to these priority areas. The remaining $340 million will fund all other research areas, which in effect means that almost all of the growth funds will be allocated to targeted areas. While we may question this approach, particularly in the apparent exclusion of major areas of research such as the humanities and social sciences, the additional research investment is of course very welcome to the higher education sector.

It is important to remind all researchers of the University that substantial research funds are available for all other areas on a competitive peer reviewed basis. We should also remember that funding through the National Health and Medical Research Council has doubled from 2000, over a five year period, providing enhanced opportunities for research funding for our medical and health research colleagues and research students.

The Government has just released a discussion paper on Linkage Priority Centres of Excellence, which will support new centres within the four priority areas for ARC funding. The program will have a budget of $80 million over five years, and it is expected that eight to 10 centres will be established, with one to three in each priority area. They are proposed to provide more flexibility in commercialisation models and in their interaction with industry, and are designed to create increased opportunities at the basic and pre-competitive stages of research.

The Federal Government is also taking a close interest in our research and research training management plans, and it is now a requirement upon the University to submit a plan that satisfies DEST guidelines to be eligible for research and research training funds in 2003. These guidelines contain a number of ‘new’ areas for our attention and consideration, including identifying areas of research strength; research and research training objectives; future directions for research and research training; managing research performance; measures to ensure a quality research training experience; collaboration and partnerships; intellectual property, commercialisation and contractual arrangements; reporting on expenditure of infrastructure funds; and providing data on numbers of research active staff. This has created a major workload for the University’s administrators and researchers to manage our research and research training enterprise in the absence of additional resources, and is of great concern.

May I wish you well in the ‘new’ research and research training funding environment. There are of course major challenges in this environment, but also significant opportunities for us as one of Australia’s most successful research universities.

Finally, I would like to advise you about the most recent student enrolment figures for the University during 2001, and of estimates for 2002. There are exciting and landmark figures for the University of Newcastle. In 2001 actual enrolments reveal a total student population of 21,958, which is the first time that we have exceeded 20,000 students. Of these, 3713 (or 17 percent) were postgraduate students, 10,643 (or 7.5 percent) were enrolled in enabling courses, 13,905 (or 72 percent) were Bachelor’s (pass and honours) students, and 2,286 (or 10.4 percent) were overseas students. Estimates for 2002 show that the University will enrol 22,260 students this year. We have therefore moved into a new era for the University in terms of its size and student composition, with a substantial growth in total load and in overseas and postgraduate students.

Roger S Holmes
Vice-Chancellor and President
Susannah’s gift

Drama students and fans of renowned British actress Susannah York were privileged to see her perform at the University last month.

Susannah offered to perform her touring solo show *The Loves Of Shakespeare’s Women* as an impromptu gift to Newcastle students after talking to her friend, author Helen Garner, who is currently Writing Fellow for the Australian Writing Centre in the University’s School of Language and Media.

Susannah shot to stardom in films such as *Tom Jones*, *The Killing Of Sister George* and *A Man For All Seasons*. Oscar-nominated for her role opposite Jane Fonda in *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?*, she also won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival for Robert Altman’s *Altered Images*. On television, she has starred in many popular series such as *We’ll Meet Again*, and her recent stage work includes *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* and *Hamlet* for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The Loves Of Shakespeare’s Women is a personal journey that strings together speeches and sonnets from some of Shakespeare’s most famous and infamous women. In Australia to perform at the Adelaide Festival and at Sydney’s Seymour Centre, Susannah plays more than 20 roles from Juliet to Mistress Ford, Isabella to Constance. The common theme is love in its many forms and the performance is interwoven with Susannah’s own commentary, stories and personal insights.

Head of the School of Language and Media, A/Professor Hugh Craig, said Susannah’s visit was a wonderful opportunity for drama and English students to see a thoroughly professional actress perform.

“Susannah is keen on the idea of bringing Shakespeare to life for a new generation,” Hugh said. “The audience was split between students, who may not even have heard of her, and staff and other admirers of her work keen to see her.”

The company technical manager for Susannah’s show in Australia, Vanessa Hutchins, studied drama at the University and was already planning to spend that day in Newcastle with her family. The performance was an opportunity for Vanessa, who is based in Sydney, to contribute something to current drama students and catch up with people in Newcastle.

Vanessa dedicated Susannah’s show to the memory of her late father, who died last Christmas.

“He used to come and watch my shows at the Drama Theatre and the day of the performance would have been his birthday,” Vanessa said. “My mother and two sisters were able to attend the show as well, which was great.”

The Loves Of Shakespeare’s Women, held in the University’s Drama Theatre on March 21, was jointly presented by the Conservatorium and the School of Language and Media.

Shave for a Cure

It’s that time again when strange hairstyles appear around campus, indicating that the owner of the shaved or coloured head is doing their part to find a cure for cancer. The Shave for a Cure event was staged at Callaghan last month, with 13 members of staff sacrificing their hair in return for raising money for cancer research.

Three security guards had their heads shaved with a razor, another had his moustache shaved, two women had their hair dyed, and another seven men had a ‘number zero’ with hair clippers. The Shave for a Cure raised around $5,000.

More than one way to contribute to a cure – Ann George (left) and Denise Croft from Business Services apply some colour to colleague Karrie Paczynski’s hair in the name of charity.
High energy atoms on target to kill cancer

Research being carried out in the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences into the speed and resting place of high-energy atoms could lead to a range of outcomes from better industrial processes to improved cancer treatments.

Associate Professor John O'Connor says that when an atom travelling at high-speed hits an object, it penetrates and leaves its energy inside. What is not known, however, is how fast the energy escapes from the object or where it goes.

"One type of cancer treatment involves a linear accelerator, which irradiates people with x-rays to treat tumours," John explained. "It has several side effects including the weakening of healthy cells while killing the cancerous ones.

"If we could use atoms or high-energy particles to deposit their energy to kill cancer cells, it would be much more accurate and have far fewer side effects."

The atoms could be targeted so precisely they would only affect the cancerous cells, which is particularly important in some cancers that are difficult to get to using conventional treatments.

"To be able to achieve this we need to know how fast the particles slow down so that we can be sure they will hit the cancer cells with sufficient energy to kill them," John said. "We are looking at particles travelling at more than one percent of the speed of light or over 11 million kilometres per hour. Our project is aimed at predicting both the rate of energy loss and the final resting point of the atom."

The research also helps to find out accurate information on the composition of materials near the surface of solid objects. The researchers are looking at the materials within one thousandth of a millimetre of the surface where metals start to rust and where the catalytic processes occur in the manufacture of plastics and petrol.

"It is the surface that dictates how a solid will respond to its environment," John said, "so our work could have major implications for manufacturing, coatings and nanotechnology as well as cancer research."

Study finds safety enhanced in CBD

A study carried out by University researchers has found that a new program, Nightcare, implemented by church and welfare organisations in Newcastle, is making people feel safer and happier when in the CBD on Saturday nights.

Nightcare, which began in May 2000 and was led by Newcastle Lord Mayor, Councillor John Tate, has now been incorporated into Newcastle City Council's Crime Prevention Plan.

Five organisations are involved - the Salvation Army, Citycare Newcastle, Mayfield Baptist, St Vincent de Paul and Drug Arm - and operate via sponsorship of food and materials. Volunteers provide free food, hot drinks, informal counselling and in some cases referrals to other organisations, to make individuals feel safer, calmer, and more positive about themselves and other people.

The University was commissioned to evaluate the program's effectiveness, and principal researcher, Dr Michael Allen, says the results show it's working.

"The program is run on Saturday nights only, at six locations in the city, and aims to make people feel safer and happier so that these positive feelings reduce anti-social tension and behaviour," he explained. "We studied people at three sites from March to August last year, conducting interviews and making observations."

The study found that 93.5 percent of people at one site felt safer attending the barbecue organised by the program, and 93.1 percent in the same location felt happier.

"We also found the calming and positive effects of Nightcare appeared to last even when people left and headed to their next destination," Michael said.
Salt water, wine and body fluids

A new piece of equipment – the first of its type in Australia – has arrived at the University and will modernise research within the medical, scientific and engineering communities in Australia.

The Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometer System can identify elements down to one per trillion. It works with a variety of substrates, including blood and water and will be used in areas where heavy industries, sensitive ecosystems and agricultural industries exist, as well as being applied in medical research.

Associate Professor Ellak Von Nagy-Felsobuki leads the team in the Advanced Mass Spectrometry Unit at the University, and says the applications of the new equipment are endless.

"It can detect trace elements in human and animal tissue, soils, water, atmosphere and rock systems," he says. "This means it can monitor outputs from the combustion of coal, analyse the amount of heavy metals carried into lakes by rainwater runoff or trapped in wetlands or wastelands, and even help with the study of chronic pain and fatigue-related illness by analysing blood and urine."

The equipment is so sensitive it can tell whether pollution is industry-related or due to natural processes. Ellak says the Mass Spectrometer is the first of its type in Australia.

Living with cancer: how psychology can help

University researchers are investigating the effects of psychological interventions on the quality of life and survival outcomes of cancer patients.

Partially supported by Newcastle Permanent Building Society, psychology PhD student Stuart Edser and his supervisor Dr John Shea from the School of Behavioural Sciences are conducting a three-year study into the effectiveness of special cancer support groups called Cancer Action Groups.

"They are action groups because people with a cancer diagnosis can do a lot for themselves," Stuart says. "They don't have to just leave the doctors do all the work. There is so much individuals can do for themselves, and the most recent research indicates that it's these individuals who do the best."

In the Cancer Action Groups, patients can learn how others have coped, and share ideas about where they can access foods, supplements and exercise programs that may help them. Many participants are just grateful to be able to talk with others who can understand what they are going through.

"As leaders of the groups, we use a number of different strategies to help patients including setting goals; assisting them to identify destructive thought patterns and reframe them; teaching new skills of meditation, relaxation and mental imagery," Stuart said. "In providing a safe place for people, we encourage participants to share their thoughts and feelings."

The researchers stress that psychological interventions are not meant to replace traditional medical treatments, but rather complement and supplement them.

"If a patient has a positive mental attitude towards survival, they may be more likely to continue treatments like chemotherapy, which can be quite draining both physically and mentally," Stuart explained. "This positive mental attitude is also likely to keep them engaging in practices like relaxation techniques which are good for them physically and psychologically."

Studies by the Newcastle researchers and others show that patients who gain the most both physically and psychologically are those who believe they can help themselves and proactively take it upon themselves to do everything they can to help their bodies stay well. The Cancer Action Group can help them in this process.

The researchers are seeking participants for their study. They are running morning, afternoon and evening groups to allow people to fit into the schedule. The groups will run three times during 2002, with the first to begin in the week commencing April 15. For information contact Stuart Edser on 4968 4747 (in the first instance) or mobile 0416 075 984 or University 4921 7486.
A true believer in the BA

Head of the University's School of Language and Media, A/Professor Hugh Craig, is a great believer in the merits of studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Hugh, who has taught English at Newcastle for more than 20 years, is delighted that the University's BA is currently fully enrolled and with evidence that there is a swing back towards the study of arts.

"The Bachelor of Arts has suffered from low self-esteem for some time but there's signs of improvement with more people making arts at Newcastle their first preference this year. I think that more students are recognising that they are likely to do a range of things in their career, so they might as well begin with a generalist degree and do specific things later. I think it's important for people to study something that builds on their interest or passion as a path to their future career."

Hugh finds it ironic that such an intrinsically difficult and complex program as the Bachelor of Arts should be easy to get into because of low demand.

"A BA is extremely taxing and full of ambiguity. It requires students to take account of a great deal of hard to organise, and at times conflicting, information."

The School of Language and Media includes the former Departments of English, Linguistics and Modern Languages, which Hugh says gives the new school a wide diversity.

"The school encompasses widely diverse interests, from the very applied, like the dysphagia clinic in speech pathology, to the very academic and theoretical upper level linguistics courses. With that kind of diversity, we are never going to be as unified as a smaller school with fewer disciplines."

Hugh is keen for the School, which is currently split between the McMullin and General Purpose Buildings, to co-locate, in the interests of creating unity. He says there is a great deal of goodwill operating within the new School and a willingness to make the new structure work.

"There are great advantages of scale to having a larger structure, for instance having a larger group of postgraduate students makes it easier for us to provide better facilities for them. It's also enjoyable getting to know and work with new colleagues."

The new structure brings opportunities for teaching across different areas, with German lecturers already teaching film studies courses and quite a few new proposals to collaborate. Hugh also sees some possibilities for collaboration between English and Linguistics staff, who have not previously interacted a great deal, as well as between any or all language discipline studies and English in the general literary studies area.

Hugh began work as a Senior Tutor at the University in 1978 after completing a Bachelor of Arts at Sydney University and a PhD at Oxford University. His thesis was in mannerist art theory. He rose through the ranks in the former English Department to become an Associate Professor. He teaches a course on the Age of Shakespeare to first year students and takes an Honours seminar class.

Hugh is passionate about his research. He is Director of the University's Centre for Literary and Linguistic Computing and becomes animated when describing his recently completed study showing that Shakespeare didn't write an elegy attributed to him in many recent editions of his work. In other projects through the Centre, Hugh is examining how the language of letters changed between 1580 and 1679, and taking part in a technology diffusion project in collaboration with the University of Sydney and the Australian Academy for Humanities.

Despite his English bias, Hugh is an enthusiastic advocate of the other disciplines in his School. He is pleased that the coursework Master's program in his School, the Master of Applied Linguistics, attracts strong enrolments of overseas students and says Study Abroad students are a significant presence across the School's courses.

He laments the declining interest in language studies, saying that the modern language disciplines will benefit from being part of a larger School structure, where there are opportunities to become involved in other areas.

"Expertise in other languages is a national resource and if you ignore its importance, you risk situations like that after the September 11 attacks in the US, where not enough people in the CIA spoke Arabic, for instance. Learning a language is the ultimate induction into another world view. While it's extremely difficult and involves a huge investment in time, it leads naturally to a semester abroad, which helps to create great applications in career terms."

Hugh says there are possibilities for modern languages to offer courses in cultural sensitivity to professional disciplines such as business or tourism studies. Coping with shifts in student preferences is an ongoing challenge for the School, he says. He looks forward to working within the new structure to seek opportunities.

"It was time for a change."
A smooth transition

Head of the School and Dean of Education, Professor Phil Foreman, says that the transition from a Faculty to a School was very smooth for Education.

"The former Faculty of Education was in a very strong position in terms of student numbers and finances and we went into the new Faculty as a large and strong School. While there are a few structural things still being resolved, such as who makes decisions about what, all we really had to do was change the signs."

Phil gives a lot of the credit for the ease with which the change took place to the former Dean of the Faculty of Education and now Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Education and Arts, Professor Terry Lovat.

"The structure Terry developed for the former Faculty translated very easily into the structure for the school, so up to now it has been a rewarding experience making the transition. Also, because I held the position as Dean of Students as well as Dean of Education and Head of School for four months at the end of last year, the workload seems to have improved this year."

Phil says his School is also benefiting from an increasing interest in teaching as a profession, not only in Newcastle but nationally.

"There was a 22 percent increase in students putting Education at Newcastle as their first preference this year. I think that one of the reasons for the surge in interest is that we are currently in a period of teacher shortage in Australia, which leads to good job prospects in education. But also, I would like to think that there has been a growth in altruism in Australia. People are looking for jobs where they can help others."

Phil's own career is a case in point. He was inspired by Gordon Elliot, a lecturer in educational psychology, during his studies at Newcastle Teachers' College and although he spent several years teaching in rural primary schools when he graduated at 18, Phil then worked with the Guidance Division of the Education Department and became a school counsellor.

From 1968 to 1972, Phil was the counsellor responsible for five Newcastle high schools and several of the city's primary schools. But it was his work with the Guidance Division, doing psychological assessments of children with disabilities, that began a special interest for Phil in children with intellectual and other disabilities. He studied for two Master's degrees through the University of New England and a PhD through Macquarie University, all in the special education area. His PhD looked at treatment approaches for children with Down Syndrome.

Phil's teaching and research since joining the Newcastle College of Advanced Education in 1973 has built on his special education interest. He is a former Director of the University's Special Education Centre and retains his involvement in its research arm, the Centre for Special Education and Disability Studies.

"I am working with Michael Arthur on comparing the behaviour states of students with the most severe disabilities - those who have no language, are not mobile, and need assistance with eating, drinking and toileting - to discover if they interact more with their environment in a regular school or in a special school. Our research seems to be showing they do interact more with their environment in a regular school setting, even though they still require full-time support from an aide."

Phil says education has always been a rich area for research and the School has a strong research profile, with two research Centres, including the Centre for the Study of Research Training and Impact. The new structure of the University, where the portfolios created at the University level are repeated at the Faculty and School levels, improves the potential for interaction with other disciplines, Phil said.

"Just in discussions about research activities at Faculty Board, I've learned a lot about what other areas in the Faculty are doing and that is reinforced by our representative on the Faculty Research Committee, Allyson Holbrook. Also, the School's manager of web-based learning and development, Carol Richards, who has some visionary ideas on the use of information and communication technologies, is the School representative on the Faculty IT Committee, which will encourage cross-fertilisation."

Phil says the current mix of programs in the School, with four-year double degrees combining the Bachelor of Teaching with a discipline specific program and a range of coursework Masters' programs on offer, is working well. Despite this, the School is continually reviewing its programs to ensure their ongoing popularity and relevance.

"Teacher education courses today need to deal with a range of new issues including child protection, computer competencies and the integration of students with disabilities, to name a few. Schools are complex places and society places high expectations on teachers."
On the same day that Hollywood acknowledged their high achievers with Oscars, the University honoured its own stars with the presentation of the Vice-Chancellor's Awards for General Staff Excellence.

While it may have lacked some of the glitter of the film industry's night of nights, the ceremony in the Great Hall celebrated some significant achievements by staff. Awards were presented to three individuals and three groups, with another group highly commended.

Established by the Vice-Chancellor in 1998, the awards recognise exceptional service from members of the University's general staff and require a nomination to be supported by three nominators.

From the University of Newcastle Industry Scholarship Scheme (UNISS) team's success in establishing the multi-million dollar traineeship scheme to the friendly service of the Ourimbah Campus Maintenance Officer Bill McCarthy, the awards recognised a wide range of skills. While acknowledging Bill, who received his award at a separate ceremony on the Central Coast, Chair of the Awards Committee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Brian English, said that feedback from Bill's colleagues continually reinforces how helpful and obliging he is.

"Bill is committed to helping both staff and students, often helping students in distress or lending a hand to disabled students who experience difficulties getting across campus," Brian said. "He also keeps the campus in excellent condition, taking great pride in making it a showpiece for special events such as Graduation and Open Day."

Other individuals to receive awards were Eileen O'Donohue, who was nominated for her work as secretary to Professor John Ramsland in the former Faculty of Arts and Social Science; and Dianne Pascoe for her efforts in maintaining the NUSS student system during the implementation of NUSTAR.

In introducing Eileen's award, John Ramsland said she had given outstanding service and support to the Faculty as a whole during her four years as his secretary. During this time she serviced 13 departments, four centres and a school, as well as undertaking administration and management of the Hartley Bequest Program.

"The valuable contribution Eileen has made towards the successful running of the Hartley Bequest, which sends on average four students each year to France, shows her commitment to building the profile of the University both nationally and internationally," John said.

Vice-President (University Services) Ms Linda O'Brien said that Dianne Pascoe's commitment and dedication to the University goes far beyond her roles within the Planning and Business Improvement Unit and Human Resource Services.

"In her role as Staff Development Officer, Dianne consistently provides the highest levels of service to staff," Linda said. "In her dealings with the University's external training providers and through her involvement with local sporting groups, Dianne conveys a very positive image of the University to the community."

Linda said that Dianne maintained NUSS until NUSTAR went live, while continuing in her Staff Development Officer role.

"Through Dianne's efforts with NUSS the University was able to continue to provide a quality service to students," she said. "Dianne immerses herself in the life of the University and this is evident in her work as a Grievance Adviser and also through her involvement with the Sports Union and more recently with NUSport."
**Research in the deep end**

Doctor William Gladstone and research student Vanessa Owen (pictured above), from the University’s School of Applied Sciences at the Ourimbah Campus, have ventured into deep water in pursuit of their latest research project.

Their research, which has been attracting a lot of interest from swimmers at the Berkeley Vale public baths, involves teaching themselves a rather offbeat skill in the name of marine ecology.

The skill, pertinent to their project but probably useless to most people, is the ability to judge the size of fish underwater to within a fraction of a centimetre. In order to master it, Bill and Vanessa place plastic fish models on the bottom of the swimming pool and practice observing them to get their judgements right.

The research project, entitled ‘Monitoring of Central Coast Rocky Reefs’, aims to increase understanding about the impacts of human activities and coastal development on reefs from Broken Bay to Port Stephens. Part of the project, which is funded by the Commonwealth Government under its Natural Heritage Trust/Coast and Clean Seas Program, is to assess the coastal reefs, monitor and count fish types and populations, algae and shellfish. Bill admits it’s an unusual way to prepare for research, but something that must be done.

“If you’ve ever tried to judge the size of something underwater you will understand that it is quite deceptive. When you lift the object out of the water, it is actually much smaller than you thought.”

“Imagine trying to get accurate information on the size and age of fish populations, especially when you are trying to do it underwater and they are constantly moving. It can be quite a challenge.”

There is limited information on the current status, and no monitoring of reefs within the Central Coast Region. The research project will involve community diving groups in the monitoring and assessment of reefs of the Central Coast area. A manual and training curriculum will be produced outlining the monitoring techniques and the researchers will train dive groups to continue the monitoring, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program.

The results will provide Estuary Management and Action Plans to NSW Fisheries and Local Councils to help predict future impacts on coastal reefs, assess management strategies and plan for sustainable use of the reefs.

Bill said an interactive website would be launched to provide further information on the research project and details as to how community dive groups can get involved. He said he is happy for people to contact him at the Ourimbah Campus by telephoning (02) 4348 4123.

Bill says the reactions of swimmers at the local baths to the research have been diverse.

“It’s not every day that you have people plonking fish models along the bottom of a community swimming pool and then trying to figure out their size. That has been an interesting exercise and an insight into human behaviour. Some people really want to know what you are doing and will ask a lot of questions. Others will swim back and forth over the top of you as if it’s something they see every day. There’s no accounting for the way people react to unusual situations,” he laughed.

**Hunter Building Refurbishment Program**

The Hunter Building has been refurbished over the past two years, focusing on providing disabled access to the main concourse, opening up the building to its original design by removing ill and providing new suspended ceilings. The electrical infrastructure has also been upgraded and re-roofing undertaken.

The project encompassed over 3,000 square metres of space within a budget of $2 million and feedback from users has been very positive. One of the prime drivers for the refurbishment was the co-location of the School of Health Sciences. The Vice-Chancellor and the Hunter Building Users Committee will inspect the refurbishment on June 20. The major areas of work consisted of:

- Art education workshop
- Huxley Library – three computer laboratories
- School of Health Sciences – Head of School office; Physiotherapy- three laboratories, storerooms and office accommodation; Medical Radiation Science laboratories and office accommodation; Occupational Therapy laboratories, office and postgraduate accommodation; Occupational and Environmental Health office and postgraduate accommodation; Nutrition and Dietetics laboratories, office and postgraduate accommodation
- School of Biomedical Sciences – office accommodation
- Faculty of Health – distance learning office and chemical storage room
- School of Fine Art – seminar “home room” for photography.
Parliamentary Secretary visits University

The newly appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honorary Chris Gallus MP, visited Newcastle last month.

During her visit, Mrs Gallus met with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Ron MacDonald and students from the Australian Development Scholarship Scheme. The Federal Government program, through AusAID, funds scholarships for students from developing countries to study in Australia. Last year the program invested more than three million dollars in students at the University.

This year 128 overseas students are under the scheme in Newcastle, including students from Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Laos, Vietnam, Samoa, East Timor and Mozambique. The students are enrolled in a number of courses across the University including medicine, law, health, engineering, business studies, and environmental management.

"The students I spoke to seem to be delighted with the program," Mrs Gallus said, after meeting with six AusAID students. "They love Newcastle, partly because it isn't as big as the capital cities, and the University has a good international reputation. It was interesting for me to find out why they had chosen to study in Newcastle and it seems that much of it is due to word of mouth, through speaking to others who have come here. The University seems to be noted for its ability to help students while they are here."

The scheme is part of the Australian Government's overseas aid program and gives students from developing countries access to the best expertise in the world at Australian universities.

As well as visiting the University, Ms Gallus was reviewing the AusAID information stall at the Newcastle Show. With $1.8 billion each year being spent on AusAID, she said it was important that people were aware of the advantages of the program to Australia and to their own regions.

"People can be suspicious about giving aid when there are areas of need within Australia," she explained. "Part of my job is to let Australians know about the benefits of creating good relationships within the Asia/Pacific region through schemes such as AusAID. It contributes to stability within the region, helps towards good governance, as well as generating future opportunities for trade, when students who are well disposed towards Australia after studying here return to their own nations."

Mrs Gallus says the whole Newcastle community benefits from the AusAID students who come to the University, both in terms of the multiculturalism they promote in the city and in financial terms as they contribute directly to the regional economy.

Although she came to politics late, only joining the Liberal Party in 1986, Mrs Gallus has gained a lot of experience since she won pre-selection for the seat of Hawker in 1988. She was Shadow Minister for the Environment and subsequently for Aboriginal Affairs. Before moving across to the Foreign Affairs position, she was Parliamentary Secretary for Aboriginal Affairs and recently stood in for the Minister at a Tokyo meeting on Afghanistan, where she pledged Australian support for reconstruction of the war torn nation.

Business opportunities in Southern Africa

Former President of the Australian Senate, the Honorary Kerry Sibra conducted a seminar at the University last month on doing business in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Kerry Sibra was a Senator representing NSW for 19 years and was appointed Australian High Commissioner to Zimbabwe in 1994. He was also Australian Ambassador to Mozambique, Namibia, Malawi, Botswana and Zambia. He is currently the International Liaison Officer for the Australia/Southern Africa Business Council.

Mr Sibra discussed ways the University can attract students from countries in Southern Africa and how to develop business partnerships in the region.
The status of women in Canada and Australia

Legislators in Australia have begun to think of prostitution as a job and to protect the rights of sex "workers", an approach that has never been considered in Canada, a conference hosted by the University last month has heard.

Keynote speaker at the Status of Women in Canada and Australia two-day conference, Professor John McLaren, said that the extent to which the law responds to prostitution reflects differences in the political and social cultures of the two former Commonwealth nations.

"Prostitution as a practice has invariably been controversial in Anglo-Saxon societies, producing everything from outrage, through grudging acceptance to celebration," he said. "This failure to agree on the moral and social significance of the sex trade has been reflected in varying visions of the nature and role of prostitutes."

Historically in Australia there has been greater interest in forms of regulation for prostitution and a reluctance to prosecute prostitutes criminally, Professor McLaren said. In the past 10-20 years in Australia, people have begun to think about prostitution as a job, so rather than treating its practitioners as criminals, they should be dealt with by a system of regulation that protects their health and employment standards. Canada, on the other hand, has a national system of criminal law with provisions outlawing prostitution.

Educating for a sustainable future

Educators have a responsibility to coach the future leaders of society in environmental sustainability, a visitor from the US Colorado School of Mines said at a seminar held at the University last month.

Professor Arthur Sacks spoke on the Human Dimensions of Global Change and Environmental and Sustainability Education when he spoke at Callaghan during a visit hosted by A/Professor Geoff Evans from the Discipline of Chemical Engineering. He told an audience of 50 staff and students from across the University that the Colorado School of Mines, a conservative US engineering school, has adopted an interest in interdisciplinary environmental education and the design of engineering education curricula in the field of sustainability.

Professor Sacks' research interests include global environmental politics and policy, and the human dimensions of global change. He is an experienced environmental education consultant for both the Asian Development and World Banks and has been involved with education and environment ministries in the former Soviet Union, India, the People's Republic of China and Indonesia.

Environment Officer with the University's Facilities Management division, Latha Lewis, said Professor Sacks' enthusiasm to collaborate with Newcastle academics may be an asset the University could draw on in the future. His visit promoted cross-faculty partnerships and the benefits of the campus as a practical sustainability laboratory.

"He appreciated his tour of the Callaghan campus and was impressed by the detailed planning and holistic approach adopted by Facilities Management staff over the past decade," Latha said. "He said he'd like to clone the University's Director Facilities Planning so that he could take up a similar initiative at the Colorado School of Mines."
Two prominent scientists from the Japanese National Space Development Agency (NASDA) visited the University last month to hold discussions about a magnetometer experiment being developed by University physicists to fly in the first Australian-made satellite to be launched in over 30 years.

The FedSat satellite is a project of the Cooperative Research Centre for Satellite Systems (CRCSS), a consortium of government agencies, private industry and universities, including the University of Newcastle. It will be launched from Japan between November 2002 and February 2003.

On board FedSat will be the NewMag magnetometer experiment, being developed by the University's Space Physics Group, led by Professor Brian Fraser.

"NewMag will measure the Earth's magnetic field continuously around the FedSat circular polar orbit at a height of 800 kilometres," Brian said. "The equipment will monitor space storms in the magnetic field and provide important data for the development of models for space weather applications."

The Japanese visitors, who were accompanied to Newcastle by NASDA's Australian representative Mr Stephen Ward, also visited Auspace Ltd in Canberra, where the 58 kilogram satellite is being assembled. They came to Newcastle to check on NewMag's progress and plan research collaboration. Japanese scientists will use data from the experiment in their own research to study radiation damage to space instrumentation caused by extreme space weather conditions.

"In exchange for launching FedSat on a Japanese rocket, Australia will pass on data from our experiments," Brian said. "We are currently preparing our NewMag payload for the satellite in Canberra but were able to demonstrate the functions of FedSat to our visitors using models."

Disposable age, disposable worker?

In this 'disposable age' are we moving towards 'disposable workers'? Recent statistics reveal that Australia's workforce is becoming less permanent, with one study defining 30 percent of workers as 'temporary'. The trend toward casual and temporary employment in Australia was discussed at a conference in Newcastle last month.

Dr Julia Connell (Newcastle Graduate School of Business) and Dr John Burgess (School of Policy) convened the International Perspectives on Temporary Work and Workers Conference that included research data/researchers from Denmark, the UK, the US, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Speakers covered issues relating to economic policies, labour market restructuring and the inside view from temporary workers, contracting organisations and temporary agencies.

Julia said that the restructuring and fragmentation of the Australian labor market has led to a phenomenal growth in casual/temporary employment.

"Whereas temporary workers were once used primarily to fill in for sick or vacationing permanent employees, they are now frequently employed on an ongoing basis," Julia said. "Indeed, in many cases permanent jobs are being converted to temporary positions. Today's 'just-in-time' employee is just as likely to be found on the factory floor, in a laboratory, behind a computer and in the executive suite as on the company switchboard."

She says the rationale for hiring temporary workers is the same as every other workplace initiative - labour cost savings associated with downsizing, increased global competition, new technology and the need to respond quickly to an ever-changing marketplace.

"Temporary workers help organisations to staff up and down with ease but once the job markets tighten up companies that have relied too heavily on contingent workers in critical skill positions may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage."

One recent analysis, based on an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of employment arrangements, defines 30 percent of the Australian workforce as temporary. Beaton (2002) defined as temporary workers who were casual employees, fixed term employees with entitlements, and owner managers of incorporated and non-incorporated enterprises working on contracts.

Australian studies discussed at the conference indicated the main reason for the growth of the temporary workforce in Australia has been the drive by contracting organisations to push HR responsibilities on to employment agencies, combined with legislation such as unfair dismissal, that has made employers wary of taking on new employees on permanent contracts.

The conference was held at Noah's on the Beach on 28 February and 1 March. Julia and John are currently negotiating with publishers to convert the papers presented at the conference into an edited book, which they hope to complete towards the end of the year.
Demystifying AUQA

The University will this year be audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). AUQA is an independent agency, owned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers of Education, established to conduct quality audits of self-accrediting Australian higher education institutions and State and Territory Government higher education accreditation authorities. The agency aims to assist in maintaining quality and diversity in the higher education sector, given that over the past few years there has been growth in international education, private providers, virtual universities and online delivery, and the approval of several ‘universities’ without assessment.

The audits will be conducted on a five yearly cycle and public reports will be provided on the outcomes. Through its Audit Panels, AUQA considers, reviews and comments on the effectiveness of the auditee’s mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing their academic quality and standards. There will be no funding rewards for good practice. The major components of the audit process are as follows.

Portfolio Reports
The University will provide AUQA with a portfolio of information on its quality assurance arrangements. This will be a self-evaluation of ‘how an institution thinks it can improve’ and will focus on selected areas including teaching and learning, research and research training, Indigenous education, international activity, online delivery and our sustainable campus and partnerships. It will draw on last year’s external review of the University and our response to it, which shows that we are undertaking significant change to better position ourselves to achieve our strategic priorities.

The report is being written by a Project Team with oversight by the University’s Planning and Quality Steering Committee and will be submitted to the agency on 7 June.

Trial Audit
As part of the development of the portfolio, a Trial Audit will take place in the week commencing April 29. Approximately 13 schools from across the University’s five faculties have been shortlisted for participation in the trial audit, from which three will be selected. This selection will be announced around April 15. A team external to the University, including people from the University of Tasmania, James Cook University and Hunter Area Health Service, will conduct the trial audit.

Audit Report
A draft report will be available from AUQA in mid-October and the University will have the opportunity to check the content for accuracy and emphasis before it is finalised in late November and made public via the web in early December. The report will be written to address the issues and also to protect universities from extreme interpretations in the media.

The report will identify good practices and areas where improvement is needed – it will feature commendations as strongly as recommendations. The University will then have to prepare an action plan to address the findings of the Audit Report and follow-up with a report of the resulting actions within two years of the audit.

The AUQA audit is an opportunity for the University, rather than a threat. It is an opportunity for us to look at what we are doing in terms of our quality assurance systems and processes – to identify the things we do well and also those that we don’t do so well and to put improvement plans in place.

Family Action Centre skims coffee cart cream

Members of the University’s executive team turned their hands to coffee making to celebrate the launch of a second Crema coffee cart at the Callaghan campus last month.

A proportion of the sales of the exceptional coffee from the Crema cart goes to support the work of the University’s Family Action Centre, which is entirely funded by donations and grants.

The new cart is located between the Auchmuty Library and the Life Sciences Building, with the original one outside the CT Building.

Adding froth to the March 4 launch were FAC supporters, from left, Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Health John Marley, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment Adrian Page, and Deputy Chancellor and Chair of the FAC Advisory Board Trevor Waring.
RIP John Lambert

Former Director of the University's Computing Centre John Lambert, who passed away in May last year, had a long and distinguished association with the University. His work with computers at Callaghan continued beyond his official retirement, as the following tribute written by Alexis Antonia reveals. Alexis, from the Centre for Literary and Linguistic Computing worked with John from 1980 to 2001.

Working with John

It was with some trepidation that I prepared for my first meeting with John Lambert, then Director of the University's Computing Centre. I had just been appointed as Research Assistant to the then Professor of English John Burrows, who had received a grant to do computer assisted analysis of Jane Austen's novels.

I needn't have worried. John quickly put us at ease and assured us that our total unfamiliarity with the Brave New World of computing didn't matter at all.

In those days the Computing Centre consisted of a mainframe machine connected to a number of Visual Display Units. Very few people (certainly no one in the humanities) had their own VDU. There were perhaps 10 of these "magic machines" available for general use in a room near the Computing Centre. It should not have surprised us that the Director of the Computing Centre took a personal interest in our project. One of John's most endearing qualities was the possession of an open enquiring mind - he was interested in, and knowledgeable about, all manner of things. Happily for us, one of his pet interests was the English language.

I was recently informed that John's interest in computing in the humanities pre-dated his association with us. Apparently, when the very first computer appeared on campus, only three people were permitted to use it - two mathematicians, John Lambert and Warren Brisley, and a metallurgist, Eric Hall. When they decided to write a concordance program, John tested it on a phrase from Beowulf, much to the delight of the University's inaugural Vice-Chancellor, James Auchmuty.

During the early years of our research, John was always available to us. No problem was too small or trivial; nothing was too much trouble for him. Our initial work culminated in the publication of John Burrows 1987 book Computation into Criticism. A Study of Jane Austen's Novels and an Experiment in Method. A special research centre, the Centre for Literary and Linguistic Computing (CLLC), was established on campus to facilitate the continuation of work with what has become known as the "Burrows' Method".

When John retired as Director of the Computing Centre the CLLC was quick to take advantage of his interest in our work and secured his services as a part-time programmer. The acquisition of John's expertise was both felicitous and timely. At that stage the CLLC was one of the heaviest users of the VAX system with a whole range of programs that were VAX dependent. When it became clear that PCs were to become the preferred way of computing, John started to rewrite our programs for the PC. Miraculously - it seemed to us - he had the new programs up and running just as the plugs were pulled on VAX. Ever a perfectionist, John kept improving our suite of programs right up until his untimely death. Always looking to the future, he had begun work on a program for converting our electronic texts to TEI format.

Working with John after his 'official' retirement gave me some insight into what an amazing, many-sided person he was. First and foremost came his family - his wife, children and grandchildren were a constant source of pride and pleasure. He glowed in them and their achievements. The University - with which John had been associated since its inaugural days at Tighes Hill - was important to him, and he gave it unstinting service. His work for the Union was recognised with the naming of the Lambert Lounge in his honour. He acted as Treasurer for the Friends of the University, producing the best reports and newsletters that computer technology could provide. He was Web Master for the Faculty of Arts and Social Science and freely gave his time and expertise to any Department that required it. For many years John was called upon to run teaching seminars on Excel, one of his many areas of expertise. He regularly lunched with members of the retired lecturers association, so acting as a link between the University's past and present.

John was so full of life that his sudden death in May 2001 took me totally by surprise. Even now, almost a year later, I miss working with John.