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The Senate enquiry into Australia's higher education needs has commenced and it has been interesting to read some of the transcripts of committee hearings. The most recent hearing was held in Hobart on April 26, when the Senate Committee interviewed 'witnesses' from Tasmania.

The published terms of reference for the enquiry are: 'to inquire into and report on the capacity of public universities to meet Australia's higher education needs'. Particular reference is being given to the following issues: adequacy of funding; the effect of increasing reliance on private funding; public liability consequences of private commercial activities of universities; equality of opportunity of participation; capacity of universities to contribute to economic growth; the regulation of the higher education sector; and the nature and sufficiency of independent advice to government on higher education matters.

My reading of the Tasmanian enquiry was that it mainly dealt with discussions by non-government senators and university representatives about the consequences of the reduction in public sector funding of higher education since the 1996 budget (a six percent sector wide reduction took place during 1997-2000). Questions and comments from Government senators dealt with the continued growth in university enrolments during this period and the increased funding from private sources (principally for research) and also from increased enrolments of full-fee paying domestic and international students. There were also questions about the consequences of an increasing reliance on the private sector for funding, particularly any possible impacts on academic standards and the 'independence' of universities. In addition, there was discussion about the apparent demise of some areas of the humanities arising from decreases in available funding for 'mainstream' academic programs. The Hansard account gave a useful insight into the likely areas for discussion with the Senate enquiry when the Committee meets in Newcastle in June.

I have just returned from an Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Congress of executive heads held on Cyprus, which discussed related issues to those raised at the Senate enquiry. The meeting focused on the European Union, in particular the forging of links between universities of the Commonwealth and the EU. The Director-General for Research of the EU, Dr Achilles Mitas, advised of an allocation of 17.5bn Euros for research in the following areas: genomics/biomedical science; ICT; nanotechnology; aeronautics; food safety; sustainable development; and citizens and government, as well as on programs to promote teaching excellence and staff/student mobility programs. Opportunities for non-EU member participation in these programs are limited to those universities forming partnerships with EU based universities. Given the increasing number of agreements with European universities, there is an opportunity available to us through partnership activities to access some of these funds for mutual benefit.

The Canadians described an improved position for public investment in higher education at the ACU Congress. Dr David Stompay, President and CEO of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), reported on the funding and activities of the CFI, which was established to assist not-for-profit, non-government, research institutions with equipment and facilities to allow their researchers to compete with the best. Total funding available or expended is now in excess of C$1bn, and is being spent on university research buildings and equipment at the rate of more than C$1bn pa until 2010. This funding is in addition to that provided to Canadian universities to establish 2000 research professorships, with full stipend and support.

The difference in approach to public investment in higher education and research between Australia, and the EU and Canada is therefore striking, particularly over the past five years. We are hoping of course that the lead up to the next Federal election will bring about major enhancements in funding for Australian universities, to allow us to be more competitive in a global context. Certainly, the developments in Canada and the EU indicate that we have a lot of catching up to do.

Council has now endorsed the response to the Review Report on the reorganisation of the University’s structures and administrative arrangements. The papers, available on the University’s web site, deal with the mission of the university for the next 10 years; faculty, school and central divisional structures and operating principles; the Central Coast Campus; and the benefits to students following these changes.

Council has also approved a draft implementation plan for the establishment of five new Faculties (Business and Law, Education and Arts; Engineering and Built Environment; Health; and Science) and two new Central Divisions (University Services; Research and International) from 2002. An offer will also be made for the Vice-President University Services position, and interviews will proceed during May and June for the five recently advertised PVC positions to head up the new Faculties. The next stage will be for Council to consider a final implementation plan at its June meeting and for the University to appoint the PVCs, hopefully by mid-year. I am very pleased with the progress so far and am confident about implementation in time for 2002.

Roger S Holmes
Vice- Chancellor and President
Philosopher rewarded with medal

Ralph explains. He thought about his beliefs while at Corrimal and resigned. Still a believer, however, Ralph turned to the more liberal thinking Presbyterian faith, studying theology at St Andrews Hall at the University of Sydney.

It was in his first assignment in the parish of New Lambton that he began his long association with the University and with philosophy. On completing his undergraduate degree, Ralph was offered the historical and significant parish of Parramatta and was working there while studying Honours in philosophy at Newcastle.

"It became increasingly difficult for me to say the things I had to say and after spending a lot of time thinking about broad ethical matters, I found that I no longer believed in the core beliefs of the Church."

Ralph resigned his ministry in 1968 and returned to a part-time tutor's position in the University's philosophy department. He was appointed to a senior tutor's position in 1970 and became a lecturer in 1971. In his PhD studies Ralph continued to work his way through his religious belief, completing his thesis on the use of analogies in religious language in 1975.

From 1971 to 1976, Ralph conducted group process training sessions for staff at the Shortland Psychiatric Clinic on a voluntary basis. He was a member of the University Council, Head of the Department of Philosophy, a member of Academic Senate and has served as a Sub Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He has taught short courses for the University of the Third Age as well as teaching courses in OPC since the late 1970s.

"I've always thought that the OPC is one of the best things that the University does, because it gives people a chance to enter university that they wouldn't otherwise have had," he said. "I enjoy teaching and have always tried to engage students in discussion and dialogue and encourage them to argue - teaching them to be critical thinkers about their own beliefs and mine."

Ralph took early retirement from the Department of Philosophy in 1988 but continued to lecture in Open Foundation. In 1997, aged 67, he returned to full-time work to become Director of the Enabling Programs Unit, which includes the OPC, Newstep, Unpath, and most recently the Yapug preparatory program for Indigenous Australians.

"I wasn't bored in retirement but I ran out of things to challenge me. The Director's job has given me the chance to reinvent myself and get back to something that is challenging."

The Council established the Exceptional Service Medal in 1997 to recognize exceptional and sustained contributions by a staff member towards some aspect of the University's activities. Ralph received his award from the Chancellor, Ric Charlton, at the Great Hall on May 11.
Bicycle odyssey brings global perspective

Newcastle visual arts graduate Lowanna King arrived in Sydney this month a happier person at the end of an amazing 12,000 kilometre overland journey from England by bicycle.

Lowanna, who began her epic odyssey with English partner Kevin Doyle to raise awareness for sustainable travel, says cycling through third world countries gave her a new perspective.

"I began with very radical, idealistic views on green issues and transport," Lowanna told Uninews on a four day stopover to introduce Kevin to the delights of Newcastle. "I dreamed of an ideal world with no cars and would feel deeply depressed when I saw heavy traffic or a busy airport."

With every turn of the wheel, Lowanna felt she was paddling for a better world. The green couple estimated that by cycling rather than flying, they were conserving around 50% of fuel each - the global warming equivalent to the release of five and a half tonnes of CO2 each.

But as they entered Greece and cycled through Turkey, Pakistan and India, Lowanna’s beliefs began to take on a global perspective and she discovered that environmental issues, while still important, took a back seat to human rights.

"In so many countries people struggle to meet basic requirements of food, shelter and clean water," she said, "and women struggle for the right to leave the house when they want and to dress as they please. In those countries I felt as though I was cycling for women."

Another lesson learned since leaving England on February 1st last year has been the importance of family. Lowanna grew up on Sydney’s northern beaches before leaving home to major in photography and video at Newcastle, graduating in 1995. She was eagerly anticipating spending time with her parents and three younger sisters in Sydney.

"The journey showed us that the majority of the world live in tight family units and highlighted the breakdown of the family unit in Western society," she said.

"We’ve been isolated and lonely for so long since leaving England that we’re thrilled at the idea of living in the small flat under Dad’s house in Manly for awhile."

Lowanna enjoyed showing Kevin her native Australia after disembarking from a container ship in Brisbane in March. Kevin said Australians understood what their journey was about more than any other country they had travelled through. He loved the abundance of native wildlife they’d encountered on their trip, which took them inland from Brisbane along the Beaudesert and New England Highways, as well as his first swim in the surf at Newcastle Beach on April 26.

Lowanna and Kevin were welcomed to Sydney with a reception at Lady Macquarie’s Chair in the Botanical Gardens on May 3. The pair plan to produce a documentary about the ‘Bike20’ trip with the more than 70 hours of video footage they recorded along the way and Lowanna will write a book based on her three volume journal. She also hopes to mount an exhibition of photographs from their journey.

Save the rain and save millions

Newcastle researchers say water costs in cities can be cut by 50 percent. Most of the recent rain along Australia’s east coast will run into the ocean through the river systems, but millions of gallons of good quality water will run in to storm drains and be lost.

PhD student Peter Coombes, Associate Professor George Kuczera, Professor Jetse Kalma and Dr Hugh Dunstan, say their studies have shown saving rainwater can save millions, reducing the need for construction of water infrastructure, as well as cutting the cost of water to consumers.

They have used a residential housing development in Newcastle, called Fig Tree Place, as a model to prove their theory. In the three years of its operation no storm water run off has escaped into the street drainage system.

They retain all the roof run off in tanks and use it for toilet flushing, hot water systems and outdoor water use, which has meant a 34 percent reduction in the amount of mains water used.

Peter Coombes says, "by using these methods, storm water and water supply infrastructure can be reduced, saving on building costs. Further down the line, less water used means less need for major dams and less run off means less cost to water authorities. An added bonus is reduced erosion, pollution and down stream flooding."

In the Hunter region, the focus of the experiment, they estimate construction water supply headworks can be delayed by 34 years, saving around $67 million, at present values. In the Central Coast region of New South Wales, the need for new dams could be deferred indefinitely, saving $50 million.

For further information about Figtree Place, view http://rambler.newcastle.edu.au/cc/staff/pcoombes/
UNISS welcomes new sponsors

The University of Newcastle Industry Scholarship Scheme (UNISS) welcomed new sponsors and scholars at a reception held at the University last month.

Ten new sponsors have joined the scheme over the last year, including the first to sponsor students outside the Faculty of Engineering, where the scheme began. This year sees Sydney biotechnology company, Gradiporc, sponsor a student from the Faculty of Science and Mathematics; and Lahey Constructions, JML Engineering and NCP Printing each sponsoring students from the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Design.

Twenty-two students joined the scholarship scheme this year, which places them with their sponsor for a total of 84 weeks over a five-year period, including 12-week placements in each of their first three years and a 12-month placement in year four.

The UNISS sponsors and scholars were welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Adrian Page, who said the University was continually refining UNISS to better suit the needs of industry.

Guest speaker at the reception, held at the University Club on April 11, was engineering supervisor for Newcastle City Council, Janice Walsh. There are now more than 30 UNISS sponsors.

Swapping boots for books

When former Socceroo and University medallist Graham Jennings found his sporting career drawing to a close, he thought about what he enjoyed doing and entered the field of early childhood education. A father of three, Graham says that teaching children helps him to feel young.

"Not a day goes by when I'm working with children that I can't feel happy inside. When I am able to introduce children to something for the first time, even trivial things, that's a great feeling."

By the time Graham completed Year 12 at St Pius X High School in 1977, his feet were set on the soccer field. He was selected for the Australian youth soccer squad in 1979 and played and toured with the Socceroos national soccer team from 1983 to 1989, including competing in the 1988 Olympics for Australia.

Graham played for Sydney clubs Olympic, Croatia and Apia before joining the Breakers and returning to Newcastle.

When the club went into liquidation, Graham did an Associate Diploma in Social Science (Childhood Studies) at TAFE and worked in preschools. He began a Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Social Science degree, specialising in early childhood studies at University as one of only four men in the course. He completed his four-year double degree with outstanding academic results.

"I have a very understanding and helpful wife, Louise, who worked to support us while I studied. My Dad always stressed the importance of education and always wanted one of his six children to go to university. I was the first one to get there."

April 11, was engineering supervisor for Newcastle City Council, Janice Walsh. There are now more than 30 UNISS sponsors.

Graham began work teaching Year 2 at St Pauls primary school at Gateshead this term. He worked hard to achieve his medal winning results, studying at night when his children had gone to bed. While he says his motivation flagged last year following the death of his father, Graham managed to sustain his performance. His mother, wife and children all watched proudly as he received his medal on May 11.
Many doctors in general practice find their occupation stressful and turn to creative pursuits like music as a relaxing outlet. The Faculty of Music's new lecturer in conducting, however, has an alternate take – he turns to medical practice as a release from the stresses of his musical career.

Dr David Ranney, who joined the Faculty in January this year and will conduct the University’s symphony orchestra, says the less medicine he practices, the more he enjoys it.

"I practise part-time in a skin clinic in Bolton Street and really enjoy it," David said. "Whenever I go there, I really want to be there and I find it very exciting."

David, who was born in Brisbane, began learning violin when he was 10. By the time he was 13, music had overtaken cricket as his main passion and he began to compose. He had his first taste of conducting at Pimlico High School in Townsville when his music teacher decided she didn't want to conduct the school orchestra and asked him to do it.

Despite his strong interest in music, David decided not to pursue it professionally and studied medicine at the University of Queensland (UQ) after finishing school. While at medical school, he began singing in a church choir and was asked to conduct it.

"I knew what sound I wanted from the choir, although I wasn’t too good at getting it," David joked. "But I caught the bug."

David helped to organise medical school reviews, conducting the orchestra of 20 or so players and then joined a friend to organise a choral festival for the university colleges, which was not only a huge success but attracted attention for the young conductor. He moved on from his church choir to conduct bigger and better choirs.

Following his graduation from medical school, David set up in general practice in Rockhampton for a couple of years. It was during this time he saw a documentary on Sydney Symphony Orchestra conductor, the late Stuart Chaildren.

"Challender said that the only thing he'd ever wanted to do in his life was to be a conductor and that really resonated with me. Apart from playing cricket for Australia, the only ambition that had ever burned for me was my gradually increasing desire to be a conductor. I don't exactly know why but it is where I feel most at home and the way I can best express myself musically. It is the only thing in my life that when I'm doing it, I haven't thought about anything else for hours."

So in 1993, David returned to UQ and completed his Bachelor of Music. In 1994, the concert master of the Queensland Philharmonic saw him conducting and invited him to conduct a school concert series. The following year he auditioned with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and from then on was regularly given the opportunity to conduct. It was also in 1995 that he won the ABC Young Conductor's Competition.

In 1998, David went to London to study for two years with the great English conductor Vernon Handley, who describes him as 'one of the best half dozen young conductors with whom I have come into contact for the 40 years of my teaching career'. While there, David was given the opportunity to conduct the European Medical Students' Orchestra, which he has conducted several times since, most recently last month.

"It is my favourite orchestra because they have such a passion for the music," David said. "Often music students just see orchestra practice as yet another chore at the end of a long day of music but medical students have an intensity and a love for the music that makes them like caged tigers waiting to get out and play with the orchestra."

While David finds conducting a joy, he says that the secret of success is to be thoroughly familiar with the musical score and that there is no shortcut to getting all those notes into your head.

"As a conductor you never feel as though your job is finished. It can take at least a month before you've managed to get all the notes into your head."

"The following year he auditioned with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and from then on was regularly given the opportunity to conduct. It was also in 1995 that he won the ABC Young Conductor's Competition."

Expressing himself — David Ranney in action at the Conservatorium
Stalagmites predict climate change effects

Geochemical research into ancient stalagmites that could provide an insight into the effects of global warming is one of two Newcastle projects that have attracted grants from the Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering (AINSE).

PhD student in the School of Geosciences Janece McDonald says that using stalagmites to study the paleoclimate of three regions – Cleften in central NSW, Jerrawangal and Wombeyan, south west of the Blue Mountains – will provide scientists with another piece in the puzzle of the effects of climate change.

"Stalagmites build up from dripping water and each drop contains within it information about the conditions in the soil above it when it was formed," Janece said. "The stable isotopes (carbon and oxygen) give an indication of the temperature at the time the stalagmite was forming as well as the extent of vegetation activity, which can be related back to palaeoclimate of the site. For instance, we are told that at about 100,000 years ago in central NSW there was a period of warm humid climate during which the stalagmites grew very strongly followed by a cooler, drier period."

Janece says the stalagmites have an advantage over other climate indicators such as pollen cores or lake cores because they can be dated very accurately. She is working with stalagmites that range up to 110,000 years old. The dating, by the uranium-series disequilibrium method, is carried out at the Australian Science and Nuclear Technology Organisation (ANSTO) based at Lucas Heights in Sydney.

The postgraduate award from AINSE, worth more than $13,000 a year, will allow Janece and Newcastle geoscience colleague Fiona Dick access to more than 100 facilities at Lucas Heights, which include neutron and gamma ray irradiation facilities, ion and electron beam accelerators, radiopharmaceutical laboratories and a fully equipped marine survey vessel. The Newcastle researchers were amongst 10 PhD candidates nationwide to win the grants.

Janece's supervisor, Dr Russell Drysdale, says the grant will expedite her research and ensure she has excellent data sets as a result. Fiona, whose research proposal is entitled "Elemental structure of fine particulates from the Asian continent under differing meteorological conditions," is supervised by Associate Professor Howard Bridgman.

A grand day for Stuart and Sons

For the first time in over 100 years a concert grand piano was exported from Australia last month and it came from Newcastle.

The Newcastle designed, built and developed Stuart and Sons Concert Grand Piano worth $200,000 went to the Welsh College of Music, which has just signed an exchange agreement with the University.

The Stuart and Sons piano has undergone extensive development at the University and the sale to the Welsh College came after a delegation visited the University two years ago and heard the piano played.

Wayne Stuart says his piano is designed to bring the instrument into the 21st century.

"It has a greater dynamic range and can be played both louder and softer than the standard piano without losing clarity," he said. "A modern piano sound needs clarity and greater sustaining of sound. We believe we have created new technology to achieve new levels of performance."

Stuart and Sons have been developing a small manufacturing base in Newcastle since the mid-1990's and this order for the Welsh College is seen as a major breakthrough for the company and a boost for the Newcastle export industry.

The Principal of the Welsh College, Edmond Fivet was part of the delegation that visited Newcastle to sign the exchange agreement, which will allow the exchange of students and staff between the College and the Conservatorium, as well as cooperation between them in music teaching and research.

Dean of the Faculty of Music, Professor Robert Constable says the relationship with the College will be vitally important in helping to spread the influence of the Faculty into Europe.

"The Welsh students and teachers coming to Newcastle will add a new dimension to the work done here," Robert added.

Edmond Fivet says the exchange agreement marks a milestone for his College and symbolises the sister state relationship between NSW and Wales. The signing took place on April 5 at the Conservatorium and the Stuart piano was officially handed over the following day in Sydney at a reception attended by State Treasurer, Michael Figan and other political leaders.
Neil Hunter has been appointed General Manager of the Central Coast Student Union.

Born in Scotland, he was educated at Andrews University in Michigan in the US. He comes to us from Avondale College where he was Director of Food Services. He also ran a vegetarian restaurant in Edinburgh for six years in the University area where many of his clientele were students.

"A large part of the Union's role involves hospitality and catering for large functions," he said, "so I am at home in this position."

He has worked in other tertiary institutions for 12 years, and is currently completing an MBA at Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh.

One project of the Student Union he is seeking to completion is the new building that will house a board room and a lounge area for students.

"The Union has funded this totally," he said, "at a cost of around $750,000. The student help desk is now functioning, and the rest of the building is still to be finished before the official opening."

Central Coast students performed well at 2001 University Cluster Games hosted by the Central Coast Student Union at Ourimbah campus in the break following Easter.

Sports included archery at Erina Archery Club, cycling at Calga and on the campus ring road, mountain biking in Ourimbah state forest and rugby league at nearby Solihill Park. Visiting athletes came from throughout NSW and the ACT, and competition was strong.

Local archer Trent Dickeson successfully defended his title in the Geelong category and won silver in the Adelaide category. Trent was part of the University team that won the team event, ending a three year run for Sydney University. The Coast's rugby league team also bagged a silver.

Ironically the overall champion cyclist was UTS student Brian Arnott who lives locally and trains on the Ourimbah track with the Central Coast Cycling Club.

Another Ourimbah campus student, James Beasley, won gold and silver for the Central Coast at the concurrent Eastern University Swimming Championships.

Students from the University’s Archery Club have won the overall team title at this year’s Eastern University Championships (EUC) held on the Central Coast last month. Club Secretary, Adam Evans, who competed as part of the winning team of six, said it was the first time Newcastle has won the title since competition began almost a decade ago.

"The Universities of Sydney and NSW have traded the team championship since 1992," Adam said. "We were really pleased given that we fielded such a small team and the fact that the Club hasn’t been able to shoot on campus all year."

The University is building a new archery range on No4 oval after the club was displaced from its previous ranges due to occupational health and safety concerns. The Archery Club has a 21 year history at the University.

Outstanding newcomer I-Sheng Hsu, who had his first taste of archery when he joined the University club in June last year, won gold in the Geelong Male Novice and the Adelaide Male Compound events. Joe Kelly, who joined in 1999, won gold in the Adelaide Male Recurve and silver in the Geelong Male Recurve.

The two day EUC competition, held at Erina on April 21 and 22, also included mountain biking events, with the University’s team performing well to take out silver in the team title.

Among Newcastle’s best performers were Helen Green, who won gold in the Women’s Cross Country and Nicholas Villa, who won the Men’s Dual Compression Downhill event.

Archery team on target

Celebrating their win (from left) Adam Evans, Mike Langford, Trent Dickeson, Joe Kelly, front row John Winslow and promising newcomer I-Sheng Hsu (Abra)

Professor Lyndall Ryan and Dr James Bennett of the organising committee are calling for papers, which may be located within a single discipline or may challenge and cross disciplinary boundaries in the pursuit of gender issues in unconventional and unfamiliar territories. The keynote speaker for the conference will be Dr Michael Flood from ANU.

Suggested themes include media, film and performance; Indigenous issues; religion, belief and spirituality; politics, work and policy/ issues of power; teaching and education; gendered sites (eg. the environment and corporal); alternative sub-cultures; pro-active approaches to gender; technology and science; or gender and youth.

Conference registration is being kept to about $40 in order to attract postgraduates and staff from across as broad a range of areas as possible.

Conference enquiries should be directed to Dr Marguerite Johnson at clmjm@alinga.newcastle.edu.au or Dr James Bennett at jjbennett@mail.newcastle.edu.au.
Defence skills come in handy

They may seem like radically different environments but former Australian Army Major Graham Campbell says his army training prepared him well for his new position as Coordinator of the University’s Prizes, Examinations and Graduations Services section.

Graham says that the qualifications and skills he acquired during his time in the army involve expertise in management and education that is applicable to the University environment.

“It’s a challenge adjusting from one organisational structure to another but the Army is very flexible and I was trained to think laterally and to find innovative solutions to problems. While it’s hard to equate the two environments, there are common management practices between education and defence.”

Graham, who graduated with his Master of Leadership and Management in Education (MLMed) on May 11, joined the army after leaving his Taree high school. He entered Royal Military College, Duntroon in Canberra, where he studied arts and has also completed a degree in adult education from the University of Technology in Sydney. His military career has taken him all over the world, with postings to West Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Canada and Port Dickson in Malaysia.

Graham held a string of operational and training positions with the army, primarily at the School of Artillery, which was then located at Sydney’s North Head, and the Australian Defence Force Warfare Centre at RAAF Williamtown. He began his Masters studies at Newcastle while working at Adamstown Barracks and was given a medical discharge from the army last year.

“My wife saw the advertisement for the University position at a time when it was evident I would be discharged so it was imperative I pursue another career. I gained many skills in the army and was always prepared to get up and move at any time but I know that my family appreciate staying still in Newcastle. They have been constantly disrupted and the past few years in Newcastle has provided some stability for them.”

Graham feels his defence skills are appropriate in his role as coordinator for one of the busiest administrative centres in the University. He supervises five permanent staff members and a number of casual staff employed to supervise examinations. He is responsible for coordinating the many examinations, not only held at the end of each semester but also now at trimester end at the Graduate School of Business and at numerous remote sites for distance learning students. He also administers the University’s 364 prizes and the ever-growing organisational task involved in the many graduation ceremonies held by the University each year.

The course director for the MMLMed, Dr David Gamage, said Graham has excelled at his studies. He completed his studies part-time over two years, achieving very good results. The management subjects were of special interest to him, particularly applied management areas such as accounting and finance. Graham’s wife, Kim and three children attended his graduation ceremony on May 11.

Diploma in Education

Have you ever considered becoming a teacher? The University is offering a limited mid-year intake for those who have completed a degree or equivalent qualification and who would like to become a secondary school teacher in science or mathematics.

The two-semester full-time graduate program is 11HECS-based and offered at Callaghan. Applicants will need written confirmation of the suitability of their academic qualifications from the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. You can contact the Department by telephoning 1300 300 498 to check your eligibility. Those interested are urged to apply to the Department as soon as possible to avoid possible processing delays.

For information on the course, contact Airlie Johnson on 4921 6530, email Airlie.Johnson@newcastle.edu.au. For information on the Diploma in Education Primary contact Katrina Kittel on 4921 6531 or email katrina.kittel@newcastle.edu.au.
The Family Action Centre meets the real needs of young people and families through:

- **Caravan Project**: Families and residents who live permanently in caravan parks have benefited from programs delivered by professional field staff since 1986. Programs include home visits, craft, playgroups, men's groups, community gardening, after school programs and special events. Caravan Project staff provide these families with valuable support, resources, information, and links with other community services, as well as training and empowering residents to run their own programs.

- **Home-Start**: Home-Start's trained volunteers visit families with young children who are in need of support. All Home-Start visitors are parents or grandparents themselves and are selected for their caring attitudes and ability to relate to others. After completing a ten-week (one day per week) training program, visitors are linked with a family and supported by their professional coordinator. The Home-Start service is free to all families in need, and has been operating at the Family Action Centre for over ten years.

- **Homelink**: The Homelink program provides an important link between home and school. By training volunteers and linking them with a school child who is in need of support, Homelink can assist both teachers and parents to communicate and plan for better educational, social and emotional outcomes for children. Homelink links families, schools and the community through friendship and has been operating at the Family Action Centre for over eight years.

- **Men and Boys Program** offers a research and training consultancy to school, health and welfare organisations in the areas of Engaging Fathers, Boys' Education, and Young Men's Health.

- **Family and Community Research Program** fosters partnerships between communities and the University to research and develop the strengths and resilience of families and communities.
Now, you can help. You are invited to support the Family Action Centre. For a minimum of $5 a fortnight, deducted from your payroll, you can help the Centre to continue helping Australian families in need. All donations are fully tax deductible and you will be invited to three luncheon events a year to hear about what is happening in the Centre’s programs.

The Family Action Centre of the University of Newcastle is entirely funded from grants from State and Federal Government Departments, donations from philanthropic organisations, and corporate and private sponsorships.

2001 Seminar Program:

January - "What are the strategies that work best to engage others in the lives of their children?" by Richard Fletcher

September - "What do we know about the strengths of Australian families - how do you fare?" by Simone Eilberberg

November - "Skills and strategies for women working with boys," by Deborah Hartman.

To become a supporter of the Family Action Centre, complete the form in this issue of Uninewa.
Medal medley

There were 47 University Medals presented to outstanding students at the May graduation ceremonies. To be considered for a medal, a student must graduate with First Class Honours, not fail any subject and achieve high academic results throughout their studies. Achieving these requirements, however, doesn't guarantee the award of the prestigious medal, with their determination left to the discretion of a selection panel. Uninews has selected several medallists to profile in this issue. The selection was largely random and our congratulations go to all 47 medallists.

Miriam Pepper
Bachelor of Chemical Engineering/Bachelor of Arts

Miriam liked science and mathematics while at Merewether High School and decided that engineering was a practical way to use her skills and to make a positive social impact with her contribution to industry on graduation. She had also enjoyed her high school German studies and after deciding to do a combined degree, she also went on a six month exchange to Klagenfurt in Austria at the end of 1999.

Miriam has a graduate position with Australian Water Technology in Sydney, working in their water treatment process group. She took a position working with water as it has a community focus and she is interested in the environmental aspects such as the scope for using water in environmentally friendly ways. She hopes one day to work in a policy-making role and thinks it is important that she improves her world experience.

"I have always been a diligent student and I worked hard but I didn't set a goal to win a medal until my final year of studies when I realised it might be attainable if I could keep the standard up. I wanted to do the best I could for myself but I think that the sort of recognition of your efforts that a medal represents brings the opportunity to do further studies one day."

Ryan Webb
Bachelor of Arts (English major)

Ryan came to University from Merewether High School. He studied arts despite having prepared himself for a career in engineering, studying 4-Unit Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry for his HSC and coming second in the Hunter region in Maths.

"I loved maths but English was the only thing that I thought would hold my interest for any length of time. After Year 11, I decided that I was happy to read books and that was something I could enjoy for the rest of my life."

Ryan did his Honours thesis on self-inclusive authorship, looking at authors who include themselves in their books as recognisable characters. Having set himself the goal of working in academia, he realised he would have to do well in his studies. He is currently taking a break from study, working part-time in the University's libraries, and plans to do his PhD on the border between history and fiction in 20th century novels.

Camilla Seamer
Bachelor of Design (Graphic)

From Mullumbimby, north of Byron Bay on the NSW north coast, Camilla decided at aged 12 that graphic design was what she wanted to do. She excelled in high school art class and her HSC major work, a series of five big bright eyes, was selected for the competitive Art Express touring exhibition as well as for the cover of the 1996 UAC Guide.

Camilla loved her graphics studies at Newcastle, enjpying every subject. She enjoys many different aspects of design including corporate, digital and print and is currently targeting the Sydney advertising agencies that she would like to work for with her own uniquely designed CV that includes a self-launching CD-ROM with samples of her commercial work in a case that also houses her resume folded into a compact booklet.

"I worked hard - I've always been a workaholic and I set myself the goal of getting Honours. I only became aware of the University Medal in my final year."
Gough Au  
**Bachelor of Biomedical Science**

Gough, who was named for former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, was interested in science while a student at St Francis Xavier High School and thought that the University’s new biomedical science course would be more vocationally focussed than a broad-based science degree. He did his Honours thesis on virology and is currently undertaking a PhD in the area of virology, working with medical researcher Dr Darren Shafren at the David Maddison building.

Gough plans to pursue a career in medical research. He enjoys making new discoveries and finds the work constantly changing and exciting. The research he is taking part in currently involves looking at a number of viruses including the common cold and attempting to find new treatment strategies such as gene therapy and using viruses to target various cancers. Gough says the skills he is learning are easily transferable across various fields of medical research.

“Since an early age, I’ve always tried to do my best at everything. It was instilled in me by my Dad – he didn’t set high expectations but just told me to do my best. Winning a university medal wasn’t a goal I set for myself and I’m very excited to be receiving it. It’s still a bit of a shock.”

Timothy Constable  
**Bachelor of Music**

A talented percussionist, Tim was invited to complete his Honours year at the prestigious Royal College of Music in Stockholm. He had visited the College in 1998 to play in their percussion expo – one of only three students worldwide invited to play and attend master classes with famous deaf percussionist Evelyn Glennie and marimbist, Keiko Abe. Tim has also performed at a special concert with outstanding percussion group Kroumata.

Back in Australia, Tim is enrolled in the University’s Master of Arts (Music) and is performing professionally with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He also performs with Australia’s premier percussion group, Synergy and plays in a jazz duo with Sydney-based percussionist Darryl Pratt. Tim, who attended Newcastle’s Steiner School, began music lessons at the Conservatorium when he was 10 and plays over 100 instruments. He also composes and is researching methodology for improving and teaching improvisation to music teachers.

Dean of the Faculty of Music and proud father, Professor Robert Constable, presented Tim with the University medal on May 9. “Everything he’s done has been on his own which is pretty remarkable,” Robert said. “Music has four medallists this year and everyone of them is enrolled in a Master’s here. They were an extraordinary batch.”

Aiden Sims  
**Bachelor of Mathematics/Bachelor of Computer Science**

Aiden has always enjoyed mathematics and thinks a lot of that was engendered by his father, Head of the Department of Mathematics Dr Brailey Sims. “When I was a kid Dad used to show me stuff that was interesting and made maths fun for me.”

A former St Francis Xavier student, Aiden says the maths he’s done at university is completely different to high school maths. While he undertook a double degree in order to increase his vocational opportunities, Aiden would like to continue with his mathematics research and follow his father into an academic career. He is currently undertaking a PhD carrying on from research he began in his Honours year on C*-algebra. He is collaborating with fellow PhD student Trent Yeend, who was also awarded a University medal at the May graduation.

“We are investigating the properties of concepts, not concrete equations. It’s hard to explain – even to define it is complex.”

Aiden paid tribute to the staff of the Mathematics department and to his supervisor Professor Iain Raeburn, who he says can claim a lot of credit for his performance. He says that while he had always expected to do well at his studies, he would never have expected to win a medal and was really happy to have received one.
Communication for CanTeen

A group of final year Visual Communication students are helping the local branch of CanTeen, the national organisation for young people with cancer, to communicate with their members.

The five third year students, part of the first cohort to study the Bachelor of Design (Visual Communications) degree, volunteered to develop a design template for CanTeen's bi-annual newsletter. The design work follows a call for help to the University's design students from Coordinator of the Hunter Northern (NSW) Division of CanTeen, Martin Reilly.

"The magazine provides our members with information about cancer as well as telling their own stories, reflects on our activities and acknowledges the members' involvement in them, and allows us to thank our sponsors," Martin said. "We want it to look good - eye-catching and young looking - to help get our message across in the right way. But we also want the members to be involved in its production so ideally, the design should allow for a 12-year old to put it together."

Helping special students

Helping 16 to 18 year-old high school students with special educational needs is the focus of new research at the University.

Lecturer in psychology in the School of Behavioural Sciences, Dr Kerri McCarthy, explains the research will enable new diagnostic models of general ability testing to be developed to support Australian high school students.

"The purpose of this research is to provide diagnostic information to support the special education needs of these senior high school students, and help them achieve their maximum potential at school," Kerri explains.

The research will be focused on students with special needs, such as mental health problems, developmental disabilities, and hearing impairments.

Current psychology testing models do not cover Australian 16 to 18 year olds.

A pilot study, conducted last year, involving 21 special needs students aged 16 to 18 years revealed this lack of information about the profiles of Australian special needs adolescents. While students with special educational needs are encouraged to continue at school and study for their HSC, there is increasing demand for educational assistance strategies to help them and their teachers.

The study began this month and Kerri is optimistic that the results will be adopted by education authorities to assist senior high school students with special needs to successfully complete their studies.

Funding for the project was made through the Keats Endowment Fund, established by Emeritus Professors John and Daphne Keats to fund research that assists the Hunter community.

Support chronic fatigue research – sponsor a rower

Newcastle University Boat Club in conjunction with the University's Collaborative Pain Research Unit (CPRU) will hold a Row against Pain and Fatigue on June 10.

The CPRU has been researching chronic fatigue and pain conditions for over eight years. They have joined forces with the Boat Club to raise money for their research. Half of all proceeds from a 36km, sponsored row will be directed to the CPRU research with the rest supporting the University rowing program for 2001. The row, planned to become an annual event, will also help raise awareness for chronic pain and fatigue conditions. Hugh Dunstan, a member of the CPRU team, will participate in one of the crews and will definitely be fatigued and pained! The crews will row from Newcastle Harbour to the boat sheds at Hunter Valley Grammar School near Duckenfield.

Sponsorship can be per kilometre (36 km) or by donation. For information or a sponsorship form, contact Sandra on 4921 5630 or David Hanson on 4956 3300...
Why do volunteers do it?

What makes someone give up their time to volunteer for conservation organisations, with no financial reward and basic living conditions? What do they get out of it, and does the experience change them?

These questions are the basis of research by PhD candidate Sue Broad, in the Department of Leisure and Tourism Studies. Sue decided to find out about volunteers, she had to become one of them and spent six months at the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project in Phuket, Thailand.

“The Project (GRP) relies heavily on volunteers for both labor and funding,” she says. “It saves gibbons and their rainforest habitat through rescuing white-handed gibbons used as pets and giving them a more natural home, and rehabilitating and releasing those they can.”

The cost of volunteering at the GRP is $US975 for eight weeks, the minimum stay is four weeks and volunteers often stay six months or more. So why do they do it?

Sue says most of the volunteers are under 25 and had just finished or were on a break from University.

“Many had a high level of commitment to conservation before they started and that seemed to be heightened by the volunteering experience. Others were looking for an alternative tourism experience in a different culture.”

Personal growth was the most identified consequence of volunteering, according to Sue.

“Despite the long hours and fairly primitive living conditions, they describe their experience as brilliant, fantastic and amazing,” she said. “Some saw it as adding to their career direction, others as a personally rewarding experience and some decided to devote their life to working with wild life.”

Sue hopes her research will help foundations like the GRP offer volunteers an even more rewarding experience and help them in their conservation goals.

She received funding for her work from the Winifred Violet Scott estate, which provides funds to support the promotion of kindness towards animals and the protection of endangered species.
PPE's recent addition to campus facilities is an extension to the Engineering F Building, providing 850 square metres of additional space. This building is the new home for postgraduate engineering students, the CAD Laboratory and a Faculty meeting room. It also houses the Centre for Sustainable Technology.

The University's Staff Architect Geoff Whitnall worked closely with the Faculty of Engineering to formulate the design brief for the extension. Architects Seymour Lawler produced the functional and cost efficient design to create an attractive facility within the available project budget of SL35m.

Cost efficient features include the unadorned industrial finishes and the application of sustainable building design including natural ventilation and thermal mass heat transfer concepts to create comfort. The design process included sophisticated three-dimensional computer modelling for thermal comfort and natural lighting.

Budget constraints prohibited the air-conditioning of the CAD laboratory. The comfort levels within this facility are currently being monitored. Provision has been made to easily convert the CAD laboratory into a dual ventilation system if a review of its performance suggests that is required and additional funds are available. The extension 'splits' at its centre to create a public area within the building and an external deck facing onto the remnant bushland. The angle column on this western end of the building also aids character.

The Engineering F extension has just been short-listed for the NSW Royal Australian Institute of Architects Award.

Sustainability features
Masonry Thermal Mass - the design includes maximising the exposed masonry surface to facilitate heat transfer in summer and winter. In summer the exposed masonry surfaces extract heat from the warm air flow through the building and increase the indoor comfort by creating air movement - even on still days. The low winter sun penetrate through the large northern glass facade to heat the masonry surfaces. This heat is then re-radiated to elevate the indoor air temperature in winter.

Natural Ventilation - applies the principles of natural convection and cross ventilation. Low and high level venting louvres have been designed to facilitate natural ventilation. On still days these vents create a buoyancy effect and rely on natural convection for air movement. A cross ventilation strategy is used for windy days.

Walling Systems - ventilated wall cavity reduces radiant heat transfer to the inside of the building. External metal cladding over vertical framing allows the wall cavities to remain fully ventilated, while internal walls are insulated. Direct sun heats the highly conductive metal cladding quickly. However the ventilated cavity minimises heat transfer to the inner masonry walls. Once the sun moves off the cladding, it cools quickly, unlike an external masonry skin, which would continue to transfer heat slowly into the building.

Banksia Environmental Award

Our University has been nominated as a finalist in the Building category for the prestigious National Environmental Banksia Award. This year all finalists for this award have the opportunity to participate in the Prime Minister's Environmentalist of the Year Award. A presentation ceremony is to be held in Canberra on 2nd June, 2001.

The University's holistic approach to a series of ESD (ecologically sustainable design) buildings demonstrates an economic and practical approach while breaking new ground in architectural excellence and environmental performance. The Rocky Mountain Institute has described this succession of new buildings and approach to the management of the natural environment as "probably the most significant succession of sustainable buildings anywhere in the world" (Huston Eubank, November 1999). These buildings are complimented by sensitive landscape and management techniques, including the LandSoft Catchment management system, which represent significant progress in maintaining remnant Australian bushland in a heavily populated urban context.

PPE's submission for the award includes a series of 12 buildings on the Callaghan site. These projects, valued in excess of $130 million in total, have demonstrated excellent, economical architecture – as well as being stimulating and pleasant places in which to work and study.

All are invited to come and celebrate the award ceremony. Ticket applications are available on http://www.banksiafilm.com. RSVP 23 May, 2001.
Halls of residence plug in

During the summer the Communications Services Group within IFSD undertook to establish data communications to the student residential bedrooms on the Callaghan campus.

This large project is now complete and has provided the supply of data communications to student bedrooms in the residential halls, which until now have had no provision for data network access. Cutler and Burnett Houses (Edwards Hall) and all of the smaller residential houses within Evatt House, International House and Edwards Hall have been linked with underground fibre optic cabling. In all some 34 separate buildings were connected.

ABB Australia was the successful tenderer for the external part of the project. Their work included the installation of underground conduits and cable pits as well as the fibre optic cable installation, termination and testing. All underground conduits were installed using an underground-boring machine to create the new pathways. This method had proven to be successful during previous projects and is cost effective and environmentally friendly.

Celtron was the successful tenderer for all of the internal twisted pair cabling which had to be installed in each of the residential blocks. Celtron installed 650 new data outlets throughout the bedrooms of the Residential Accommodation Unit. Add to this the areas that previously had data cabling and the new Barangiean building, and the Residential Accommodation Unit precinct now has around 1000 data outlets located within student bedrooms and a further 200 in offices and general areas.

The timeframe to complete a project of this size was very tight, as most of the work had to be carried out during the December and January semester break when rooms were vacant. Although IFSD managed the project, a successful outcome could not have been achieved without the help and cooperation of other University units: Residential Accommodation Unit, Physical Planning and Estates, and Finance.

The Vice-Chancellor provided a loan to the Residential Accommodation Unit in order that the work could proceed immediately, since Newcastle was the only east coast university without computer data points in student accommodation. This loan will be paid back over a period of approximately 10 years from funds collected from users (students) of the new network facilities. This project was carried out and completed within the estimated budget and timeframe.

Now that the University of Newcastle can offer network facilities to students in all bedrooms on campus it should prove to be a real drawcard in attracting new students to study and live at the University.

Andrew Pollack
IT Infrastructure Program

Norwegian named top business student

A Norwegian student from the city of Trondheim has been named the top student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the Graduate School of Business, and won the Graduate Management Association Prize for the Most Outstanding MBA Graduate in 2000.

Twenty-four-year-old Geir Jacobsen achieved the highest Grade Point Average from over 50 graduates from the MBA in 2000. It is the first time an international student has won the award and Geir, who is now studying his Master of Applied Finance at the University, says it's an honour.

"I'm really enjoying studying at the University of Newcastle," he says. "Now I've taken on a Master of Applied Finance, using credit from the MBA, and I'll finish that in April."

Geir will then return to Norway and build up his work experience, before considering travelling to the United Kingdom or the United States. He is partway through an undergraduate degree in Law at the University of Bergen, and says he may consider Business Law as a career.

"I will miss Newcastle when I leave," he said. "I share a house overlooking the beach with four other Norwegian students, and I enjoy a great lifestyle here."

Top MBA student Geir Jacobsen at Newcastle Beach
For Sale by tender

For Sale by tender 03/01

The following items are available for sale by tender.

Item 1: Large format DNI printer, Epson DX5000, Dot Matrix Printer. Serial Number 0G70000093

Item 2: Large format DNI printer, Epson DX5000, Dot Matrix Printer. Serial Number 020000025

For further information please contact Warren Keen - Electrical & Computer Engineering, UCC 089 - ext 6571. The goods are sold in “as is” condition and the University reserves the right to reject any or all tenders. Tenders close on Friday, 1st June, 2001 at 11:30am and should be forwarded to the Tender Box, Supply Section, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan 2308. Please mark clearly on the sealed envelope “TENDER 03/01”.

For sale by tender 04/01

The following items are available for sale by tender.

Item 1: Pencil eraser - Wescliffe
Item 2: Cables - multi-pin - assorted box
Item 3: Cassette tape - technical alignment - BVU
Item 4: Cassette tapes (2x) - technical alignment - lo band
Item 5: Chrome key unit - Shintron

For Sale

Country style 3 seater lounge and 2 chairs, solid pine frame with green tartan-type covers, excellent condition, $800 (I have photos)

Peg Perego pram, navy blue and white, sturdy frame, excellent condition, $50

Fleece-lined 3/4 length anorak, (English size 12) dark green, with detachable fleece-lined hood and plenty of pockets. This is a very warm jacket and would be suitable for anyone planning on going to the snowfields, and has been worn only a few times - $50.

Please contact Anne Burtoft on 4921 6444 (w) or 4975 2139 (h)

Knights season ticket - Concourse seat (eastern side on 20 metre line) $120.00 phone Sue X6829

May 9-27


May 25

Alumni Cocktail Party and viewing of the 'Monet and Japan' exhibition to be held at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra from 6.30-8.30pm. Dr Brian Kennedy, Director of the Gallery will be the guest speaker. Newcastle graduates and their guests are welcome. For information contact Alison Kindler on 4921 7228.

June 4

Australian Red Cross Donormobile will be parked between the Hunter Building and the Student Services Centre on June 4 from 9.30am to 4pm. Enquiries to Evelyn Read on 4921 6002.

Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute Gold Series Meetings:

Topic: "Vascular Afternoon" Date: 16/6/01

Topic: "Neurology, MS & Parkinsons" Date: 24/7/01

Venue: TBA

Paediatric Meetings:

Topic: "Growth & Puberty" Date: 25/5/01

Topic: "Child Sexual Abuse" Date: 12/6/01

Topic: "Ent/Allergy/Surgery/Headache" Date: 23/6/01

Topic: "Asthma" Date: 7/7/01

Venue: All meetings held Small Lecture Theatre John Hunter Hospital.

Teleconferences:

Topic: "Dementia" Date: 29/5/01

Topic: "Investigation Of The Thyroid Nodule" Date: 14/8/01

Venue: Your Home Phone

For information about any of these courses please contact the Secretariat on 49236163 or 49236173.
Health and Safety

Commonsense safety

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." "A stitch in time saves nine." "Look before you leap." "Better to be safe than sorry." Sound advice, which can not only bring about the prevention of injury or illness but also, in extreme circumstances, may save a life — and that life could be yours, or that of a family member or workplace.

We're all familiar with the above sayings and the message they convey is straightforward and simple and reflects the current day occupational health and safety stance of identifying and eliminating or controlling risks. We all have a duty of care when it comes to health and safety. Everyone applies safe practices wherever our family and homes are concerned and this should carry over into our working lives. The following are some commonsense tips which could apply equally in our work environment as well as in our everyday lives:

- Walk, don't run (especially in wet weather)
- Use designated footpaths/pavements (don't cut through garden beds/take short cuts on rough ground)
- Don't rush tasks — speed is not more important than accuracy and can lead to accidents
- Always switch off power before removing plugs and leads
- Don't use telephones during storms
- Ensure equipment and tools are in good working order — report any faults for repair
- Follow instructions/safe operating procedures — don't take shortcuts
- Use handrails when ascending or descending stairs
- Make use of personal protective equipment where necessary
- If you have a problem discuss it with another person — two heads are better than one. In the work environment approach your supervisor or Head of Department, or alternatively contact the Health and Safety team for advice or assistance
- Adopt correct lifting procedures eg. bending from the knees and seek assistance where necessary
- Familiarise yourself with emergency procedures and follow instructions of Building/Fire Wardens in evacuation situations (the University's Emergency Procedures are located in the front section of the internal telephone directory, displayed on noticeboards in University buildings and available on the web at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/hrm/safety/emergencies/emergencyprocedure)
- Ensure regular rest and exercise breaks are taken from keyboard work
- If working back late at night make sure your car is parked close to the building where you are working.

There are many things we can do to make life safer for ourselves and others in the work environment, beginning with our own workspace. We can all understand the audit of our own desks or workstations to ensure they are safe and we adopt good housekeeping tactics. On a wider scale, why not carry out your own inspection of the office area in which you work to spot any potential hazards, for example boxes etc stored where people might fall over them, books/items stacked on shelves that may fall down and injure someone.

If you perceive a dangerous situation around the campus be proactive and report such hazards — don't make the mistake of thinking someone else will take care of it. It only takes a second or two to make a phone call to Maintenance and quick action can make all the difference. What only seems a minor or insignificant problem could develop into a major problem if left undetected or unreported.

Everyone can contribute to making the world a better place by maintaining a vigilant attitude to health and safety and being alert to what is going on around us. Visit the Health and Safety website at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/hrm/safety/index.htm for further information on safety policies and issues and remember "an OUNCE of prevention REALLY IS worth a POUND of cure!"
Airfare Savings
To All University Staff

- Plus special opportunities to renew your Ansett Wing membership or other exclusive University rates before 30 June and go into the draw to win the cost of your membership back.
  (conditions apply)

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