Newcastle raises the bar in national enrolments

The University of Newcastle defied the national downturn in 2005 for commencing student university enrolments.

Borne out by DEST statistics, the University experienced an increase of nine per cent, in contrast to most Australian universities, especially those in regional areas.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Kevin McConkey, said this was partly as a result of growth places allocated to the University by the Australian Government for its Callaghan, Ourimbah and Port Macquarie campuses. It also reflected students’ willingness to take up these places.

“At the same time the University has focussed on providing relevant degree programs that produce qualifications that lead to rewarding career paths.

“Looking at the 2006 enrolment figures, the University of Newcastle has maintained and improved its strengths from 2005. It is very encouraging that more students are choosing to commence and complete their degree at Newcastle.”

This positive trend has been further enhanced by recent statistics released in the Graduate Destination Survey. The survey shows that in 2005:

• The University of Newcastle’s graduates had some of the highest starting salaries in Australia, and
• Almost three quarters of our bachelor degree graduates find employment within four months of completing their degrees.

More students will be heading to the University of Newcastle in 2007, thanks to an extra 264 Commonwealth supported places being offered in health, science and education across its three campuses.

The University received more additional places than any other university in New South Wales. With the extra student places, the University will extend its existing programs and offer a range of new degrees, including teaching at Port Macquarie and psychology at Ourimbah.

The additional student places include 20 medical places to establish Australia’s first joint medical program between the University of Newcastle and the University of New England to operate from 2008.
Looking beyond our shores

A diversified approach to internationalisation

Our current strong links with Malaysia and other Asian countries in business and industry, the professions, the arts and politics owe much to the Colombo Plan which assisted many young people to come to study in Australia and establish enduring friendships and interests. Australian universities have benefited greatly from their international alumni and the University of Newcastle is no exception to this.

Malaysian students continue to come in large numbers to Australian universities to mutual benefit, but our Malaysian colleagues would now like to see more traffic of Australian students in their direction. So we would.

Over recent years, our University has taken a diversified approach to internationalisation. While continuing to recruit international students to our campuses to study at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the University has also established successful off-shore partnerships in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, and has growing numbers of students enrolled through GraduateSchool.com, our online postgraduate service provider. Currently the University has around 2,500 full-time equivalent international students enrolled in our programs (including Study Abroad, English language and International Foundation students), with about 850 EPSFIL of this load enrolled off-shore, predominantly in undergraduate programs run in Singapore. International students make up about 13 per cent of our total student load, a figure that is significantly less than the Australian sector-wide average.

Singapore— a gateway into Asia

This month the University completed the establishment of a company in Singapore to deliver a range of University of Newcastle programs in partnership with our longstanding partner, PSB Corporation. The company, Uni Singapore Pte Ltd, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the University of Newcastle. Professor Tim Roberts has been appointed at Dean of the Singapore campus and will serve as chief executive of the company, resident in Singapore. Prior to this appointment, Professor Roberts was Deputy Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Information Technology.

Over the next twelve months, the University will be commencing in Singapore a range of programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in engineering, information technology and business. Students will be taught by staff employed in Singapore and by staff travelling from our campuses in Australia. We anticipate very significant growth in student numbers over the next three to five years. The Singapore campus will be an increasingly important gateway into Asia for the University.

Our internationalisation strategy

There are four key objectives of the University's internationalisation strategy: increase the number of international students enrolled in our programs on- and off-shore; increase the mobility of our Australian students by encouraging them to spend a semester or more of their study off-shore; internationalise our curricula with a particular emphasis on achieving international accreditation and recognition; and enhance international research links and opportunities, particularly for early career researchers. Achievement of these objectives will require significant investment of resources, particularly in the creation of scholarships and other student support to encourage overseas travel, and will be assisted by the selective establishment of partnerships with high quality universities around the world.

Recent consultations about the new Institutional Strategic Plan reveal strong support from University staff and students and from the community for increasing the number of international students at our campuses and for enhancing our international networks. The new campus in Singapore has a major role in play in our international development.

Nicholas Saunders,
Vice-Chancellor and President

What's in a name?

You may notice the Media and Public Relations team has more in common than just their love of promoting the University's news and events. All deriving their name from Katherine, the team works with staff and students to let media know about all aspects of our latest news and events from the University.

Each day the Kates provide advice and support to uninews@newcastle.edu.au by 4 September. There are lots of different ways to promote your story, so call Kate Robinson, Manager - Media and Public Relations, 02 4921 5061 or 0498 115 467.

Kate Porritt, Coordinator - Media and Public Relations, 02 4921 5120 or 0415 466 580.

Kate Reid, Media and Public Relations Officer, 02 4921 5351 or 0428 745 968.

Caitlin Way, Senior Media and Public Relations Officer, 02 4921 6956 (Callaghan), 02 4348 4319 (Durnihbah) or 0414 313 172.

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The next UniNews will be published in the 3rd week of September. Send your contributions to uninews@newcastle.edu.au by 4 September.

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More students earmarked for Newcastle

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Making a mark in student learning

Congratulations to all recipients of the Vice-Chancellor’s Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning for 2006.

- Debbie Booth, Kai Chen, Helen Lloyd, Vicki Piscano and Ann Stakes (Anzac Library – Academic Services Division)
- Bronwyn Blash (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)
- Dr William Gledstone (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)
- Dr Mark Lucock (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)

For the successful introduction of an information literacy program that has been internationally recognized as enhancing the student experience.

- Rensoy Blash (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)
- Dr William Gledstone (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)
- Dr Mark Lucock (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)
- Dr Kevin Lyons (Faculty of Business and Law)
- Associate Professor Behdad Mohajerin (Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment)

For providing effective support, guidance and advice to students of the Faculty of Science and Information Technology, enriching their self development and experiences at University.

Dr Philip Morgan (Faculty of Education and Arts)
For bringing a unique, scholarly and inspiring approach to teaching physical education to primary school pre-service teachers.

Mr Greg Preston (Faculty of Education and Arts)
For excellence in implementing and encouraging innovative computer-based approaches to the enhance learning.

Dr Debbie Plath (Faculty of Education and Arts)
For bold, innovative teaching that inspires the personal and professional development of social work students.

Mr Willy Sher (Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment)
For sustained transfer of industry research and practice to undergraduate construction students.

Dr Cynthia Webster (Faculty of Business and Law)
For incorporating communication and engagement within challenging learning environments stimulating student confidence and learning.

Associate Professor Antony Williams (Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment)
For implementing student-centred learning contributing to effective outcomes-based education and scholarship in teaching and learning. Congratulations also to those who have been presented with the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Teaching Excellence.

Dr Philip Morgan (University Teacher of the Year) (Early Career Academic)
- Mr Greg Preston (Faculty of Education and Arts)
- Dr Clare Collins (Faculty of Health)
- Dr John Holdsworth (Faculty of Science and Information Technology)
- Dr John Anderson (Faculty of Business and Law)

For developing an innovative student-oriented approach to teaching in Engineering.

Dr Kenneth McConnell

World-class climber and University of Newcastle medical school graduate, Dr McConnell, died in January this year in a tragic climbing accident in Tasmania.

Dr McConnell, who recently qualified in psychiatry, made a deep impression on many people, both here and overseas. He climbed numerous peaks on several continents, and led expeditions to remote areas of Nepal and Tibet. He participated in international expeditions to Everest in 1993 and in 1999 from Tibet, climbing over 8,000 metres each time. He received a Shipton-Tilman mountaineering award in 1998.

Earlier this year, the two Universities and the Hunter New England Area Health Service proposed to the Australian Government that it provide up to 60 additional Commonwealth-supported medical student places each year from 2008, of which 20 will be targeted at the University of New England and 20 at the University of Newcastle.

Based on evidence that medical students completing their training in a rural setting are more likely to practice in those areas, the program will attract medical students to the area by capitalising on the University of Newcastle’s highly respected medical course and the University of New England’s strong rural standing.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nicholas Saunders, said the innovative approach provided medical students with rural opportunities with a high quality regional university, and urban opportunities with a high quality city university.

“We will provide medical students with the best of both worlds.”

What’s all the hubub?

You may have noticed a gaping hole in the Student Services Centre at the Callaghan campus and wondered what’s happening there. It’s the site for one of the new Student Hubs, opening later this year across the University campuses.

The Hubs will be a ‘one-stop shop’ for students, containing support and administrative services, and offering a blend of online facilities, lounges, food outlets and service desks in a relaxed atmosphere. Four Hubs in total are planned, at the Sport and Recreation (Callaghan), City Precinct, Student Services Centre (Callaghan) and Ourimbah.

We’ll keep you posted on progress.

Tribute to University of Newcastle graduate
Dr McConnell

Dr McConnell was a valued supporter of the non-government organisation BODHI (Benedictine Organisation for Development, Health and Insight). The first hand exposure of expatriates to the poverty in places such as Nepal has generated a tradition in which many expeditions are linked to a charity working to reduce Third World poverty.

Dr McConnell commended BODHI to the members of four of his trips, partly because of his friendship with BODHI co-founder Dr Colin Bulitzer, who he knew from Newcastle medical school (coincidentally, they started and graduated in the same years: 1980 and 1987).

Dr McConnell is survived by two sons, Allan and Ian.

Congratulations to the NUbots

The new Four-Legged League RoboCup world champions!

Dr Butler recalls Dr McConnell’s dry humour, and obvious compassion. He writes: “Ken will be remembered as a generous, patient adventurer who lived life to the full and who touched many people across the world. Of course, I always knew he was a risk-taker, but I am very sad that he died so young. In Ken’s name BODHI is subsidising the education of a poor Nepalese girl with a hearing impairment. We hope she will go on to teach other deaf children. You can learn more about BODHI at www.bodhi.net.au.

Dr McConnell is survived by two sons, Allan and Ian.

UniNews August 2006 3
An honours student at the University is on a mission to help working mums. After realising that some mothers returning to work after having children can come across outdated social expectations, Nicola Paget is asking mothers to share their stories about rejoining the workforce in a study that will give mums the helping hand they deserve.

Nicola, an Occupational Therapy Honours student, is looking for six to eight mothers to participate in her study that looks at the issues mothers experience when returning to paid employment for the first time.

"The Returning to paid employment: A mother's experience study will use mothers' personal experiences to help other women. We need participants who are within 12 months of returning to paid, full or part-time employment for the first time since becoming a mother," Nicola said.

"I have heard women criticised for returning to work soon after having a baby - which I am strongly against. It is difficult for mothers to balance home and family tasks with work, and mothers often experience increased stress managing these demands."

According to Nicola the number of mothers who are in full or part-time employment is currently at an all time high, so it is a wonder that this research has not been conducted sooner.

"I'm investigating the experiences that mothers face when returning to paid employment to determine the most significant pressures from the mother's perspective. For example, do they struggle with workplace support, childcare or financial stress?"

"I'll also look at factors that helped these mothers cope with the return to work. Hopefully this information can ultimately be used to decrease the stress on mothers when they go back to the workforce."

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and confidential. For more information please contact Dr Imelda Burgman at the University of Newcastle on 02 4923 8398.

"More shut eye may help chronic pain sufferers"

As many as one in five sufferers of a chronic condition such as chronic pain, asthma or arthritis don't sleep well - but hope for them is on the horizon with help from researchers at the University of Newcastle.

Lauren Brown, a Health Psychology postgraduate student at the University of Newcastle, is calling on volunteers to assist with research into the relationship between chronic pain, insomnia and mood.

"If you experience chronic pain that has lasted at least three months, and you have difficulty sleeping because of the pain, then you may be eligible to participate in the study. Our aim is to see whether getting more and better quality sleep helps people to manage and cope with their pain," Lauren said.

Years of working nights on a telephone counselling service, listening to callers' devastating experiences with insomnia as a result of chronic pain, prompted Ms Brown to take action.

"Working at the counselling service I knew that sufferers want and need sleep so desperately but they can't get it. It's a vicious cycle that continues in a downward spiral of poor sleep leading to more pain and more pain leading to poorer sleep."

The study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr Mark Chorlton from the University of Newcastle and Dr Delwyn Barlett from the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research.

Anyone interested in taking part in the study can contact Lauren on 02 4923 7768.

"Work with some of the world's top researchers in centres of excellence."

You can ring my bell

These days you can't go anywhere without hearing the ring of a mobile phone. Clare Lloyd, a PhD student in Communication and Media Arts, is asking some probing questions about the social impact of the ownership and use of the mobile.

Clare said the mobile phone had become a very powerful tool, not just for communication but in forming identity.

"We have the choice of different styles, sizes and colours. Different ring tones are available in the latest chart songs, we can include pictures of our friends on the screen, or access the internet and soon we'll be leaving video messages." Clare said mobile phones had also raised issues about how we use them in social situations.

"How would you feel if you swapped phones with someone and they went through your message inbox? How intrusive would that be? Or do you share your messages with others?"

"What is the etiquette for the use of mobile phones?" asks Clare. "Should you answer your phone and talk when having dinner with a friend? A relative? And if so, when?"

"This research will explore the social impact mobile phone use is having on young Australian adults."

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NEW GROUND

Super powered microscope to revolutionise nanotechnology

"You have to make a choice sometimes - do you want to make money or do you want to make a difference?"

At 25, Kane Chatterrell, a PhD physics student at the University of Newcastle, is destined to make a difference. Kane and the University's physics department are collaborating with Cambridge University in England to help build the most advanced microscope the world of nanotechnology has seen, a super-powered microscope.

"We are building the next generation microscope that is critical to the future of nanotechnology. These scanning electron microscopes will allow researchers to look at single atoms on surfaces. For example, this microscope could enable nanotechnology to see how viruses attach to cells," Kane said.

"The component I am building is a detector which works similarly to the eye of a human eye, which has a two-dimensional surface that detects light. This component will be attached to the microscope to make it sort of a super microscope. This could open up an entire new field."

According to Kane, who is building the component for his PhD, the scanning electron microscope is the next big electron microscope. "Researchers will now be able to see what is going on at the molecular level in the nanometers," he says.

Kane is working alongside the University of Newcastle's Dr Eric Thomsen with associates Associate Professor Paul Howard and Professor John Cumings to build the detector.

"So what does the future hold for Kane Chatterrell?"

"I want to make a difference to the world. I want to become an academic and teach undergraduate students in physics."
National recognition for excellence in teaching

Two academics from the University of Newcastle have been recognised for their excellence in teaching from the prestigious Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

Dr Philip Morgan from the Faculty of Education and Arts and Associate Professor Behdad Moghtaderi from the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment have received Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning. Dr Morgan's citation is for bringing a unique, scholarly and inspiring approach to teaching physical education to primary school pre-service teachers, and providing evidence of its impact and effectiveness.

Associate Professor Moghtaderi's citation is for the successful convergence of a student-centred and vertically integrated approach to design in engineering. Dr Morgan has also been named as the 2006 Pearson Education/AAE Teacher Educator of the Year. The national award, designed to encourage developing teacher educators and recognises outstanding performance, carries a $3,000 prize.

Green thumbs making Callaghan safer

Lately, there has been a lot of activity in the grounds at the Callaghan campus to improve the safety and visibility along roads, car parks, pedestrian pathways and around the Residential Colleges. Around the Ring Road, at intersections and at car park entries and exits, over-growth has been obscuring pedestrian and driver visibility. To ensure everyone’s safety (particularly at night), certain medium height species will be replaced with low growth native ground covers. Tall growth will also be removed along pedestrian pathways and at building entrances.

The University has recently invited tenders for a long-term maintenance plan for the Callaghan landscape and grounds, including defining guidelines for plant species to ensure appropriate plantings along the Ring Road, pedestrian pathways and similar high traffic areas. An invitation to staff and students to participate in a campus grounds interest group will also be issued shortly. The group will ensure members of the campus community can share ideas on the overall development and maintenance of the campus grounds. In the meantime, comments or queries can be directed to the Director of the campus community can share ideas on the overall development and maintenance of the campus grounds. In the meantime, comments or queries can be directed to the Director of Infrastructure Services, Trevor Gerdien, on (02) 4921 8994 or by emailing Trevor.Gerdien@newcastle.edu.au

Happy 20th anniversary to the Family Action Centre's Hunter Caravan Project

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New chair of architectural design advocates sustainable urban design

Internationally regarded architect, Professor Stefan Lehmann has been appointed to the University's newly created Chair of Architectural Design.

The Chair, partly funded by acclaimed Newcastle architectural firm, Suters Architects, will be based in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment.

Originally from Stuttgart in Germany, Professor Lehmann worked under famous architects, James Stirling and Michael Wilford in London, and Arata Isozaki in Japan before setting up his own practice in Berlin in 1993.

In addition to working as an architect, he has taught at respected schools of architecture (including Berlin Technical University). Most recently he taught at the Queensland University of Technology where at age 49 he was the youngest professor of architecture ever appointed in Queensland.

His research areas, which mesh perfectly with the philosophy of both the University of Newcastle and Suters Architects, include strategies for urban renewal and regionalism in architecture.

He said the reputation and calibre of the University of Newcastle’s architecture program attracted him here.

An enthusiastic ambassador for his profession, Professor Lehmann said his aim was to really connect with the city and to contribute to its urban renewal.

"I am an advocate of creative reuse and sustainable design. Architecture has a priority role to play in the regeneration of a city."

"It works best when it is based on good communication and collaboration and the University has a very important part to play here. I am passionate about that. But then architects have no choice but to be passionate.”

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Big job for Kylie Little

With almost two decades in the higher education sector under her belt, Kylie Little – the new coordinator at our Port Macquarie campus – is no shrinking violet when it comes to hard work.

A recent recruit from Charles Stuart University, Kylie will be the first point of contact for all University business at the Port Macquarie campus, including providing a crucial link between the TAFE and the University.

"The top priorities of my new role are to support the various sections of the University whose presence is often required on the ground by our staff and students here; to work with TAFE and University staff to ensure the relationship runs well; and to assist with student recruitment for next year."

So what's Kylie's MO? "I'm a 'get the job done' kind of person. Give me a call, send me an email, visit me on campus - I'm keen to hear from my colleagues at the University and TAFE, and to connect with the local community to ensure the University of Newcastle Port Macquarie campus continues to excel in program delivery and services for our students."

Kylie can be contacted on: 02 6581 6262 or by emailing kylie.little@newcastle.edu.au.

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Vive La France!

All part of the curriculum

Three University of Newcastle undergraduate students are off to France for six months as part of the University’s unique Kelver Hartley Bequest Program.

The students, Elvira Abel, Cressida Green and Teile Marquardt, have been given the opportunity as a result of their outstanding performance as French scholars in University degree programs.

In the all-expenses-paid trip, the trio will attend the University’s unique Kelver Hartley Bequest Program, Dr Marie Ramsland, said a fourth recipient has been awarded a grant from the Bequest to undertake postgraduate research for her Master of Applied Linguistics (Translation).

Valerie Pritchard, who will receive a living allowance and have her travel expenses paid, will stay in France for three months.

The Kelver Hartley Awards were made possible when, in 1988, the first Professor of French at the University, Professor Kelver Hartley, left his estate of the University’s unique Kelver Hartley, left his estate...
The University of Newcastle Legal Centre is offering additional free legal advice sessions from 6pm to 7:30pm every Wednesday. Call 02 4921 8666 to make an appointment.