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The reforms announced in the 2003 Federal Budget are of major significance for the higher education sector and will lead to a number of changes, many of which are welcome and have been sought for some time.

One of the commendable initiatives is the renewed emphasis on teaching and learning outcomes within Federal Government policy and funding arrangements.

A Learning and Teaching Performance Fund ($83.8m in 2006-2007) will be established to reward universities that have demonstrated excellence in teaching and learning. Commencing in 2006 with an initial $54.7m, the Fund has been given the role of recognising and rewarding high quality teaching and learning practices and outcomes.

To be eligible for allocations from the Fund, universities will need to demonstrate in the first stage that they have a strong commitment to teaching and learning through a range of strategies, practices, policies and student evaluations, which are evidence based. Once eligibility is established, university performance will be assessed using a range of indicators of teaching and learning outcomes.

Although details are not known at this stage, one of the measures currently used to evaluate the learning experience of graduates during their degree programs is the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). CEQ surveys the opinions of new graduates about the program that they have recently completed. Five aspects of the program are examined: the quality of teaching; the clarity of goals and standards; the nature of the assessment; the level of the workload; and the enhancement of generic skills. The graduate's overall levels of satisfaction with their recently completed program is recorded on the same scale.

Comparisons are made on a national basis with the mean for each major field of study. With the completion of the 2002 CEQ, the University will have 10 years of data available as an input to quality assurance processes such as program reviews. In addition, it is obvious that CEQ data will be one of the likely indicators for demonstrating teaching and learning excellence.

In general, there is room for significant improvement for many of our programs for this and other indicators of teaching and learning excellence.

To improve our students' learning experience over the past 12 months, the University has put in place new quality assurance measures in terms of program planning and review procedures, course assessment returns and program monitoring. In addition to these measures, the Chair of the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (CTL) Portfolio Committee, Professor Bill Hogarth, has initiated the development of a Practical Teaching Skills Program for staff development. The project manager is Associate Professor Roy Killen, who is being assisted in program development by a senior representative from each Faculty: Associate Professor...
Professor David Powis (Health); Associate Professor John O'Connor (Science and Information Technology); Professor Aaron O'Cass (Business and Law); Dr Erik Eklund (Education and Arts); and Professor Rob Melchers (Engineering and Built Environment).

The intention is to ensure that the program meets the teaching and learning objectives of the faculty. Experienced staff within each faculty will contribute their teaching experience to the program.

The Practical Teaching Skills Program will be piloted in semester 2 and is intended to make a Graduate Certificate available to staff. I encourage academic staff to participate in the program to improve their teaching skills, which I am sure will lead to better outcomes for graduates.

The use of technology to facilitate or enhance the learning experience is escalating. Videoconferencing, Blackboard and other web-based systems are being adopted throughout the University. Whilst they open up new opportunities they often present pedagogical and technical challenges.

The Teaching and Learning Support Group of Education Services is working with faculties to trial new initiatives, develop best practice skills, and support and complement their endeavours to meaningfully interact with students. Their work is also being incorporated into the proposed Practical Teaching Skills program. Electronic information literacy modules, digitised short loans and the implementation of a Web Access Module to scholarly information resources, also facilitated by Education Services, allow the integration of quality electronic information retrieval into online teaching and learning.

In 2004, a new National Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education will be established as a national focus for the enhancement of learning and teaching. The Australian Awards for University Teaching will also be enhanced and will include 210 awards valued at $10,000 each; 40 awards valued at $25,000 each; and the Prime Minister's award for Teacher of the Year valued at $50,000. I am hopeful that our 'best' teachers (or teams of teachers) will strongly participate in this awards program.

In addition to CEQ, the Composite Student Questionnaire (CSQ) is another important measure of student satisfaction, which was introduced in 1998 and has become an annual event for the University. This survey of our current students asks about diverse areas, ranging from teaching and learning experience with our programs, library and IT facilities, and other student services. Each year, the results are compiled in a report, and all areas (faculties and divisions) are asked for their response and for the actions they intend to put in place to address issues raised by students. This feedback is then provided directly to a meeting with student representatives, which from 2003 is faculty based.

I would urge all staff members to consider ways in which our performance in teaching and learning, and in the provision of services to students, can be improved or at least sustained at an appropriately high level. CSQ and CEQ indicators are only two of the measures involved in this QA process. The most important actions however rest with individual academic and general staff members who consider on an ongoing basis ways in which we can provide improved teaching and learning experiences for our students.

I warmly commend all of those staff members who regularly undertake a program of review of their teaching and learning activities, and seek to improve teaching and learning outcomes and experiences by students as part of their regular activities.

Roger S Holmes
Vice-Chancellor and President

“Our new Micro-PIV system, for instance, will allow us to quantify flows in microfluidic situations often encountered in biomedical applications,” he said. “Our researchers are already applying the system to evaluate the performance of a number of artificial heart designs.”

The facility was opened by Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment Adrian Page on June 13.

Adrian congratulated the people from the discipline of chemical engineering who worked to make the laboratory a reality, including Professor Geoffrey Evans and Dr Moghtaderi.

“I'd like to pay tribute to the staff from chemical engineering, who lead the way in terms of research performance, with the level of funding they attract to the University," he said. "They are amongst the biggest research players at the University and regularly bring in funds far beyond what would be expected for a discipline of their size."
Legumes essential to environmental and human health

CEILR is exploring the genetics of plant development, and in particular the genetic control of differentiation—the very mechanism that makes each plant unique. The plant that Ray and his students are working on, which has become a worldwide model for genetic research into plant development, is a legume called Medicago truncatula.

"Legumes have a symbiotic association with bacteria in their roots that enables them to use atmospheric nitrogen in the production of their proteins. They are essential to both environmental sustainability and human health," Ray explains.

"This new research has the potential to reverse environmental degradation and discover bioactive molecules important to human health."

Ray began researching Medicago truncatula years ago with funding from Australia's sheep industry. Introduced into Australia from the Mediterranean, it was popular in the past as a pasture crop in the classic Australian wheat/sheep agricultural cycle.

"Medicago truncatula is an ideal model because it has a small genome and is self-fertilising, so it doesn't need bees or insects for pollination. Genes can also be inserted by transformation. You can't have a model for genetic research that you can't insert genes into because you can't test for gene function," Ray said. "Medicago truncatula is a newcomer to the legume research world that was unknown overseas but it has now become a major international model with its own gene sequencing project begun. We have developed a lot of genetic engineering techniques for that plant in my

Sociology, I fear, is a discipline that can attract some rather strange people. But Mick already had runs on the board—four years as Professor and Head of Department of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen and some interesting additional experience from time spent as a Professor in Sierra Leone, as well as four books in which he had demonstrated his scholarship. Within one year he had won the sufficient confidence of his colleagues to be elected Dean of the Arts Faculty, and then in 1979 he became Deputy Chairman of the Senate, the highest elected academic position in the University and one which he held for three successive times. In this role he became my closest colleague for the next eight years until my retirement in 1986. We shared many difficult issues over those years and had a lot of fun together.

I know I wasn't the only one disappointed when the University Council in its wisdom didn't appoint him as my successor as Vice-Chancellor. Again, totally within his principled view of how a
laboratory. Although no one had managed to produce transgenic plants, we published a paper on how to produce transgenic Medicago truncatula, which saw us become recognised as experts.”

The United States’ National Science Foundation and the huge Noble Foundation set up to benefit mid-western American farmers, are both spending millions of dollars researching truncatula and the whole genome is expected to be sequenced within a few years.

The CEILR uses another legume model, Lotus japonica, made popular by Japanese scientists and being researched by Professor Gresshoff, as well as Medicago truncatula. By covering both models, the Australian researchers hope to get an edge on the rest of the world in the genome to phenome studies.

Ray and his fellow Newcastle researchers are working on techniques that allow them to investigate the genes that allow plants to grow from individual cultured cells – seeking to understand the fundamental science that triggers differentiation.

“We have made links that no one else had made and developed robust systems of growing plants from cells,” Ray said. “We study short distance signalling to try and understand this process as well as how bacteria interact with cells to form the little nodules organs in the legume plant where the atmospheric nitrogen becomes part of proteins.”

The implications of the CEILR research are far-reaching. By understanding how legumes interact with airborne nitrogen, the need for the use of nitrogen fertilisers might be eliminated. By understanding growth centres and organ formation within plants, scientists could work to manipulate lucerne, to extend its root system, for instance, a crucial step when coupled with salt resistance in the remediation of salt-affected irrigation areas.

“There are lots of examples of applications where you need to control the growth of particular organs in plants,” Ray said. “The research could help to produce a more sustainable agriculture.”

And of course there are the nutritional and biomedical outcomes. Legumes are rich in protein and it is part of the Centre’s job to articulate more clearly the importance of a Mediterranean diet to people’s health. And understanding the complex biology that enables plants to interact with their environment could lead to genetic knowledge with enormous implications for human health.

The Centre will provide opportunities for postgraduate training and create networks with industry. It has a very distinguished scientific advisory board and its research is highly regarded in Australian scientific circles.

Ray Rose came to the University in 1975 from the CSIRO, where he worked on chloroplast DNA. He was head of the former Department of Biological Sciences and is conveyer of the University’s biotechnology degree and a member of the plant science research group. He describes himself as a biologist who works on plants and is ‘really keen about cell differentiation’.

“Being at the University enabled me to research things that were very biologically fundamental but that few wanted to use plant cells for, and to work with some really good postgraduate students from Newcastle and overseas,” he says. “We specialise in in-vitro meristem formation. With all the excitement about the sequencing of the human genome, it hasn’t really caught on yet that we can revolutionise some things with knowledge about the legume genome. But our work will be very significant to the study of genetics, particularly in linking the genome-phenome with the environment.”

university scholar should behave and despite any disappointment he may have felt, he continued to serve the University with distinction, finally being appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 1988 and remaining in this capacity until his retirement in 1995. The University honoured almost 20 years of dedicated service with his appointment as Professor Emeritus and the award of the honorary degree of Doctor of the University (in my opinion, the most prestigious doctorate of all). Sadly, one thing the University couldn’t reward him with was a long time in retirement.

Mick had a deep interest in people and the human condition. He enjoyed watching our foibles, our peculiarities and our behaviour. Perhaps it was the sociologist in him, but I suspect it was more deep-seated than that. He just liked people and his genuine interest in their welfare endeared him to all. Many students and staff can testify to the times he went out of his way to assist them.

Although we think of Mick doing so much within the University, we shouldn’t overlook his other valued contributions. He chaired the Hunter Valley Research Foundation for 13 years, a great interest which he carried with him into his retirement. He sat on the Board of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company for seven years, the Royal Newcastle Hospital Board for five years, the NSW Institute of Psychiatry for five and the Board of Senior School Studies, also for five. To all of these he brought that insight and integrity which was so valued inside the University. And when some of us were clinging to our winter fires, he was out there in all weathers as Patron of the University Rugby Club.

It is difficult to try and sum up a life in just a few words but let me just try:

Total honesty, commitment, enthusiasm and sincerity. A person never destructive but always supportive. A dedicated scholar who lived the academic life to the full and inspired generations of students to follow his own standards of excellence. And a rare and wonderful talent for friendship.

During the final stages of his illness, which he bore stoically, he was pleased to have visits by many of his old friends and to talk about old University events, in so many of which he and they had played key roles. And that wicked half-smile would appear whilst you awaited some acute observation on the tip of his tongue that he shortly would come out with. We will all miss him greatly but not of course as much as his family who were always so important to him.
Mim's kingdom

A typical day in the working lives of Mim Woodland and her construction workers starts at 6am, when it is still dark and most of us are safely tucked up in bed.

Mim, who is Callaghan Campus Environment Services Manager, says the early start is necessary to get work done on parts of the campus that are crowded with people and traffic after nine am.

“There are a lot of restrictions to when we can work in different parts of the campus,” Mim said. “We can’t start work around the residential colleges, for instance, until after nine am and in other parts, we have to stop work before nine.”

Some jobs need to wait until vacation time, when Mim and her team work even harder and longer hours than during semester. For instance the thousands of pavers in the Auchmuty courtyard – between the student union and the library – that replaced the worn and slippery pebble dock surface, were laid in just over two weeks.

In a final touch that typifies Mim’s thoroughness, a pond was built to catch the water that drips from the roof of the library and had previously caused flooding across the courtyard. The pond is bordered by a garden of violets and will soon have water lilies and fish.

When you ride around with Mim in her small four-wheel drive for a morning, it is easy to see the vast scale of her responsibilities across the 140 hectare campus. She swings by one of the day care centres, where a group of workers are repairing paths and laying pavers. Mim directs the foreman on how to erect childproof fencing on top of a retaining wall so that no footholds are left for tiny feet and there are no gaps or hazards.

She points out where the banks will be planted with colourful and hardy daisies and makes sure the workers have completed the necessary excavation permit to dig the post holes and are aware of where the pipes and cables run.

“I got all these pavers for nothing,” Mim says. This is a statement she’ll make many times over the course of the morning in relation to timber, soil, sand, plants and volunteer labour. Mim is famous for acquiring free stuff. And that’s just one of the ways that she saves the University money. Consider, for instance, that the campus’ water consumption hasn’t increased in the past decade, despite a dramatic growth in student numbers and the addition of numerous buildings, including residential halls and the Olympic size Forum pool.

“We’re currently saving the University over $70,000 a year in water usage by collecting and storing rainwater in tanks and dams to water the sporting ovals,” Mim said. “It doesn’t cost much to dig a dam and it can water lawns and gardens at no cost.”

The Callaghan campus, known far and wide as one of Australia’s most natural and beautiful, is truly Mim’s kingdom. She has worked in the grounds since 1992 but grew up in Shortland and roamed the site as a child when it was just paddocks and bush. She still lives within walking distance of the campus.

Mim’s two passions in life are art and plants. She taught art through the South Wallsend Community Centre to people with disabilities before beginning her career in landscaping. She has a Diploma of Landscape (Applied Science) from TAFE, a Bush Regeneration Certificate and has completed a Bachelor of Environmental Science at the University. She is known to some as ‘the tree lady’ and has a close association with the Trees in Newcastle group, who supply many of the trees for the campus.

One aspect of her role at the University is to educate people about the bushland campus and its sustainable landscaping – a task she relishes. Mim takes visitors on tours around campus and also visits schools and other organisations to talk about her work. She has embraced community connections to help people, while benefiting the University. Her original association with Delando Crescent that saw a crew of people with intellectual disabilities mowing and whizzer snipping around campus has been an outstanding success with the University now employing Delando crews five days a week. Similarly, she employs seven Indigenous trainees as part of an arrangement with Yarmalong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment centre.

As you turn off the bitumen ring road and onto the dirt road leading down towards the railway tracks, you really enter Mim’s domain. Here are ponds for a research project involving frogs, logs rescued from the demolition of wharves at Sans Souci that have been used by members of Newcastle’s Samoan community to demonstrate and pass on their boat-building skills (naturally acquired for nothing and freely donated to a community venture) and an extensive worm farm that recycles food scraps from around the campus into nutrient rich castings.

Mim proudly shows off a sporting field created from capping a former rubbish dump and the border of rapidly maturing trees that she has planted to mark the boundary between the University’s land and the neighbouring golf course.

“They call this Mim’s kingdom,” she says, “but it isn’t just down to me. It’s a team effort. I’ve got some great people working for me, who work really hard to make it all happen.”

Mim also credits her boss, Director of Facilities Services Philip Pollard, with sharing her vision of a sustainable campus environment.

“Philip knows that I need to be out on site and that I can’t be kept in an office,” she jokes. “My job is so wide-ranging. But Philip concentrates on the strategy and trusts me to get on with making it happen. Our visions are on a par.”
Design skills aid Cannes winner

Design graduate and winner of this year’s prestigious Palme d’Or Award for Short Film at Cannes Film Festival, Glendyn Ivin, attributes much of his success as a film-maker to the skills he acquired while studying at the University.

Glendyn, whose film Crack'r Bag defeated nine finalists from around the world to take out the Palme d’Or (Golden Palm) award in Cannes in May, said the things he learned while studying the four-year Bachelor of Design (Graphic Design) course at Newcastle combine well with his subsequent training to produce his directorial style.

Originally from Tamworth, in north-western NSW, Glendyn moved to Melbourne when he finished studying in Newcastle, where he worked as a graphic designer at the University of Melbourne for six years.

"When I turned 25, I decided I wasn't doing what I wanted to do,” he said, “so I quit my job and did a postgraduate course in documentary making at the Victoria College of the Arts’ film and television school.”

Glendyn says that his documentary training created a spontaneous and raw style, which combined with the attention to detail and sense of control he gained from his graphic design experience to produce his approach to film directing. The struggle to attract funding to film projects, however, saw him turn to directing commercials, which he has pursued aggressively for the past three years.

"It has been a great way to learn my craft and technique, and to gain experience on film sets.”

Cracker Bag is a short film based on Glendyn’s own experience of a cracker night in Newcastle when he was a child, although the lead character is now a girl, played by Edith Cattell. Glendyn and his producer Jane Liscombe funded the project themselves after failing to find a backer.

"In this business there are so many ways to do things but we found we had the confidence to do the film our own way and it really paid off,” Glendyn says of his Cannes success. “It was incredible to be at Cannes and be in the same room as serious film-makers who have been a massive inspiration to me, and to be referred to in the same breath as many of them because I am a Palme d’Or winner.”

Glendyn graduated from the University in 1994. Allan Morse, Senior Lecturer, Visual Communication Design in the School of Design, Communication and Information Technology says Glendyn’s passion for film-making became evident during his time at the University.

"His major project works demonstrated an interest in the area and design staff were eager to encourage his talent and advise on the best options in his early career path.”

Glendyn has continued his association with the University by participating in an exhibition of graduates’ work as well as giving a number of guest lectures.

Cracker Bag, a 15-minute story set in the 1970s, follows a young girl named Eddie, who is fixated with putting on a spectacular fireworks display until a terrible accident changes her life. The Cannes Short Film jury, presided over by filmmaker Emir Kusturica, comprised of actress/director Zabou Breitman, actress Ingeborga Dapkunaite, cineaste Michel Ocelot, and MoMa director Mary Lea Brandly.

In addition to winning kudos for his film, the award will provide opportunities for Glendyn. He has made some invaluable contacts at Cannes and has already met with major Australian distributors, who are interested in seeing his next production. Crack'r Bag also won best short film at the St Kilda Film Festival last month and is touring the country as part of a cultural tour.

University wins engineering awards

The University excelled at this year’s regional Engineering Excellence Awards winning two awards.

The Awards acknowledge innovation, achievement and expertise in the region across the engineering disciplines – mechanical, electrical, civil, structural, chemical and environmental. They were judged within defined categories, covering a wide spectrum of engineering projects, activities and endeavours, reflecting the impact engineering has on our community.

The Excellence Award went to the University’s Science and Engineering Challenge. The Challenge is the brainchild of the Faculties of Science and Information Technology, and Engineering and Built Environment. It is aimed at year 10 students, to present an inspirational approach to engineering, science and technology, combining a range of activities from building a robot to solving a virtual maze. It has proved successful in redressing the decline in students undertaking physics, chemistry and mathematics, and plans to continue its success nationwide.

The Energy Australia Award went to Innova Soil Technology. Part owned by the University’s commercial arm TUNRA, with MCM Manufacturing and Combustion Instrumentation, Innova has developed a treatment system that cleans contaminated soils effectively, economically and with fewer emissions.

Offering a viable alternative to established soil treatments, the treatment system provides clean soil and significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions. It is totally transportable allowing treatment to occur at the site of contamination eliminating the need for the transportation of hazardous waste. Innova will now take on the National Engineering Excellence Awards.
Just finding your way around during the first few weeks at University can be daunting.

You can usually manage to find the cafeteria by following your nose but it's other things that can prove to be a challenge. Like finding where the lecture theatres and tutorial rooms are, learning your way around the library, finding out who's who on the academic staff and where and how the administrative areas do their work. And it can be quite lonely if you don’t know anyone.

This is where the Ourimbah campus has led the way with a student mentoring program known as Students for other Students. Now in its fourth year, SOS aims to support new students.

The system works with two mentors for each group of about nine or 10 students (depending on the area of study). The mentor’s role is to answer questions, let new students know where to go to obtain specific information, show them around the campus, and generally be there as a friendly face to help them settle in. For instance, new students may need to know how to alter their academic program, how to use the library, where to get help with essay writing, note taking or exam skills, or need counselling services or a class to update their computer skills.

“This is where the mentor’s role is invaluable,” Irene said. “The new students benefit from the experience of the others, so it’s a continual cycle. It also creates a very positive environment amongst the students and creates good links between them and the service areas.”

“It’s when you see the students on campus or at the train station and they thank you for your help, that you realise how beneficial the program is and how it has enhanced the social fabric of the campus.”

The mentors start their duties at Orientation Week and continue through the first semester. While most students are well on track by then, the mentors are still available if needed. Many of the groups have become good friends.

Irene started off at the Ourimbah campus after finding out about Open Foundation at a Campus Open Day. She says it was one of the best decisions she has made. With three children aged 15, 14 and five, she has had to become an expert in organisation and time management, but is aiming at a career in the IT industry, most likely in programming.

Tegan’s goal is to become a high school teacher and because she started University straight after the HSC, her group was mainly school leavers.

“They were very pleased to have a mentor, a role model I suppose,” she said. “I knew exactly where they were coming from.”

Salary Packaging

Build and protect your wealth through the university’s Staff Salary Packaging arrangement.

Contact Eric Burns, Authorised Representative of Associated Planners, on (02) 4942 1455.
Healthy Faculty team

Faculty Services Director of the Faculty of Health Chandra Murti says he is delighted to be part of the team that has built the new Faculty out of the restructuring of the University.

Chandra and Margaret McMillan, the Deputy Executive Dean, work closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor John Matley. Together with the four Heads of School, they form the Faculty Executive Group.

"I'm lucky to have an excellent PVC and Deputy Executive Dean to work with," Chandra said. "John and Margaret are both positive and forward looking people and the three of us work well together."

The Faculty Services Unit, which consists of all non academic staff of the Faculty is a mini version of the University Services Division. The Faculty Services Director is responsible for the delivery of a wide range of administrative support services to the Faculty including student services, financial services, IT services, teaching and learning support, research and research training support, space and infrastructure matters, marketing and promotion, internationalisation matters, academic workload and OH&S.

"To an extent, the position is still evolving and it has been crucial for me to develop good working relationships with both superior and subordinate staff in the Faculty, as well as with staff from other Divisions of the University," he said.

Chandra's previous position as Assistant Registrar in the former Faculties of Education, and Medicine and Health Sciences, prepared him well for his new role. He took on a range of tasks over and beyond the AR’s job and saw the restructuring as an opportunity to do something different.

"I'm also keen to utilise my years of experience at the University and put the corporate knowledge I have gained to positive use."

Chandra is quick to praise the professionalism and dedication of his team leaders and members of the Faculty Services Unit generally.

"We have a relatively large FSU and we are in the business of supporting the core business of the Faculty, which is teaching and learning, research and community engagement. We work in partnership with our academic staff members."

Recognising that change is necessary and learning to manage it positively rather than simply lamenting the 'good old days' is another virtue Chandra expounds. While he believes that the Faculty has achieved a lot in the last 18 months, he says there is still a long way to go before the FSU is bedded down. The Unit has a particularly challenging task as it has to support a relatively complex Faculty with multiple campuses on several sites including Callaghan, John Hunter, Mater, Mayfield, Newcastle city, Wallsend, Tamworth, Central Coast and Orange.

"In a position like this, one has to maintain a 'can do' attitude and a good sense of humour," Chandra said. "It has helped me to lead our team towards supporting the achievement of the goals and objectives of our Faculty, as laid down in our strategic plan."

Volunteers wanted

Be a part of the 2003 Australian University Games

Organisers need another 300 volunteers to help out at the Games, to be held in Newcastle from 28 September - 3 October. The Games are renowned for providing a friendly competitive environment for university athletes, providing an opportunity for them to compete in a national multi-sport event against world-class competitors including many of Olympic standards. The 6-day event includes a not-to-be-missed social program to enhance the experience for everyone involved.

Be a part of this exciting event. Register as a volunteer.

Phone 4921 6962
email aug@unisport.com.au or call in to the Games office in NUSport Cottage behind the Squash Courts at Callaghan

Pool closure

As part of NUSport's commitment to excellence, the Forum will be re-tiling the pool deck and concourse in July. The pool will be closed from Sunday 6 July - Sunday 27 July inclusive, re-opening on Monday 28 July.

However, members will not miss out! As you will not be able to use the pool for this three week period, we are offering you an automatic addition of three weeks to your existing aquatics or silver membership free of charge AND access to the gym and fitness classes for the three weeks of the pool closure if you book in for a free exercise program at main reception.

Thank you for your cooperation. The aquatics redevelopment will ensure NUSport continues to deliver you a first class facility in which to train and exercise, and ensure your safety on the pool deck.
Hundreds of members of the University community joined with members of the Hunter community to demonstrate their commitment to the reconciliation process at a ‘planting of hands’ ceremony held at Birabahn during Reconciliation Week in June.

Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes, speaking at the ceremony, said reconciliation is not something that can be marked with clear time-lines.

“Reconciliation is a place in our minds, where we recognise differences and understand the right to those differences,” he said. “It is a process where people learn from each other and in that process gain mutual respect.”

He said the University is committed to the aims of reconciliation including achieving social and economic equity for Indigenous Australians, acknowledging the past, and building a framework for a shared future.

“The University is, and will remain at the forefront of Indigenous Education through Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies and Indigenous research through Umulliko Indigenous Higher Education Centre,” he said. “Education is one of the great essentials to all cultural understanding and we now have this wonderful building, Birabahn, dedicated entirely to Indigenous education. One of the very few centres in the world.”

Aboriginal elders Uncle Ken McBride and Aunty Sandra Griffin welcomed people to Awabakal land. Uncle Ken outlined some of the history of the traditional owners. He said the Awabakal people had a very advanced culture and knew about coal, not only for use in fires but also for making tar to waterproof canoes and as an insect repellent.

“This land has a rich and lasting tradition from the ancient past,” Uncle Ken said. “Welcome to the Awabakol land we love and respect.”

Head of the School of Aboriginal Studies John Lester said that reconciliation is simply people getting on with people and appreciating each other’s differences.

“We all have a contribution to make but unfortunately, many of us have been limited in our ability to make that contribution in Australia,” he said. “Hopefully, now we can get on with that.”

John said that Birabahn, the eaglehawk, was a very important icon to local Aboriginal people and that the Birabahn centre, which houses Wollotuka and Umulliko, was a signature building in terms of its links to the past.

“The students who use the centre today are the future,” he said. “If you walk around Birabahn, you’ll see that all the doors have hand-prints on them, which were taken from young Indigenous pre-schoolers — in this way, we have enshrined the future in the building.”

Lori Parish, Indigenous Employment Coordinator at the University, says the ‘hands’ used for the ceremony were provided by the Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) group.

“A gold coin donation was asked from those planting a hand, with all donations going to the University of Newcastle Indigenous Scholarship Fund,” Lori said.

The ‘Planting of Hands’ ceremony was followed by the unveiling of ‘The Spirit of Birabahn’, an original floor mural in the foyer of the Birabahn building, and by a performance by the Awarbukarl dancers. The celebrations were completed by afternoon tea of wattle seed scones and hibiscus jam.
The spirit of Birabahn

An original mosaic mural was unveiled in the foyer of the Birabahn building during Reconciliation Week.

The mural was designed by an Indigenous artist from Forster, Mandy Davis, and completed by the University's Indigenous landscape trainees under the supervision of Campus Manager Mim Woodland.

Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes personally thanked Mim and her colleagues for the work they have done around Birabahn, including the mural and the planting of a native herb garden.

Mim said the mosaic had taken four months to complete and involved chipping out the existing concrete in the foyer of the building and replacing it with a concrete bed 70mm deep, which holds the coloured concrete of the artwork. Susan Holman initially coordinated the work, transferring Mandy Davis' design onto a stencil and supervising the colours. The Indigenous workers who constructed the mural mixed the pigment into the concrete as they went.

Head of the School of Aboriginal Studies John Lester said at the unveiling that Mandy Davis had won a competition held to find a design for the mural. He thanked the University's Director of Facilities Services Philip Pollard for getting behind the competition and the mural.

"I want to thank Aaron Bryson, Lucy Kelly, Ty Edmonds and Michael Williams, who worked with Mim on the hard, meticulous task of inserting all the concrete for the mural," John said, "and Susan Holman for creating the capacity to make it happen.

"The pattern symbolises Birabahn, the eaglehawk, flying high and seeing all — as guardians that watch over Birabahn building from the top of Sugarloaf Mountain."
Helping to educate Indigenous leaders

The achievements of Indigenous students at the University were rewarded with the presentation of scholarships at a ceremony at the Birabahn building held during Reconciliation Week in June.

Eighteen students studying in disciplines across the University were presented with scholarships. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Brian English said the students helped to show the link between reconciliation and education.

"The people of Australia are in favour of reconciliation – of a coming together in a way that values different cultures," he said. "It is up to all of us to make it happen and one very important way we can do that is through educating the leaders of the next generation."

Head of the University's School of Aboriginal Studies John Lester said that the staff of Wollotuka Aboriginal Education Centre were fortunate to have community support in their quest for justice and equity for Indigenous people.

"We have set a goal to raise $1 million for our scholarship fund over the next 10 years, which will be quite a job," John said. "Thanks to organisations like the Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group and to people like its founding president Jack Doherty, we've got help in trying to achieve our target. I wish to acknowledge and thank those people who have contributed to the scholarships we are presenting today for their enormous generosity and support."

Master of ceremonies and Aboriginal Studies lecturer John Heath said it used to be a dream amongst local Aboriginal people to graduate from the University.

"In the 1980s, when I was studying here, there was only a handful of Indigenous students between the University and College of Advanced Education," he said. "Now there are more than 300 and Newcastle has 31 Indigenous graduates from its medical program, which is a great achievement."

John said the scholarship winners came from many different backgrounds and that some had overcome barriers to study. He said the need for scholarship funding for Indigenous students would continue to grow. The following scholarships were awarded:

**Jack Doherty Undergraduate Scholarships**  
- Erin Cole (B.Teaching/B.Arts), Kristy Crooks (B.Aboriginal Studies), Laurie Mackeson (B.Teaching/B.Arts), Aaron Maybury (B.Sc Architecture), Trevor Roberts (B.Arts/LLB), Melanie Syron (B.Aboriginal Studies), Nathan Towner (B.Teaching/B.PhysEd and Health)

**Ken Brindle Memorial Scholarship**  
- Rebecca Scholfield (B.Teaching/B.PhysEd)

**Koiki (Eddie) Mabo Trust Fund Scholarship**  
- Katie Halverson (Nutrition and Dietetics), Rebecca Kuhn (Diagnostic Radiography)

**NSW Indigenous Medical Students Scholarship**  
- Martin Hobbs, Kara Britz, Keith Gleeson, Anna Eastman, Joe Somers

**Victor and Adele Bear Undergraduate Scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students**  
- Charis Ferguson (B.Med), Sean White (B.Med), Elkie Hull (B.Med)

**Uni hosts Indigenous forum**

Wollotuka, the University's School of Aboriginal Studies, hosted representatives from more than 20 Indigenous Higher Education Centres around Australia last month, at meetings of the National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN).

NIHEN held a forum focusing on Indigenous student support programs and a meeting between the heads of Indigenous centres and programs within universities.

The Student Support Forum included presentations and discussions around effective support programs, issues Indigenous students face while undertaking placements away from university, support for incarcerated students and other off-campus students, as well as the possible impact of the 2003 Federal Budget.

A dinner held in the Birabahn building attracted more than 50 delegates, students, staff and wider community members, with entertainment provided by Mick Davison (didjeridoo), Greg Boddy (guitar), Sharnee Fenwick (country rock singer), and Mini and Emily Heath (didgeridoo and traditional dance).

Most delegates left with a positive impression of Birabahn and the hospitality of Wollotuka staff and students.
Japanese veterans missing in action for 30 years

Dr Beatrice Trefalt’s research on the Japanese soldiers of World War II who didn’t know that the war was over for up to 30 years will be published in a book later this year.

Dr Trefalt from the School of Liberal Arts has been awarded the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) President’s Prize for best PhD submitted in an area of Asian Studies for the work.

“A number of studies have highlighted the tensions between remembering and forgetting the war in Japanese society,” Beatrice said. “While these studies have concentrated for the most part on the victims of the Japanese Imperial Army in Asia, my thesis focuses on Japanese World War II veterans.”

The research explores the veterans’ presence in post-war Japanese society, and so sheds light on an often-neglected aspect of the legacies of the war in Japan.

“The veterans that had the greatest impact on Japanese society were the so-called stragglers,” she said. “These were soldiers who had not known, or had refused to believe, that the war had ended in August 1945.”

They hid on the edges of former battlefields in Southeast Asia and the Pacific for years, and sometimes decades. During the 1950s, such soldiers were discovered and repatriated at regular intervals from New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines, and islands in the Pacific.

In 1972, one straggler was found on Guam and another was shot dead on Lubang Island in the Philippines. In March 1974, a straggler on Lubang was convinced to surrender, and the last straggler was repatriated from Morotai Island in Indonesia to his native Taiwan in January 1975.

Engineer wins for traction software

Engineering student David Hanson has developed software that will allow engineers to calculate the performance of a locomotive traction system at the preliminary design stage.

‘Traction system design plays a vital role in rail transportation and David’s software will reduce the dependence on suppliers, as company engineers will be able to decide how the train will operate from concept stage.’ His thesis, entitled ‘Software for Preliminary Design of Rail Traction Systems’, won him joint first prize in the Railway Technical Society of Australasia (RTSA) Railway Engineering Student Thesis Award.

The RTSA Award is presented to the student with the best rail related undergraduate thesis at an Australian or New Zealand university. David, who has been awarded a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) with 1st class honours, says his main interest lies in rail vehicle dynamics and the potential development for rail transportation.

“Traditionally, in areas such as traction system design, companies are dependent on suppliers,” he explains. “I wanted to help reduce this dependence.”

His software calculates the optimum traction system for a given application and allows the performance of the completed vehicle to be calculated right from the concept stage.

The RTSA is a professional society of the Institution of Engineers Australia, promoting the science and practice of railway engineering.

Gaolbirds wanted

Researchers from the Conservatorium School of Music and Drama are looking for people who have had an involvement with Maitland Gaol - from former inmates and their families to wardens, welfare workers and providers of goods and services - to take part in an oral history project.

The participants will be interviewed, with the collected data forming the basis for the development of a site specific documentary performance at the Gaol. They will also have the opportunity to be involved in the creative process, through a series of ongoing meetings and workshops in which the material will be prepared for public performance.

Drama senior lecturer Dr David Watt says the project marks an important point of intersection between the aims and intentions of Maitland City Council and Landmark TC for a ‘heritage’ site, and the academic study of modes and techniques of documentary and site-specific performance.

For more information on the project, contact Steve McLennan at Maitland Gaol on 4936 6610 or David Watt on 4921 5003.
Drought 'takes away a bit of your heart'

Drought conditions have had a severe impact on NSW regions over the last three years. The University hosted a public seminar in May - 'It takes away a bit of your heart' - on the effects of the drought in NSW, which was presented by Margaret Alston, Associate Professor in Social Work and the Director of the Centre for Rural Social Research at Charles Sturt University.

A/Professor Alston says that while a great deal is known about the economic and environmental consequences of the drought, very little is known about the social impact.

"Research into the social costs of drought is currently being conducted in three divergent regions of NSW - Bourke Shire, Condobolin Shire and Deniliquin Shire," she said. "Already apparent is that the drought has created a significant social impact, and that these impacts are gender and class based."

These issues include the effect of the drought on men's health, with many farmers feeling quite depressed which makes them more vulnerable to illness, and the increased pressure on women to look for off-farm work during drought. The research is finding that farmers who were well-stocked had greater reserves to endure the drought than poorer farmers.

The seminar discussed these key issues and the responses of governments and service providers. As well as staff and students from the University, the seminar attracted community members from organisations including the Country Women's Association and Centrelink in rural areas as far away as Armidale, in north-western NSW.

Margaret Alston has researched extensively in the area of rural social and gender issues, publishing widely in these fields. In June, she was a visiting expert to the Gender Division of the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organisation, based in Rome.

Psychology at the coalface

More than 100 psychologists descended on Newcastle City Hall at the end of May for the Australian Psychological Society State Conference.

Lord Mayor of Newcastle John Tate opened the conference, which presented a stimulating program that brought psychology to the community. The conference featured special guest 'Tim the Yowie Man' - the world's only cryptozoologist - who spoke at the conference dinner on unusual phenomena in the natural world from Big Foot to the Loch Ness monster.

The conference, co-hosted by the Newcastle branch of the Australian Psychological Society and the University's Schools of Behavioural Sciences and Education, attracted national keynote speakers, who addressed community relevant topics, from adaptability and flexibility in the workplace to family psychology and treatments for mental illness.

Keynote speakers included Professor Beryl Hesketh, Dean of the Faculty of Science at the University of Sydney, who spoke on 'Adaptability and Flexibility: Attributes in High Demand'. Professor Hesketh is an industrial and organisational psychologist whose research interests include the perception of time and speed using a driving simulator, time discounting and decision-making about retirement finances and activities, and training fire fighters for adaptability and decision-making.

Professor Matt Sanders, Director of the Parenting and Family Support Centre at the University of Queensland discussed the role of family in the prevention of childhood psychopathology. Professor Sanders is the founder of the internationally recognised Triple P-Positive Parenting Program, winning the National Violence Prevention Award from the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Australia on two occasions. He conducts research in the area of parenting, family psychology and the treatment and prevention of childhood psychopathology and has published extensively on the nature, causes, prevention and treatment of behavioural disturbance in children.

Professor Mike Startup, from the School of Behavioural Sciences in the University's Faculty of Science and Information Technology, spoke about 'Clinical Psychology at the Coal-face'. Professor Startup has a background as a clinical psychologist, where he began research into the development, delivery and evaluation of psychological treatments for psychotic disorders, especially Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and establishing training courses for mental health professionals in psychosocial treatments for serious mental illness.

The Australian Psychological Society is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing around 13,000 members. Conference Chair and Head of the University's School of Education Phil Foreman said the conference established and strengthened links between those in the field of psychology, education and the general community, and promoted the contributions psychology makes to people's health and well being.

"The conference promoted quality psychological practice and fostered learning and growth by bringing together members who work in a diverse range of employment settings and specialisations," he said. "It provided an opportunity for the University to present up to the minute research on relevant community topics, offering an exciting and informative program covering a wide range of issues from personality disorders and autism, to schizophrenia and problem gambling."
‘Glitch’ gets Gross nomination

A Newcastle graduate was one of three finalists for the highly esteemed Yoram Gross Animation Award at the 50th Sydney Film Festival.

Damien Slevin, who graduated with a Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication) in 2001, directed his animated film ‘Glitch’. The film, set in the future, is about a disgruntled observer weighing up the price of attaining a sense of self in a world where technology reigns supreme.

Roger Dunstan from the School of Design, Communication and Information Technology in the Faculty of Science Information Technology says Damien was an extremely dynamic student who took a multilateral approach to learning.

"Damien is an excellent representative of the calibre of graduates from our design school," he said. "His success speaks for itself through the acknowledgement of his film industry peers."

The Yoram Gross Animation Award is part of the Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films. The Sydney Film Festival has administrated the competition for Australian films, less than 60 minutes in length, since 1970. Previous winners include Festival patrons Gillian Armstrong, Jane Campion and Phil Noyce.

Damien’s film ‘Glitch’ screened on the first day of the Festival at the State Theatre in June. Damien was also a finalist in the Best Tertiary Animation category at the ATOM Awards at the new Melbourne Centre for the Moving Image. ‘Glitch’ has also been accepted for the Brisbane Film Festival to be held in July/August.

Damien, who came to Newcastle from Canada with his family at the age of 18, said he made the film in his spare time, while pursuing a freelance design and illustration career. Its success has been ‘a nice surprise’.

“I’m always writing short stories and I had a number of ideas," Damien said. “While I learned to use a number of computer programs during my studies, I taught myself to use another of my completed movies. As well as writing the script and creating the animation, Damien also wrote and performed the music for ‘Glitch’.

Damien completed a Bachelor of Arts, with Honours in history from the University of Sydney before studying design at the University. He said that his Newcastle studies had taught him a lot, including the mental processes required to fine tune his artistic and creative output. He is currently undertaking a Diploma of Education at the University and plans to teach, while pursuing his more artistic projects in his spare time.

After drought comes flood

While most of New South Wales still suffers the ongoing drought conditions caused by the now faded 2002-2003 El Nino event, University researchers believe signs now point toward a La Nina event developing in the Pacific Ocean.

La Nina events are the opposite extreme of climate variability to El Nino and have been linked to widespread flooding across NSW.

La Nina events are the opposite extreme of climate variability to El Nino and have been linked to widespread flooding across the Pacific Ocean.

Newcastle climate researchers, Dr Stewart Franks and Anthony Kiem, claim that a fully developed La Nina would bring much wetter than average conditions across Eastern Australia from September 2003 through to April 2004.

"From historic flood records, it is clear that La Nina events are the primary drivers of flooding across Eastern Australia," Stewart said. "The chances of floods are twice as high in La Nina years compared to normal years."

The University team have a proven method for identifying the early stages of El Nino and La Nina development. Using simple measures of Pacific Ocean behaviour, they issued the first early warning of the 2002-03 El Nino event, some months before the Weather Bureau acknowledged the possibility.

"While many climate models remain ambiguous in their current forecasts, our methodology is based purely on observations and has been shown to outperform the complex climate models," Stewart said. "The La Nina event will not arrive in time to assist farmers in the winter crop, but it does point toward a return to good soil moisture levels from the spring onwards."

While many will welcome any above average rainfall, La Nina events are associated with very high flood risk and consequently high erosion and increased land degradation. La Nina events can also bring strong storm events.

Many Sydney residents will remember the damage caused by the hail storm of 1998 during the last La Nina event. The researchers say that at this stage, it might be prudent to consider simple steps to reduce the risk of storm damage in light of the high probability of a coming La Nina.
NUbots take on the nationals

The University's four-legged soccer playing robot team, the NUbots, continued their success when they took out second place in the Australian Open of the RoboCup 2003 Legged League in Sydney in May.

The Australian Open is a nationwide competition where the best of the best in national robot soccer technology compete for the title.

NUbots team leader Professor Rick Middleton from the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science said the Newcastle team played an excellent game and was outplayed in the final stages by friendly rivals ‘rUNSWift’ from the University of NSW.

“We are the ‘new kids on the block’, with last year our first year of competition,” Rick explains “The ‘rUNSWift’ is a very strong team who won the Internationals in 2001 and came 2nd in 2002. It was the only team we lost to in last year’s world competition, RoboCup 2002, in Japan.”

Environmental change and health in the Upper Hunter

A team of researchers from the University will examine the impact of environmental change on the health of Upper Hunter communities.

Researchers from the Schools of Medical Practice and Population Health, Social Sciences, and Environmental and Life Sciences will look at the connections between ecosystem health and human health in terms of quality of life.

Researcher Dr Glenn Albrecht says the Upper Hunter has been subject to the expansion of open cut coal mining and large-scale industry in the last decade. These activities plus the changes made to the landscape by land clearing for agriculture over the last 200 years have significant impacts on the environment.

“These changes have individually and cumulatively affected the ecosystem health of the land, the river and its catchment,” Glenn says. “The people that live in the area most affected by mining, heavy industry and landscape change respond in different ways. Some welcome the changes while others are concerned about the impact of, for example, pollution on their health and the health of the environment.”

The researchers will talk to residents willing to participate in the research to see if there is a relationship between how long the person has lived in the area and their perception of significant impacts on human and ecosystem health.

“We are keen to find out if the community itself perceives any connection between large-scale landscape and environmental disturbance and the total quality of life,” Glenn said.

Once completed, the pilot study will be extended with a larger region-wide survey. The research team anticipate that this pioneering work in the Hunter Region will assist industry, agriculture and communities, both within Australia and outside, to find ways to support human and ecosystem health and a good quality of life, while engaging in the development of natural resources.

For general information about the study contact Dr Glenn Albrecht, School of Environmental and Life Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Information Technology on 4921 6635. If you are interested in participating in the study, contact Associate Professor Nick Higinbotham, School of Medical Practice and Population Health in the Faculty of Health on 4923 6180 or email Sonia.Freeman@newcastle.edu.au.
Student takes top award for Tonga

Master of Environmental Studies student, Taniela Faletau is the proud recipient of the 2003 Commonwealth Youth Leadership Award for Tonga.

The Australian Commonwealth Youth Leadership Awards (CYLA) are a key component of the Australian Government's commitment to the 'Youth for the Future' initiative designed to encourage and utilise the skills and enthusiasm of young people in Commonwealth countries.

The award offers young Australian Development Scholarship students from eligible neighbouring Commonwealth countries opportunities to experience governance practice to prepare them for leadership roles in their home country.

Taniela says the award will allow him to attend the 'Leadership Management and Governance in the Public Sector' course in Canberra in August, where he can expect to be taught the necessary skills worthy of high-quality, effective leadership.

"In Tonga I worked as an Environmental Management Plan Officer for the Tonga Environmental Management Planning, Policy and Strengthening Project, aiding consultants in formulating a lagoon management plan," he said. "I was also involved in the Tonga Climate Change Project as project officer assisting with Tonga's first communication to the Conference of Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)."

Having worked for the Tongan Government, Taniela says he's come to understand some of the difficulties that the public sector faces in daily decision making.

"I hope to learn the principles of good management and leadership at all levels and attain the skills necessary to make confident decisions," he said. "I hope to further my knowledge and experience through my studies in Australia, combined with the leadership training provided, to benefit not only my home country but the wider community and environment."

'The Mayor's a Square'

A University researcher has published a book examining the vibrant history of Australia's popular music scene from the early live rock performances in the late 1950s to the rave dance parties of the late 90s.

Dr Shane Homan from the School of Social Sciences is the author of 'The Mayor's a Square: Live Music and Law and Order in Sydney', which was launched in Sydney in June.

"The book provides an historical perspective to contemporary debates about the health of live music in Australia and the influence of local councils, state governments and venue managers on the live rock scene," Shane said.

'The Mayor's a Square' examines clashes between governments and the music culture in Australia. The title refers to a comment by rocker Johnny O'Keefe, who labelled the Mayor of Parramatta a 'square' while battling with civic authorities in the 1950s. The book also looks at the surfs and rockers clashes in the 60s, the infamous 1979 Star Hotel riot, and 90s media coverage of rave parties.

"The much vaunted Oz rock mythology - hard rock bands playing to hard drinking and hard to please fans - was evident from the 1950s, with bands forced to win over both their fans and local authorities," Shane said. "The demise of the Star Hotel in Newcastle is captured as a precursor to government crackdowns from the mid-1980s, when successive alcohol, fire, noise and building code laws reigned in the excesses of the Oz rock pub."

The subsequent shift to dance party subcultures is also examined in the moral panic that erupted upon the death of Anna Wood and ecstasy consumption within youth rave scenes. More than 60 musicians, promoters and venue owners were interviewed about what it has meant to take the stage in an RSL, leagues club, or rock pub.

'The Mayor's a Square: Live Music and Law and Order in Sydney' was launched by Rob Hirst (Midnight Oil) at the Hopetoun Hotel in Surry Hills in June.
Tocal scholarship recipient announced

Mr Duncan Sutherland has been chosen as the inaugural recipient of the University of Newcastle Scholarship for a student attending CB Alexander Agricultural College (Tocal).

Associate Professor and Deputy President of the Academic Senate Brailey Sims presented the $2000 scholarship at the College's Graduation Day in April. The aim of the scholarship is to assist students and encourage them to move into tertiary education after completing their studies at Tocal.

Principal of Tocal, Mr Cameron Archer said the scholarship is a great initiative that will help further relations between the University and Tocal.

"The scholarship raises the profile of University courses for our students, many of whom had not considered that they may one day continue their studies at undergraduate level. It will also attract capable students into agriculture and related industries, which will serve our rural sector well into the future."

Professor Brian English, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, said the University values its association with Tocal.

"We have been pleased to see a number of students pursue further studies at Newcastle following their studies at Tocal. This scholarship will strengthen the links between our two institutions."

To qualify for the scholarship, applicants must have high levels of achievement in their school studies and enrol in either a Certificate III or Certificate IV in Agriculture at Tocal. This year's winner Duncan Sutherland lives at Tallangatta, a beef cattle and lamb fattening property in the Upper Murray area. He is keen to pursue his studies to Diploma level at Tocal and then at the University before becoming a property manager.

"In the long term I hope one day to take over the family property. This scholarship will be of great assistance to my family and in helping me do this. I plan to get as much out of my year at Tocal as possible," Duncan said.

CB Alexander Agricultural College (Tocal) is a vocational education and training agricultural college run by NSW Agriculture. The College is a leading provider of distance education to the rural sector.

Newcastle students offered Mitsui scholarships

Newcastle students will be offered the opportunity to tour Japan from November 24 to December 13 2003 under a scholarship scheme offered by the Mitsui Educational Foundation (MEF).

The University is one of only two in NSW invited to participate in the 2003 MEF tour, which takes eight students from around Australia on an 18-day educational and cultural tour. The scholarship includes return airfares, accommodation, transport, attraction admissions and most meals.

The successful students will be chaperoned and will spend time with Japanese university students, as well as getting a close-up view of Japanese culture through a short homestay with a Japanese family. They will travel to Kyoto and Nara to see original shrines and temples and visit plants and offices of Japanese corporate giants Mitsui Petrochemical, Nippon Steel Corporation, Toyota Motor Company and Sharp Corporation.

University Scholarships Officer Glen Avery says the MEF was established in 1971 by Mitsui & Co. (Australia) Ltd. Managing Director Koichiro (Ken) Ejiri, who in 1992 was awarded an honorary AC by the Australian Government in recognition for his contribution to Australia/Japan relations.

"Mitsui Australia wanted to build stronger ties and promote mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Australia," he said. "The MEF tour introduces students to aspects of Japanese culture, history, business, industry and contemporary lifestyles."

The students will act as ambassadors for Australia during the tour and desirable criteria for the scholarships include: interpersonal skills, leadership, teamwork, cultural sensitivity; academically capable plus active within university activities and the wider community; genuinely eager and prepared to open up their minds to learn about Japan and the Japanese people; conscious of learning about themselves through their reaction to their experiences in Japan; and passionate about life and about the unique opportunity this MEF Tour provides.

Anyone interested in more information about the MEF tour should contact the Scholarships Office on 4921 6541.
German student's talents flower

A giant magenta honeysuckle will permanently flower over the butterfly garden outside the University's Student Services Centre thanks to an exchange agreement with the prestigious Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany.

The two-metre long fibreglass flower, which hangs gracefully from a seven metre high pole, is the work of Bauhaus student Anna Kling. She constructed the sculpture as part of her Master of Fine Art studies in Public Art and New Artistic Strategies at Weimar.

Anna, who describes herself as a 'new romantic' artist, has spent first semester in Newcastle studying Site Specific Sculpture with lecturer Vlase Nikoleski. She came to the University after meeting a Newcastle Master's student Trisha Flanagan, who is on exchange to the Bauhaus.

"I've worked in different ways with flowers in Germany, including performances involving breaking up concrete to plant real flowers and planting fields of flowers," Anna explained. "I noticed my work was becoming smaller and when I heard about the sculpture course that fitted so well with my Public Art studies, I thought I should go to a big country."

Living in Trisha Flanagan's house in Wickham, Anna was captivated by the nearby Honeysuckle development of Newcastle's foreshore and prepared a detailed proposal to hang the flower sculpture at the entrance to Honeysuckle.

"I have a bicycle and I was fascinated by this unfixed place," she said. "Newcastle has been very inspiring for me because it has beautiful beaches and is very pretty but it also has this world of work, with coal trains and ships."

Anna, who says she has been drawing and painting for as long as she can remember, didn't begin art studies until she was 27. She completed a five-year Diploma in Fine Art at Weimar and has exhibited her work in As

As a public artist, you're not dependent on the gallery system, which makes children and invites community members with a couple of hours to spare to join their team. Volunteers visit a family once a week for two hours and offer

honesulsuckle was not consistent with the objectives of their Public Art Plan.

"While I was a bit disappointed that the work won't hang at Honeysuckle, I'm still happy because it will hang at the University," she said. "I've never had a permanent public artwork put up and it's good to know that I can leave something behind as a sign that I was here."

As well as her sculpture, which was erected on June 23, Anna has completed a video installation entitled Real Train Meditation. The installation was exhibited at the University's Wrat Space Galleries in June.

Home-Start volunteers graduate

Dr John Irvine, Patron of the Home-Start program of the University's Family Action Centre presented certificates to the program's latest recruits recently.

Volunteers from Newcastle, East and North Lake Macquarie areas received their certificates. East Lake Macquarie Home-Start Coordinator Evelyn Gibson says Home-Start is a voluntary home visiting service that offers support and friendship to families with children under five years.

"The preparation course provides the volunteers with enormous insight into the community and how they can make a difference to a family in need," she said. "By using their own life experiences the volunteers can really help."

Home-Start recognises the skills that parents develop when raising their children and invites community members with a couple of hours to spare to join their team. Volunteers visit a family once a week for two hours and offer assistance through their regular visit - sometimes going on outings with the family, helping with appointments or the shopping.

This year sees the introduction of a male coordinator, Craig d'Arcy, to the Home-Start team. The position acknowledges that an increasing number of single fathers are caring for families.

"We want to encourage dads to be involved as volunteers," Evelyn explains, "and hope to offer a course that they may feel more comfortable with."

The next training courses for volunteers begin in July/August. If you would like to volunteer or would like more information about Home-Start, contact the Newcastle Coordinator on 4921 6751, East Lake Macquarie Coordinator on 4921 6842 or North Lake Macquarie Coordinator on 4921 6479.
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