Building links with Vietnam

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We have been recently informed by the Office of Senator Kay Patterson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, that Australia has attracted a record 146,577 overseas students in 2000-2001, which is a 23 percent increase over the numbers for

The major source countries listed for offshore visas were the People’s Republic of China (6886 student visas granted, up by 46 percent), the United States (7426, up by 15 percent), Malaysia (6255, up by six percent), Indonesia (6070, up by 12 percent) and Hong Kong (5740, up by 26 percent).

The major countries for onshore visas included Korea (11,721, a 90 percent increase over 1999-2000), Indonesia (7543, up nine percent), China (6134, up 58 percent), Japan (701, up 18 percent) and Thailand (3616, up 40 percent).

These are massive increases for Australia, which reflect our standing as a major provider of quality education to countries around the world and the very strong demand currently existing in the international education market place. Of particular interest, of course, are the major countries for these international students. As you would expect, China continues to be a growing source for Australian education programs, although traditional student provider countries such as Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia remain strong markets for Australia.

Advice from IDP Education Australia supports this growth for the higher education sector. Australian universities now have ~ 15 percent of their students as international students, which is the highest for any country, and well ahead of our major competitors, the UK, the United States, and Canada.

As you are aware, one of our major strategic objectives as a university is the internationalisation of our identity through our academic services and offerings, our student body both offshore and here in Australia, as well as our staff profile. We are making progress however our rate of growth in international student numbers and load is well behind the other Australian universities. I am hopeful that following the ‘restructure’ of the university, which will be completed later this year, we will develop a much higher level of commitment to internationalisation, as the responsibility for marketing our programs is delegated to the Faculties. In addition, I anticipate a higher level of commitment to the delivery of quality services to international students under the new arrangements for student services within the University Services Division, the Research and International Division, and the Faculties.

Speaking of the University ‘restructure’, I am pleased to report that we have concluded the appointment processes for the five Pro Vice-Chancellor positions. The following have accepted offers from the university:

Pro Vice-Chancellor Business and Law: Professor Bernard Carey has held a number of previous senior positions, including Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor (Development) at the University of Western Sydney, Deputy Pro-Chancellor and Member President of UWS Hawkesbury, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of Macquarie University, and Director of the Macquarie Graduate School of Management. Professor Carey holds academic qualifications in both management and law.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Arts: Professor Terry Lovat has held the position of Professor of Education at the University of Newcastle since 1995, and Dean, Faculty of Education since 1996. Professor Lovat holds academic qualifications in both arts and education, and has been a staff member of the University since 1985.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Engineering and Built Environment: Professor Adrian Page has held the position of Clay Brick and Paver Institute Professor in Structural Clay Brickwork since 1992, and has been Dean of the Faculty of Engineering since 1997. Professor Page holds academic qualifications in civil engineering, and has been a staff member of the University since 1971.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Health: Professor John Marley is currently Associate Dean International in the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Adelaide, and was the Foundation Professor of General Practice at the University of Adelaide from 1995. Professor Marley holds academic qualifications in medicine, as well as Fellowships from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Science: Professor Bill Hogarth is currently Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences at Griffith University, a position he has held since 1993. Professor Hogarth holds academic qualifications in science and mathematics, graduated with a PhD in mathematics from this University in 1970, and has held a Chair in Environmental Sciences at Griffith University since 1996.

I am sure that you all join me in welcoming our Pro Vice-Chancellors to their new positions. They will play very important roles in shaping our future and I am delighted to have such an outstanding and experienced group of academics to work with in the critical years ahead.

Roger S Holmes
Vice-Chancellor and President

Enquiries regarding display advertisements - Dianne Taylor, phone: 4921 8641. Classified advertisements and contributions for Excerpts should be sent to Rose Roohan, phone: 4921 6463, email: per@alinga.newcastle.edu.au.

Publisher: Fran Flavel
Editor: Kim Britton
Writers: Katie Porrut
Leigh Wallis
Contributors: Cae Patterson
Debbie Smith
Latha Lewis

Designer: Trude Anness
Photography: John Freund
Chris Patterson
Cover photo: Students Hi Vli (left) and Le Diliong with Nguyen Bao Thanh at the University – story p3. Photo by Chris Patterson
Danang collaboration

A unique collaboration between the University and Newcastle civic and industry leaders has led to the formation of a formal relationship with the central Vietnamese City of Danang.

The Danang contact began with a suggestion by the Australian Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr Michael Mann, during a visit to Newcastle earlier this year, that the city could benefit from entering into a relationship with Danang City to promote business, education, trade and investment. He invited Newcastle leaders to visit Vietnam and a delegation flew to Danang and Hanoi in May.

The delegates were Mr Milton Morris, who represented the City of Newcastle and Professor Jenny Graham representing the University. They were accompanied by Dr Peter Pfister from the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, who was pursuing specific business opportunities with Vietnam Airlines; and Dr Amir Mahmood, who was exploring the potential role of the Graduate School of Business in meeting professional development needs at Masters level generally and with large industries including Vietnam Airlines and Electricity Vietnam.

Danang City is the principal port and city in Central Vietnam, serving a population of over 20 million. The Newcastle delegates built a relationship with Chairman of the Danang City People’s Committee, Nguyen Ba Thanh, which led to Mr Thanh leading a Vietnamese delegation on a return visit to Newcastle in June and to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding of friendship and cooperation with the City of Newcastle. The delegation included industry leaders and representatives from major development sectors such as tourism and IT, as well as officers within the City administration with key development and investment portfolios.

"Mr Thanh had heard of Newcastle through Mr Mann and Australians living and working in Danang and was keen to enter into an agreement with the city," Jenny Graham said. "Danang has a wonderful natural port and is slated to grow in the coming decade to become the key port not only for Central Vietnam but also for Laos and Northern Thailand. Newcastle could be a preferred partner through this agreement to supply goods and services in support of that growth and the University will be able to attract both scholarship and full fee paying students from central Vietnam. The opportunity also exists for the University to contribute to major industry development projects."

The University, which plans to sign its own agreement with Danang University later in the year, will offer Vietnamese students an opportunity to upgrade their knowledge and skills in business management, IT, renewable energy research and development, engineering, education services and English language. Opportunities also exist to transfer Newcastle’s vocational training expertise to Danang.

"The agreement which Newcastle and Danang have entered into is probably the first such comprehensive business-oriented agreement which any Australian city or region has undertaken with Vietnam," Jenny said. "It is a natural step to take advantage of mutual interest in internationalisation and one which demonstrates Newcastle’s dynamism and vision for the future."

The Vietnamese delegation visited Newcastle on June 12, 13 and 14 with the University coordinating the visit in close cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Hunter Valley Training Company and the Newcastle City Council. The visit was supported by the CEO of the Port Corporation, Minister Richard Face, the Hunter Export Centre, the Newcastle and Hunter Business Chamber, Hunter Water Corporation, various industry clusters and representatives from the University, TAFE and the Hunter EdNet education cluster. Five students from Vietnam who are currently enrolled at the University helped to entertain the dignitaries and acted as interpreters.

Looking ahead

At a recent University forum, the Vice-Chancellor summarised the main strategic directions for the University’s future successful operations in the key areas of teaching, research and community service. They were:

1. Strengthen our role as a leading research and research training University.
2. Provide a world-class student-centred experience for more than 20,000 students, including six percent of research higher degree students, 10 percent of coursework graduate students and 10 percent of international students.
3. Build strong and enduring relationships with alumni.
4. Internationalise our identity in our academic offerings and services, the student body and our staff profile.
5. Become an exemplar in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, research and research training.
6. Contribute to regional development, particularly in the Hunter and Central Coast.
7. Integrate IT and telecommunications opportunities into all aspects of our planning and core activities.
8. Build a wide funding base.
9. Adopt a ‘One University’ approach, while supporting innovation and excellence.

The Vice-Chancellor said that the current University restructuring aims to support these goals and that the nine areas were all crucial to the University’s future.

“Tertiary education and the environment in which it operates has changed dramatically in the past decade and promises to continue to develop in the face of technological advances and globalisation,” Professor Holmes said. “It is necessary for the University to adapt to the changes and also to create flexible and robust structures that will sustain any future change.”
Science and maths research showcased

What is the overall effect of passive smoking on health among children, based on a diverse set of studies from across the world?

What areas of Queensland should be identified as monitoring sites for biodiversity assessment in line with Australia's international environmental commitments? How can data and expert opinion be integrated for identification of rare events?

These are among many questions that are being enthusiastically and successfully addressed using Bayesian statistics. The exponential interest in this approach to turning data into information has even enlisted NASA and Microsoft into setting up groups to explore the topic.

Professor Kerri Mengersen of the University's Department of Statistics spoke on Bayesian statistics at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics' "Forefront" conference on June 13 at the Industry Development Centre.

The conference showcased the Faculty's research activities, with eight researchers giving short seminars on subjects including Upper Hunter coal mining emissions, whether the continental land mass of Australia is still growing, new approaches to marine anti-fouling preparations, heavy metal water pollution and women's studies.

The conference was opened by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roger Holmes, and chaired by Dr Renate Griffith, lecturer in the Discipline of Biological Sciences.

Designing Steel River

Newcastle students have been given the opportunity to leave their mark on the city with the launch of a competition for the design of a major building for the Steel River precinct.

Steel River Pty Ltd has joined forces with the University to showcase the talents of architecture students, who will have until November to come up with a design for the construction of an office complex on the southeast hill precinct of the former BHP owned land. The design brief calls for a building within a landscaped garden that is consistent with the Steel River hill workshop and the Strategic Impact Assessment Study (SIAS) for the site.

Professor Tony Eddison, Head of the University's Department of Design, says Steel River is planned as an eco-industrial site, with the developers aiming to implement strict criteria for its tenants.

"The people behind Steel River want to attract industries that are non-polluting and energy efficient and to achieve symbiotic relationships where one tenant's waste could be another's raw materials," Tony explains. "The site will be the only one of its kind in Australia and will take some years to develop."

Architecture students must present their designs to Newcastle City Council and entries must include plans, sketches and commentary suitable for public exhibition. Any computer models will be incorporated into the virtual reality model of Newcastle that is currently underway at the University of Technology Sydney.

Steel River is offering a cash prize of $7,500 for the winning entry, with a further $2,500 if the design is carried through to a more developed stage.

Steel River Director Ross Wilson said the competition aimed to encourage quality design and construction by local architecture and design students.

"Steel River offers 104 hectares of prime industrial land which we are committed to developing into the region's premier industrial estate," he said.

"We have determined the need for an office building on the site and believe that it's important to support and nurture local design talent."

In addition to the architecture prize, Steel River will offer a $10,000 prize to visual design students to develop a website and a marketing campaign to attract tenants to the site.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for students to test their skills," Tony said. "We worked with Steel River Pty Ltd to formulate the competition briefs to include what they required from an academic point of view and what we required from a business point of view."

Students were briefed on the competition at a launch at University House on June 19. The competition closes on November 8 with the winner announced later that month.
No point training for jobs that don’t exist

Training courses for the unemployed are a “total waste of time” when there is only one vacancy for every 11 people without work, Professor Bill Mitchell of the University’s Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CoFE) told delegates at a recent conference in Newcastle.

“The unemployed cannot search for jobs that aren’t there,” Bill said. “The courses, documentation and other hoops the jobless have to go through are just making it harder and harder to endure the disadvantage of unemployment.

“Training merely alters the order of the 11 men and women in the queue for that job, by giving a better trained person a bump up the list. There must be more jobs available for training to be effective.”

Bill Mitchell, a voice against economic orthodoxy, argued that unemployment can be solved by ramping up the number of public sector jobs and replacing the dole with a ‘job guarantee’.

He said the difference between the US, where unemployment is low, and Australia, where unemployment is high, is that Australia has allowed its public sector jobs to decline dramatically against the number of people coming into the labour force.

His views, the job guarantee theory and the policies of the Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CoFE) in the Department of Economics, were aired at the Path to Full Employment conference held in the Shortland Union on June 14th and 15th.

Economists and academics came from the USA, South Africa, the Netherlands, Italy and Australia to speak at the conference.

Topics included the dangers of budget surpluses; employment strategies for minerals exporting countries; an analysis of government work programs; and how full employment can help create a sustainable economy.

University website under construction

The University will have a new website this year with improved consistency and easier navigation.

The site, due for launch in January 2002, will not only provide intuitive navigation and consistency of information but will also incorporate special features including virtual reality tours of the campus, devices to detect and respond to the browser version of the user logging on, and the ability to cater for visual impairment and other languages.

Professor Tony Eddison, Head of the Department of Design, who is part of the team constructing the website, says the existing site was conceived a decade ago when it was difficult to foresee what an important tool the internet would become.

“The site was established on a CWIS (Campus Wide Information Service) platform, which means that the University’s domestic and housekeeping matters are housed on the same system as the web page that presents it to external users,” he said. “It was also constructed during a time when Government scrutiny of web hosting and publishing policies was not as severe as they are now and it has grown like topsy to include more than 20,000 individual pages, many of which are abandoned or contain outdated information.”

The new design for the site will be database driven in all the key areas and will reflect the University’s strategic priorities. It will be separated into an externally focussed site and an Intranet for currently enrolled students and staff, which will be accessible using passwords. The redevelopment was funded by the External Relations Division, with Information and Education Services Division (IESD) contributing about $25,000 worth of expertise and time to the project. Marketing and Media Services (M&M) in consultation with subsite managers from across the University and the Department of Design formulated the new site proposal. The design takes into account feedback from existing and prospective students, information gathered by the University’s PIP (Personal Information Portfolio) program, and benchmarking against best practice sites, which was not restricted to higher education sites.

“Staff will continue to be able to add content to the website through the subsite manager for their area, with the intention being not to restrict access to the site but to ensure ease of use and consistency of navigation for users and avoid duplication of information,” Tony said. “People can have their own look and feel for their pages but within the context of the central navigation system, or they can opt to use a corporate template structure. We are designing the system to have an overall consistency but also to be adaptable to any future changes in structure, so we are incorporating modularity.”

The new website coding and layout is being carried out by design graduate Adam Quirk, with database expertise from IESD’s web project team. It is due to go live on January 1 after a test period from November this year.

M&M Director Dr Fran Flavel says the new design, achieved at a fraction of the cost of an externally designed system, would give Newcastle one of the best websites in Australia.

Enquiries about maintaining current pages or creating new content should be made to Director of M&M, Dr Fran Flavel on 4921 6730 or email fran.flavel@newcastle.edu.au.
Archiving University art

Fine Art Honours student Izabela Pluta is loving her role as Assistant Curator of the University’s art collection. The University has accumulated more than 450 works of art in its 30-year history and has created the Assistant Curator’s position to safeguard the collection.

“I love the job,” 22-year-old Izabela said. “It’s hard for art graduates to find relevant work and I’m gaining valuable knowledge and experience.”

Izabela is photographing and archiving the complete collection onto a database and intends to create an online exhibition early next year. This involves seeking copyright permission from each of the artists – a formidable task given that many of the works were acquired in the early years of the University.

“It’s important to try and get the collection onto the web because the University has all this great art and no one knows about it.”

The collection, which is mostly paintings but includes some sculptures and other works, includes a Margaret Olley painting, which was recently loaned to the Lake Macquarie Art Gallery for their opening exhibition. Other artists represented in the collection include Chris Langlois, John Olsen, Vera Zulkoslovski and Leslie Tilley.

“The collection reflects the best of the art world of Newcastle and the Hunter region,” Izabela said. “The sub-committee that selects new works is made up of fine art staff and others who are all aware of what is around in the shows and exhibitions locally and make their selections based on whether a purchase is in the best interests of the collection. It is usually a work that is important to the Newcastle art community in some way or that reflects the way artists are working at the time.”

As well as improving access to the collection via the online catalogue, Izabela is co-curating a show with 3rd Year Fine Art student Catherine Smith, to exhibit the latest acquisitions. New Additions opens on August 1 in the Fine Art Gallery. Her role also includes overseeing maintenance and repair of the collection, with many of the paintings needing re-framing as time and movement take their toll.

“The University owns a lot of work and the collection is worth a lot of money,” Izabela said. “It is really important that the job of maintaining and archiving the collection has been funded through the Assistant Curator’s position.”

Izabela is an award winning artist who specialises in photomedia. Born in Poland, she came to Australia when she was eight and studied art for her HSC at Glendale Technology High School. She came to University to study ceramics but quickly changed her mind when she did a first year course on photomedia.

From not owning a camera at all in her first year at University, Izabela now owns six, including a pinhole camera that she made herself.

“I develop fetishes about things, like frames, which I love to make and collect,” she said.

“Photography has come a long way and has become a common medium for artists. In a world where we are exposed to a vast number of images, photographs are very accessible for people because what they depict seems real to them.”

Izabela has won a swag of awards for her work including the National Tertiary Art Prize 2000 Photomedia/4D Arts section; the overall prize in the Winner Photomedia/Electronic Art competition; a Gold Award in the Illustrative Category of the 2000 Australian Professional Photography Awards; and first prize in this year’s Newcastle Port Corporation Maritime Acquisitive Photographic Prize.

She works with large scale monotone imagery and her honour's research is into alternative, experimental aspects of photomedia. Her solo exhibitions this year have included Out of Context at the Counihan Gallery, Brunswick, Melbourne; ACP Project Wall, at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney; and Almos Consacrat at Suites Architects offices in Newcastle. An exhibition exploring her Polish heritage, Repatriate, was the inaugural display at the Introdos Gallery last month.

Izabela works two days a week in the part-time position as Assistant Curator of the University’s art collection. She is a photomedia demonstrator in the School of Fine Art. She is an assistant for Physical Planning and Estates, and tutors at photography workshops at the Lane Cove Community Arts Centre in Sydney and Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery.
Korean visit strengthens links

The Faculty of Music is strengthening its links with Korea following a visit last month by Professor Hong Jung Pyo from the Seoul Jangsin University and Theological Seminary.

Professor Hong, one of Korea's most prominent church music conductors and the author of a number of books on church music, is head of the Department of Church Music at Jangsin. He came to Newcastle to discuss an agreement between the two universities to create exchange opportunities for students and staff.

Dean of the Faculty of Music, Professor Robert Constable, said there are many millions of Christians in South Korea and that music plays an important part in their ministry.

"The standard of church music is very high and there are more than 10 church universities in South Korea and seven or eight church music departments in Seoul alone," Robert explained. "For every 100 students accepted into Seoul universities, there are 700 to 800 unsuccessful applicants."

Newcastle is the only non-church sponsored university in Australia to offer courses in church music.

"We have a lot to offer each other in an exchange arrangement," Robert said. "We will gain from exposure to the very high quality of church music in Seoul and there are great opportunities for the University to offer Korean students postgraduate study in particular."

Beom Hyun Cho (Joseph), who graduated with his Master of Creative Arts from the University last May and now lives in Sydney, accompanied Professor Hong on his visit to the Conservatorium and acted as translator. He said that the Jangsin seminary was unable to offer postgraduate degrees and that it was part of the University's policy to encourage students to continue their study overseas.

Korean student Ji-Lyoun Lee, who is currently studying English in Newcastle to prepare for Masters studies at the Faculty of Music, said she was attracted to the city by the church music course but also by the pipe organ, which she saw while performing with her theological university's choir during a visit to the Conservatorium Concert Hall two years ago.

Ji-Lyoun, who began playing piano at the age of 10, recently won the John Brown Memorial Competition held at the Uniting Church in Pitt Street, Sydney. She won $1000 in the organ competition, performing in front of a large audience.

During his week-long visit to Australia, Professor Hong delivered seminars and conducted the Korean Church Choir and the Korean Philharmonic Choir, both based in Sydney. He came to Newcastle on July 4 and met with Professor Constable and colleague and conductor Philip Matthias.

Joint IT project to serve business and education

A fully fledged commercial Information Services Centre that also provides problem based learning to Information Technology (IT) students is being proposed by the University.

The combination of a profitable data centre and a place of learning is probably a world first, says Professor Janet Aisbett, Head of the School of Information Technology and promoter of the concept.

A feasibility study for the project has received nearly $100,000 in Federal, State and private funding. The University is now seeking expressions of interest from an IT consultancy team to prepare a business plan and advise on the appropriate scale of the project and potential modes of ownership and operation.

"Information service centres are the future of IT", Janet says. "They offer a hub of IT expertise to business and government which provides complex software, data storage, tailor-made software applications, help desk support, training, and research and development."

"The type of organisational information, and the way it is used, is becoming increasingly sophisticated. At the same time, there's a shortage in skilled staff who understand the new technologies. IT costs as a percentage of operations are rising all the time. So no wonder businesses find it hard to stay in front. The benefits of information service centres to business will be a reduction in costs associated with managing and processing their business information and even the smallest business will have access to centralised expert assistance."

The information service centre will be designed to be commercially viable while also providing problem-based learning to Newcastle students.

The project is being supported by $55,000 in funding from the Commonwealth Government under its Regional Assistance Program administered by the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business and facilitated by the Hunter Area Consultative Committee. A further $34,000 has been provided by the Department of State Regional Development through the Hunter Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) with additional support from the Department of Information Technology and Management and CSC Australia.
Education reviewer visits

Universities need to reconnect with schools to improve the quality of initial and continuing teacher education, reviewer Dr Gregor Ramsay told an audience of educators and policy makers at the Ourimbah Campus in May.

During a lecture organised by the Central Coast Professional Education Consultancy Committee, Dr Ramsay outlined the findings of his review of teacher education in New South Wales entitled "Quality Matters — Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices".

"I am convinced that the quality of professional practice in classrooms, in government and non-government schools and other educational settings, will be improved by reconnecting universities and schools in initial and continuing teacher education and by strengthening teacher professionalism," he said.

Dr Ramsay's review, commissioned by the State Government, focuses on the quality of teachers and the suitability of university teacher education courses. He consulted widely in writing the report, taking into account a range of views, and endeavoured to test the ideas against three criteria: the best interests of young learners in NSW; the professional interests of teachers; and the best way to implement any necessary changes.

He premised the report on his belief in teaching as a profession and advocates that the responsibility to develop the profession is a joint one.

"The quality of teachers makes the difference. And how do we make the quality better? The quality of a new curriculum is not always the answer, but rather the core issue is the way in which teachers are prepared.

"Compared to say accounting and engineering, teaching as a profession has not developed along the same lines and because of that we need to have a good look at our profession. We need to look at how we prepare people for teaching and how we fund that, how we differentiate skills, eg teachers skilled in teaching maths and science, and we need to put in a system that rewards teachers performing at the highest level."

The two critical issues for new teachers are the transition period between university studies and employment, and working in an environment where they are expected to excel, according to Dr Ramsay. His recommendations encompassed the following major themes:

- Making teacher quality a priority
- Professionalising teaching
- Reconnecting schools and teacher education through professional experience
- Expanding pathways into teaching
- Refocusing induction and continuing teacher education
- Integrating information and communications technology into pedagogy
- Strengthening behaviour management

Dr Ramsay said that while the imperatives for change are great, the need to respond to them is now well recognised by the education community and more broadly. Dr Ramsay has been involved in the school vocational education and higher education sectors as teacher, teacher educator, researcher and administrator. His report is based on his belief in the teaching profession and the impact teaching has on young people.

The May 29 lecture was attended by representatives from the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Department of Community Services, teachers from state, Catholic and independent schools, teaching students, academic staff involved in teacher education and community leaders.

Researchers develop medical smart card

Software engineering researchers at the University have developed a 'smart card' that can hold a person's entire medical history on a piece of plastic the size of a credit card.

The researchers say their card could revolutionise health care and they are looking for a company to take over the commercial development of the successful prototype.

The card, which they call MoReHealth (Mobile Records for better Health), is a miniature computer with memory and processor. It stores medical history so that a doctor or hospital anywhere in the world has ready access to a patient's record by the simple use of a smart card reader and a desktop PC with MoReHealth software.

The card has in-built privacy shields and tiered access so that pharmacists can read prescription records, but not the medical records available to a doctor or hospital. The card stores up to 512 health records and 512 prescription records. Losing the card does not mean losing the records because data can be automatically backed up with the "home" doctor through the Internet.

The designers, from the University's Software Precision Engineering Laboratory, are Associate Professor A.S.M. Sajeev, Michael Quinlan, a PhD student, and Kyungmi Lee, who is studying for her Master's Degree.

Explaining how the card would be used Michael says:

"Imagine a person involved in an accident is rushed to hospital seriously injured and unconscious. The smart card would instantly tell the person's blood group, allergies, medical problems and medication."
Farewell David

While he views his new appointment at La Trobe University as a great adventure, former Dean of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics Professor David Finlay left Newcastle with a lot of sadness.

"I've had a bonza time in Newcastle," the amiable professor who had been at the University for 29 years said. "Sue and I may return at some stage — the lifestyle here is second to none."

David left Newcastle in July to take up a position as Dean of La Trobe's Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering. His move to Melbourne takes him full circle as he grew up there, graduating from the University of Melbourne before coming to Newcastle as a lecturer in psychology in 1972.

"One of the things I'm most pleased about during my time here is my involvement in the establishment of the region's Botanical Gardens," David, who was the foundation secretary for the gardens, said. "My mother was tremendously interested in the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne and used to walk us there and it is satisfying to know that Newcastle's gardens will still be providing people with pleasure in 200 years."

David recalls his first position of authority at the University was as President of the Staff Association and remembers with amusement the motion of no confidence proposed against him during his first meeting in the position — over that perennial issue, parking. Around 1988, he was promoted to Professor and shortly afterwards to Dean, becoming a full dean in 1993. He has had a distinguished research career in the area of visual perception and perceptual development, has published widely in leading international journals, secured ongoing and substantial research funding, and has extensive experience in postgraduate supervision.

David remembers with pride his involvement in the establishment of the Supernova exhibit at the Newcastle Regional Museum, and the efforts of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics to boost enrolments through their activities with schools, including the SMART program and the Science and Technology Challenges.

"Science and mathematics are facing tough times around the world, especially in Australia. There is a lot of effort going into redressing the downturn in interest in science and to a lesser extent engineering in Canada, America, Europe and Asia, with governments injecting funding that makes our own government's contribution pale into insignificance."

Despite this, David believes there is cause for optimism for science and engineering faculties in Australia, saying there was a new cooperation growing between universities, industry and the government that had at least focused on the issues. The tremendous shortage in science and mathematics teachers in schools is an issue that needs to be tackled separately, David said, adding that there was a lot of emphasis on extending and improving the double degree teaching program for science and mathematics at Newcastle.

While David is looking forward to the challenge of his new position and to re-establishing close contact with friends and family in Melbourne, he leaves behind many happy memories in Newcastle.

"I have most enjoyed working with the very enthusiastic, extremely competent people within the Faculty and the University, who put in more than they are asked for for all the time. I have learned a lot from them which has been to my betterment."

David will take up his appointment at La Trobe on August 1.

Supporting chronic pain and fatigue research

The University's Collaborative Pain Research Unit (CPRU) joined forces with Newcastle University Boat Club to raise funds for their research with a Row Against Pain and Fatigue on June 10.

The CPRU, which has been researching chronic fatigue and pain conditions for over eight years, also used the event to raise awareness about chronic pain and fatigue conditions. Crews rowed 36 kilometres from Newcastle Harbour to the boat sheds at Hunter Valley Grammar School near Duchenfield in what is planned to become an annual event. More than $3,000 was raised, with half of the proceeds directed to the CPRU research and the rest supporting the University rowing program.
Professor Bernard Carey, formerly Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development) at the University of Western Sydney, will lead the University of Newcastle's new Faculty of Business and Law.

Developing research interests and attracting postgraduate students will be a priority of the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

"There is an exciting set of challenges ahead for the University of Newcastle," he said.

"Government policies are pushing universities to self-generate income, and we must employ best quality assurance and highly strategic methods to do so."

"We must appeal to the marketplace with a significant focus on research collaborations and postgraduate studies to take the University forward."

Professor Carey is highly respected in his field by both the academic and professional communities.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws, both with First Class Honours, and a PhD, all from the University of Sydney.

He also has a number of professional affiliations, including those with the Corporate Directors of Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management.

Professor Carey will take up his appointment on January 1, 2002.

Professor Bill Hogarth, currently Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences at Griffith University, will lead the new Faculty of Science at the University of Newcastle.

The Faculty has been formed following the restructure of the University, which will be implemented from 2002.

Professor Hogarth says he is delighted to accept the appointment.

"Newcastle is an excellent teaching and research University," he said.

"I look forward to the challenges for Science that have been highlighted by the Chief Scientist's report and the Innovation Council report."

"The University of Newcastle is in an excellent position to take advantage of the renewed interest in science from the Federal Government, the Opposition and the community."

Professor Hogarth has extensive experience in research, academia and industry.

As Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector liaison and management representative for Griffith University, he has a sound knowledge of tailoring education to meet industry needs.

His board memberships of a number of Commonwealth Research Centres (CRCs) are testament to his research career.

"The former President of the NSW Teachers Education Council is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and head of the new Faculty of Education and Arts at the University of Newcastle."

Professor Terry Lovat, who was appointed to this position in early July, has been Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together groups with much to offer to each other in terms of teaching and research," he said.

"I am looking forward to working more closely with a larger portion of the University, and I find the prospect of having responsibilities at all major campuses of the University particularly challenging and exciting."

Professor Lovat holds academic qualifications in both arts and education and has been a staff member of the University since 1985.

He is also a member of 16 Australian and six international professional associations.

Professor Lovat has held academic appointments at the Catholic College of Education, Sydney; Monte Sant'Angelo College, North Sydney; Hunter Institute of Higher Education and Sydney College of Advanced Education.

He holds qualifications in theology and religious education as well as a Master of Arts (Hons) from the University of Sydney, a Bachelor of Education from the South Australian College of Advanced Education, a Bachelor of Letters from Deakin University and a PhD from the University of Sydney.
Professor John Marley has been appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor of the new Faculty of Health at the University of Newcastle. He is currently Associate Dean (International) and Professor of General Practice in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide.

"I have always wanted to work at the University of Newcastle because of its outstanding reputation in education and health," says Professor Marley. "I am a strong believer in opportunities to study health for indigenous students, those from rural and regional Australia, and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The University is highly active in these areas."

Professor Marley says he is pleased to be joining the University at an exciting time of change in the delivery of health care in Australia. "A number of Federal Government initiatives announced in the last Federal Budget for nurses, psychologists, mental health and GPs, will position Australia as a leader and innovator in new models of care."

Professor Marley has held numerous key positions on international, national, government and university committees. He has also worked in a senior executive position with the large multi-national drug company Bayer, and was the Foundation Professor of General Practice at the University of Adelaide, where he has worked for the past 11 years.

Professor Marley has numerous academic and professional qualifications, including a medical doctorate from the University of Adelaide.

His wife is a dietitian and they have three children, one of whom will complete his Bachelor of Medicine degree at the University of Newcastle this year.

One of Australia's leading researchers in structural clay brickwork has been appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor of the new Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment at the University of Newcastle.

Professor Adrian Page, currently Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University, will lead the new Faculty, formed following the restructuring of the University, which will be implemented from 2002.

"The amalgamation will create real opportunities for synergies in both teaching and research across all the disciplines in the new Faculty," he said.

"There are a number of areas of mutual interest in which potential interaction can develop and I look forward to the challenge and opportunity to create a strong, vibrant Faculty well equipped to meet the challenges ahead."

Professor Page is Chairman of the Australian Masonry Code Committee, and leads the most active Masonry Research Group in Australia, based in the University's Department of Civil, Surveying and Environmental Engineering.

The research opportunities created through the merger of academic interests in engineering and the built environment will be strengthened with the leadership and profile of Professor Page.

He holds a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) from UNSW and a PhD from the University of Newcastle.

Professor Page began his career as a cadet engineer with the Hunter District Water Board in Newcastle, worked as a professional engineer in Australia and overseas, and has been employed at the University since 1971, holding his current Dean's position since 1997.
Exploring new teaching possibilities

A Faculty of Education decision to encourage final year teaching students to gain some experience outside the local system has led to practical placements in some very unusual places including Samoa, China, Gove in the Northern Territory and even Taronga Zoo.

Assistant Director of Professional Experience (Primary) Ruth Reynolds said that some of the placements were organised by the Faculty (the links with Samoa and China are through Faculty staff) and some were identified by the students themselves and supported by the Professional Experience Unit.

“We encourage the students to go further afield for their prac than the local area in their final year to learn about different systems and to challenge themselves,” Ruth said. “It opens horizons for them to learn about possibilities for future careers. They also need to adapt and think on their feet as they learn about a new system.”

Chris Swain was one of three Newcastle students who spent four weeks in the education centre of Taronga Zoo. As well as learning how to handle a range of animals including snakes, koalas, echidnas and tawny frogmouths, Chris learned how to adapt his knowledge of the material to accommodate different stages of learning from pre-schoolers to adults.

“It was a fantastic experience and I was really impressed with the professionalism of the centre staff and how what they were doing fitted in with what classroom teachers are doing – tailoring activities to maintain the interest of the group they are teaching,” he said. “The zoo placement opened doors for me and I can see there are so many options for teachers. I would say it should be mandatory for education students.”

Twenty-one-year-old Claire Rafferty combined her interest in Aboriginal studies with a holiday to visit her brother in Gove in the Northern Territory. She secured a placement teaching Years 1 and 2 at the Yirrkala Aboriginal community, where the Yolngu students are taught English as a second language.

“The students don’t begin reading and writing English until Year 3 so all their classes were conducted in Yolngu,” Claire said. “I have always been interested in indigenous culture and did Aboriginal Studies at high school and at university. I’ve done a combined Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching and was never certain whether I really wanted to teach but I loved this prac and it has made me a lot more relaxed about what I’m doing.”

The teacher who supervised Claire at Yirrkala was Gunuwun Yunupingu, wife of high-profile Yuthu Yindi front man Mandawuy Yunupingu, who she met when he came to the school with a Japanese film crew during her four week stay. Claire plans to return to the Northern Territory when she completes her studies later this year and will seek casual teaching in Darwin to adjust to the new system before looking for work in an Aboriginal community.

“That’s what I want to do.”

Inter-cultural Studies Conference

Modern Languages in June.

A strong regard for the importance of authenticity and authority in life-stories led Dr Mycak’s research into the infamous fabrication of a Ukrainian identity by young Australian writer Helen Darville. Dr Mycak describes Darville’s book as a “manipulation of a multicultural ethic as an ethnic identity was constructed, maintained and then manipulated for commercial gain”.

A research fellow in English at the University of Sydney, Dr Mycak has studied multicultural literature of Australia and Canada for several years. She drew upon her own experiences as a person from an ethnic background who has written short stories about ancestry to explore the contradiction between contemporary theory and lived experience in the literary construction of identity.

Other conference topics included detention centres and their impact, the reason Japanese students are silent in the classroom, community language schools; and how smells combine across cultures. Speakers came from a variety of disciplines including modern languages, linguistics, social work, design, English and classics.

The conference was held in the McMullin Building on June 21 and 22.
Spotlight on the Centres

The University has dozens of research centres established to provide a focus for the research efforts of various schools, departments or groups. The centres often interact with industry and government departments or act as a conduit for academic consultancy. This series will turn the spotlight on a number of these centres to examine their structure and the types of research they carry out.

Employment Studies Centre

Director, Dr Duncan Macdonald

Background

Not long after the establishment of the ESC in 1991, high profile economics senior lecturer and, later, professor, Roy Green became director, a position he held until his departure to take up a position overseas in 1999. Although it has a wide range of research associates both within and outside the University, it forms a focus for the research efforts of staff in the Faculty of Economics and Commerce and particularly the School of Management. One of its key aims is to become a national and international centre of academic excellence in areas related to work, employment and industrial relations.

Structure

The Centre is a division of the University of Newcastle Research Associates (TUNRA) and operates under the auspices of a formal constitution, which was ratified by the University Council last year. It is located on the ground floor of the Faculty of Economics and Commerce building at Callaghan and is managed by Director Duncan Macdonald. It is administered by a Management Board that meets every three months and has an Advisory Board that includes representatives from the local community, industry, educational organisations and trade unions. The Research/Administrative Officer for the Centre is Linda Cooper.

Research

The ESC undertakes research on a diverse range of topics in areas such as industry restructuring and policy, trade union strategy, vocational education and training, skills formation and economic impact studies. Last year, the Centre was invited to present research findings at hearings of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission, to regional trade union leaders, educators, industry leaders, and the Centre of Labour Research in Adelaide. Other research findings of the Centre were incorporated in Hunter Advantage—the regional economic development strategy. The ESC hosted two seminars at the University during the year.

The Centre co-hosted (with support from the School of Management and the Department of Economics) a conference in May examining the consequences of 10 years of enterprise bargaining. It is currently undertaking research into apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW for the Board of Vocational Education and Training and has just won a $75,000 grant to look at group training companies in conjunction with Hunter Ednet for the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research.

"In recent years we've tried to integrate consulting and contract research more closely with academic research undertaken in the Faculty," Duncan said. "There have been significant changes in the workplace with industry restructuring over the past decade and the changes in this region are huge and still continuing as the manufacturing industry declines and service industries rise. Centres like the ESC provide a very important link between universities and the business world."

Director

Dr Duncan Macdonald was the Centre's inaugural Director and in March last year took up the position on a part-time basis. He holds Bachelor and Masters degrees from the University of Newcastle and completed his PhD in industrial relations at the University of NSW. He joined the staff at Newcastle to lecture in the Department of Economics in 1975 and transferred to the School of Management in 1996, where he stayed until he retired at the end of 1998. He is currently an Honorary Associate of the School of Management.

"The Centre provides an important focus for research and an opportunity for people to be involved in projects that have immediate relevance to business and community groups. Academic staff are able to augment their salaries and their work greatly enhances the reputation of the University."

While Duncan says he can't hope to rival Roy Green's connections in high places, particularly in the ALP and the labour movement, he has strong connections to Newcastle and the Hunter region. He has been President of the Newcastle Branch of the Industrial Relations Society and is a life member of the branch. During his academic career, he specialised in public sector industrial relations but also lectured on, and researched, workplace change, industrial relations theory and trade unionism.

"The ESC would probably be seen as being fairly sympathetic to trade unions—or certainly sympathetic to the principles of collectivism as opposed to individualism; a stance typical of industrial relations researchers."

"We have established a good reputation through the centre and although we don't advertise our services, we consistently respond to media enquiries which helps to keep our name in front of people."

In 2000 the ESC and its projects earned around $125,000 from more than 10 projects with Federal and State government departments and agencies, industry and trade unions.
In memoriam Eric Andrews, 1933-2001

The following is an excerpt from a eulogy delivered by Dr David Lemmings from the Department of History.

As a former colleague of Eric myself, I feel best equipped to talk about his enormous contribution to the University of Newcastle and the community associated with it. His tremendous energy as a teacher and generosity as a colleague and friend is the reason why most of us are here today.

As a teacher, Eric sought to bring the past alive for his students; despite a reputation as a tough marker, he always attracted the highest enrolments. Besides his considerable passion for the study of the past, which infected all those who heard him lecture, Eric also infused his teaching and administrative work with his healthy scepticism of establishment figures, especially politicians and prime ministers; and vice chancellors above all. He hated 'bullsh*t' and pretentiousness, and delighted in his reputation as a 'bloody'. I well remember that when he was Head of Department in 1993 he frequently signed departmental memos 'Eric the Red', with an exclamation mark! When he taught 'Nationalism and Fascism' for the last time at the Central Coast Campus, the students rewarded him with a bottle of whisky and a wooden spoon - and begged him to 'keep stirring'. But he was an efficient and cheerful administrator.

Alan Ward, formerly Professor in the Department, said this about him: "Eric's enthusiasm and good humour were one of the constant themes of my nine years in the job. When I went on a year's leave-without-pay to work in Wellington, he stepped into the breach as Head of Department and did an excellent job. And when he took early retirement, and knew that it would be awkward to replace him at short notice, he very generously and very professionally continued to teach his course down at the Central Coast, without pay, till we could recruit someone to replace him... He will be remembered as a very decent and kind man."

Finally, and above all, Eric was very much the human face of academia. He was completely committed to his students and colleagues, and his sensitivity and generosity in the classroom spilled out into our private lives. He would do anything for anyone and, as a consequence, many of us are here today as his friends. What began as extra tuition with essays and exams, or collegial support with research and teaching, extended into social visits, assistance with homes, gardens, illnesses, personal and emotional crises, and any other need he perceived in our lives. I for one will always remember his gentle enquiries as to how things are going, and determined insistence that he could help out when problems developed. He was always there for us.

Brief biography
1933: Born in Highgate, London 1952: sat A-levels after his education was interrupted by WWII, was accepted to take a BA at Exeter College, Oxford and met his wife Shirley 1956: took a Diploma of Education 1957 - 62: taught at Lancaster Royal Grammar School 1963: won a scholarship to do a PhD at the Australian National University 1966: returned to England and taught 1968: accepted a job teaching in the Department of History at the University of Newcastle 1993: retired as Associate Professor

Eric wrote six full-length books and was known as a leading revisionist historian of the Great War, especially through his fifth book, Anzac Illusion. His textbook on Australian Foreign Relations is still widely used and his final work, a commissioned history of the Defence Department, was published in June.

Gender Studies Conference

More than 50 Australian academics concerned with the study of gender across many disciplines attended the University's 8th Interdisciplinary Gender Studies Conference on June 29.

The conference delivered a heady ride into the examination of gender in many forms including politics, popular culture, the Stolen Generation, lesbians, gays, social action and growing up.

Keynote speaker Dr Michael Flood, of the ANU's Centre for Women's Studies, opened the conference at the Central Coast Campus, Ourimbah, with a talk on Men, Masculinities and Gender Studies. Other topics included the heterosexual menace at the Sydney Mardi Gras, lesbian separatist communities in NSW, sex education in Newcastle, 1930s-1950s, the experiences of a white woman with an illegitimate child to an Aboriginal father, marginalising boys in HSC English, and males' experiences of anorexia nervosa.

Newcastle Communications and Media Arts researcher Judy Wells gave conference delegates a look at the unpublished journal of Marion Mahony Griffin, wife of Walter Burley Griffin, designer of Australia's national capital. The designer of Canberra would have been unknown in Australia without the architectural expertise and forceful character of his talented wife, Judy says.

Marion became the first licensed woman architect in the world in Chicago in 1896 and worked for 14 years with acclaimed US architect Frank Lloyd Wright. She married Walter in 1911 and later that year they submitted plans for the architectural competition for the design of Australia's new capital.

"Marion was out there pushing Walter all the time," Judy said. "She thought he was a conceptual genius, but he couldn't put his ideas on paper. He needed her drafting skills to make his plans live. She told him that if he didn't get his Canberra plan ready in time for the competition she wouldn't draw it."

Marion was an artist and the plans for Canberra, drawn in ink and gold paint on linen, are beautiful, Judy says.

"She was way beyond her time in temperament and ambition. She seems a woman of today, but she was not a role model for women in her own lifetime. This social change interests me."

Creative arts activities with a gender theme were run in the Fine Art Building in conjunction with the gender studies conference.
University wins prestigious equipment grant

The University has acquired some of the best facilities for teaching telecommunications with the delivery of $200,000 worth of leading edge equipment from Silicon Valley.

The equipment – equivalent to having a mobile phone system on a desktop – will allow students to work with video imaging in mobile phones, study the trade-offs between the size and power of a mobile phone and quality of sound and pictures, and study possible health risks from using mobiles.

The equipment, rare in Australian tertiary institutions, was donated by US telecommunications company Agilent Technologies of California. Last year Agilent distributed $US8.8 million in telecommunications gear to 30 US universities and 20 international universities (the majority in Japan) as part of a world-wide grants program.

The three pieces of equipment donated to the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering provide students with their own simulated mobile communications system, a signal generator that can test radio signals (for example measure strength and interference) and a spectrum analyser that analyses received mobile signals.

The equipment was delivered in May and the setting up process was completed in June. The Faculty of Engineering offered its telecommunications degree for the first time in 2000 and the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department is one of the strongest in Australia.

Head of Department Associate Professor Minyue Fu says the equipment will expose Newcastle students to the latest telecommunications technologies and enhance their career options.

“We are one of the few universities in Australia to have this type of equipment. It’s very exciting,” he said. “It’s like having a mobile phone system sitting on one’s desk. We can mimic problems and then set about solving them. These equipment grants are very difficult to get – we had to compete against much larger universities and universities worldwide, so we feel both fortunate and grateful.”

Get Your Team Together Now!

The Forum’s Sports Competitions commence July 2001

Mixed Netball
(Sunday Nights)

Ladies Netball
(Tuesday Nights)

Mixed Volleyball
(Friday Nights)

Mixed, Mens or Ladies Basketball
(Monday Nights)

Patrons must use the facilities responsibly and are advised that The Forum will not be responsible for personal injury or loss of property. You participate at your own risk.

For more details plus nomination forms, please contact The Forum on:
(02) 4921 7001

HURRY!! TEAM SPACES ARE LIMITED, INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS WELCOME.

The Forum’s Sports Competitions are proudly sponsored by The Cricketers Arms Tavern.

Great prizes to be won!
Parking gains

The middle level of the new car parking station was opened for general use from the first day of the 2nd semester.

The ground level of the parking station is designated as staff parking. This includes reserved parking spaces that have been relocated from between the McMullin and Behavioural Sciences Buildings.

This provides an opportunity for McMullin Lane to be converted into a pedestrian friendly area to reduce interruption to teaching from traffic noise. Reserved spaces in car park 2 have been relocated to the ground level thus freeing up additional student parking in car park 2. Staff parking that was originally moved to car park 2, while construction was under way has relocated back to the ground level of the parking station. This provides an extra 20 staff parking spaces.

Level 1 and level 2 are designated as general parking, as are the two rows located in front of the parking station and all spaces at the rear of the building. This facility has added an extra 350 parking spaces to the University.

Chancellery Visitors Information
Marketing and Media Services will operate a University reception site for visitors to the Gallagher campus, to ensure they are given a positive and memorable first impression. PPE's design team Geoff Whitnall, Kevin Johnson and Mahruz Pejam (PHD student Architecture) are hard at work planning the conversion of the 'old' student services counter at the Chancellery into an inspiring and inviting Visitors Information Centre.

ATSC

The construction of the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre is in progress. The rammed earth wall is an embellishing feature of this building symbolising the culture of Indigenous Australians. This wall has been constructed and is currently protected to prevent damage from on-going construction activity on site.

Forum Refurbishment

PPE's Building Services Manager Trevor Mowbray says that the University's former Anschutz Gym has had a complete floor replacement including a sprung floor after 28 years of use. The facility will be available for basketball, badminton and netball in the coming Semester.

National Tree Planting Day

National Tree Day attracted more volunteers than the Sydney Olympics last year, according to Nina Rogers, National Tree Day Coordinator. This year there are plans to plant one million trees around Australia. The University's Landscape and Ovals Manager Mini Woodland intends to plant approximately 5000 trees on the University's reclaimed ‘nature reserve’ as our contribution to the national goals. Everyone is welcome to come along and plant as many trees as you can.

27 July 2001
Meeting Point at University Railway Station Bridge 10 am to 2 pm

Student and Academic Services Division rewards staff

Staff from the Student and Academic Services Division deemed by their colleagues to have performed outstandingly in their jobs were rewarded at the divisional quarterly meeting on July 6.

University Secretary and Registrar Gem Cheong said the Excellence Awards were initiated in response to feedback from SASD staff in the University's inaugural Staff Survey conducted in 1999.

"There were individual and team awards presented and all the winners were nominated by their peers," she said. "The awards recognised people who had been innovative in their way of working or had demonstrated outstanding client service. There were no defined criteria and the nominations were considered by a volunteer committee."

Individual awards were made to Julie Kien and Jackie McIntosh for Customer Service, Roslin Babcock for Productivity, Jodie Hoffmann for Innovation and Hamish Lithgow for his contribution to the Working Environment. An award for teamwork went to the Central Coast Graduation team comprising Karynlee Mossman, Louise Leekain, Maria Chisholm, Debbie Donnellan, Kylie Martin, Michelle Mansfield, Vanessa Lamb, Janine Jeffries and Jerini Gow.
NUSTAR shines

The University is being 
as a success story by software 
giants Peoplesoft in the wake of its 
rapid and successful deployment 
of the NUSTAR system, according 
to Project Manager Gail White.

"Newcastle has managed to 
implement NUSTAR in just over 
12 months and at a fraction of the 
costs being incurred by other 
universities in their system 
upgrades," Gail said. "NUSTAR 
has successfully replaced all the 
functions performed by NUSS and 
already added value, with more 
impressive functions still to be 
implemented."

The University will spend 
around $6.5 million in preparing 
the NUSTAR system to take on 
the data burdens of the new 
century, compared to tens of 
millions outlayed by universities in 
the US (Stanford has spent an 
estimated $US$2 billion) and other 
inestitutions in Australia.

"The secret of our express 
implementation has been our 
decision not to modify the system 
for local conditions," Gail said. 
"Most other institutions using 
the system have extensively modified it 
and customised it to fit their 
historical processes. We decided 
from the outset to minimise the 
cost of the upgrade by modifying 
our processes to fit the software."

Buying NUSTAR "off the 
shelf" not only eased the 
implementation of the software 
but means that Newcastle will be 
able to plug in monthly upgrades 
and patches without modification, 
thereby saving money throughout 
the life of the system.

"We had the experiences of a 
lot of other institutions in the US, 
Canada and Australia to guide us 
and the overwhelming message was 
that all those that jumped in and 
made extensive modifications to 
the software have regretted it in the 
long run," Gail said. "While we had 
to make a few checks to the system 
where it interfaces with our other 
systems, such as Finance One, we 
didn't need to modify much at all."

In answer to criticism about 
having to conform to new 
terminology (ie. changing "subject" 
to "course", etc) Gail says the 
difficulty in modifying this 
requirement is insurmountable and 
that none of the institutions that 
have adopted the Peoplesoft 
software in Australia or overseas 
have changed this.

"Peoplesoft attempted to 
come up with terminology that 
would be consistent globally," she 
said. "They have made a series of 
localisations for Australian users, 
mostly to do with HECS, which 
doesn't apply to other nations. 
There is also a very effective user 
group active in Australia, which 
petitions Peoplesoft to customise 
the software in various ways to suit 
local conditions."

Peoplesoft are currently 
creating a local modification that 
suits Australian universities' needs 
in dealing with research higher 
degree candidates in response to 
lobbying from the Australian user 
group. Newcastle is active in this 
group, which includes 
representatives from the 
Universities of Queensland, New 
South Wales, Adelaide, Griffith, as 
well as the Australian National 
University and the Royal 
Melbourne Institute of 
Technology.

One major advantage of 
NUSTAR will be its capacity for 
student interaction. Examination 
results for Semester 1 this year, for 
instance are already on the system, 
allowing students access to them 
on the web. Ultimately, they will be 
able to check and alter their 
enrolment in courses, their 
financial history and details, 
their biographic details, and be able to 
swap, add or drop classes all at the 
click of their mouse button.

Gail says that staff are keen to 
come to grips with NUSTAR and 
that key users of the system have 
received training.

"The new system will 
ultimately lead to new ways of 
working and discovering and 
adopting to the changes might be a 
little uncomfortable for some staff, 
especially those who knew the 
NUSS system backwards," Gail 
said. "NUSS had outlined its 
usefulness, however, and NUSTAR 
will deliver the sort of progressive, 
student-focused approach that the 
University is striving for in its 
strategic planning. When we have 
updated the way we do things to 
adjust to the system, it will also 
make life easier for the staff and 
students who will be using it."

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Eastern University Games

One hundred and forty 
Newcastle students travelled to 
Coffs Harbour in the semester 
break to contest the 2001 Eastern 
University Games.

The University was 
represented by teams in AFL, 
baseball, basketball, hockey, netball, 
soccer, touch and tennis. 
Competition began on July 2 and 
many of the University teams 
made their way into the quarter 
finals, with men's basketball, mixed 
netball, men's touch and women's 
tennis undefeated.

The men's AFL played a 
tough physical game, resulting in 
their placing sixth overall -- a 
fantastic result as many of the 
team had no AFL background. Our 
footballers enjoyed the week, 
fielding the only mixed side in the 
competition and placing seventh 
overall. Favourable results 
continued for our men's basketball 
team, which flew through the 
qualifying rounds, with the 
women's team improving each 
game they played. The men's team 
ended up with silver to qualify for 
the Australian University Games 
and the women's team placed 
third. Women's hockey finished 
fifth with some great individual 
performances during the 
championships.

The quiet achievers of the 
week were the mixed netball team 
who went through undefeated only 
to lose in the final. The speed of 
the games during the week took 
their toll on the Newcastle team, 
which lost its healthy lead to 
succumb to the Australian National 
University in the overall team title. 
The men's soccer and men's touch 
had their eyes on gold medals but 
both teams lost their semi finals in 
close games. Women's soccer 
placed ninth and the men's tennis 
team played well all week to finish 
fifth. It was the women's tennis 
team that won Newcastle's first and 
only gold medal – congratulations.

Contact Lisa at the Sports 
Union Office, phone 4921 6963, if 
you are interested in competing in 
the Australian University Games 
to be held in Sydney from 23 
September to 28 September 2001.
Using new technologies in heritage studies

Heritage officers, museum staff and councillors from across the Hunter and New England gathered at the University last month to discover how to use the world-wide web, multimedia and virtual reality technology in heritage education and studies.

The Hunter Heritage Network held a seminar at the University on July 6 to examine how to communicate heritage issues to the public through new technologies.

Professor Tony Eddison, Head of the Department of Design and a world leader in virtual reality technology, led a program of five speakers, which included Asher Graham, the creator of 'Virtual Olympia', a 3D interactive reconstruction of Ancient Olympia, the home of the Olympic Games.

"The seminar showcased how the latest technologies can be used to inform the public about heritage issues and communicate information about our roots in a three-dimensional way," Antony said. "If technology is used appropriately, it can present accurate, well researched information in quite a compelling manner."

Professor Eddison has worked across Europe with archaeologists, museum curators and heritage officers to record, archive and communicate heritage and archaeology using virtual reality. The seminar was held in the Design Building and the Hunter Building from 9.30am to 4pm on July 6.

Wanted to buy

Software - Word and Excel version 7. Please phone Julie on ext 5148.

For sale

Antique Victor Pianola, American frame, good condition $1,000 ono. Ph Jenny ext 6009.

The Friends of the University 2001 Book Fair

August 11-18 at the Great Hall Books, rare books, magazines, sheet music, records, CDs, auction of rare books. Open 10am-5pm Saturday and Sunday, 10am-4pm Monday and Thursday night till 7pm. Phone 4946 8859.

Bursaries for Vietnam veterans' children

The Vietnam Veterans Trust is offering 14 Long Tan Bursaries to help selected students with the costs of tertiary study. Each bursary is $6000 for one year. If you are under 25, the child of a Vietnam veteran, eligible on financial grounds for Youth Allowance, enrolling in the first year of an approved course, and have not received a Long Tan Bursary, apply to Australian Vietnam War Veterans Trust, PO Box K978, Haymarket NSW 1240, phone 1800 620 361, email vvt@accsoft.com.au or visit http://www.accsoft.com.au/vvt.

2002 Fulbright Awards

Applications are invited for the Fulbright awards for study, research and lecturing in the United States. Graduate awards exist in all fields of study, with specific awards in engineering, statistics and related disciplines, business administration, science, visual and performing arts, and for ATSI people. Professional awards are available in any professional field and in vocational education and training. Senior scholar and Postdoctoral Fellow awards are also offered! Applications close on August 31. For information visit www.fullbright.com.au.

Blues Dinner 2001

The Sports Union's Annual Blues Dinner will be held at the University Union on Friday, 31 August 2001. Awards will be presented to Blues, Colours and the Sportsperson of the Year. For tickets call 4921 6960.

Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute Programs

Gold Series Meetings:
Topic: "Paediatric Infectious Diseases and Dermatology"
Date: Saturday 25th August
Venue: David Maddison Building
Topic: "Practical Procedures III Paediatric Burns and Wounds"
Date: Tuesday Evening 18th September
Venue: David Maddison Building
Paediatric Meetings:
Topic: "Scarring, Feeding, Neonatal Problems"
Date: Tuesday Evening 14th August
Venue: SmL Lecture Theatre John Hunter Hospital
Topic: "Migraine"
Date: Tuesday Evening 28th August
Venue: SmL Lecture Theatre John Hunter Hospital
Teleconferences:
Topic: "Geriatrics (Dementia)"
Date: Tuesday Evening 5th July
The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences has biomedical laboratories located in a number of sites. On campus, these include the Life Sciences Building (LSB), the Medical Sciences Building (MSB), and the Hunter Building (HB). Off campus, there are laboratories located in the John Hunter Hospital (JHH), the Mater Hospital (NM2) and the David Maddison Clinical Sciences Building (DMB).

These laboratories are the workplaces of staff from a number of different disciplines within the Faculty and some of these laboratories have been classified as "PC2" and "PC3". These classifications relate to the level of "physical containment" that is required for the type of work carried out there and, in some cases, the types of microorganisms used within the laboratory. Microorganisms are classified into particular risk groups that are described in the Australian Standard AS/NZS 2243.3. The higher the number, the greater potential risk to humans from the organism.

Many of our PC2 classified laboratories do not carry out microbiological work, but rather are involved in genetic manipulations. These laboratories are regulated by the Gene Technology Regulations 2001 and are inspected annually by the University's Institutional Biosafety Committee. The total number of laboratories on all sites that the Faculty Safety Committee inspects annually is 35.

In the year 2000, the Safety Committee carried out inspections on all laboratories and to date this year, has inspected all those located in the MSB. In addition to the laboratory inspections, the Committee has prepared and disseminated information on the ergonomics of computer use, which is relevant for all staff, but in particular for administrative staff members who have to sit at computers for long periods of time. 

With the recent formal requirement for all faculties to have safety committees, there has been increased responsibilities in terms of maintaining registers of dangerous chemicals, registers of electrical equipment and their current locations, buildings and grounds audits, risk analyses, reviewing incidents/hazards, nomination of Building Wardens, and carrying out evacuation drills. This has put increased pressure on members to fulfill their voluntary obligations as committee members, as well as duties associated with their employment.

Our Faculty has had a Safety Committee for at least ten years, operating as a subcommittee of the University’s Occupational Health and Safety Committee. The committee members have changed over the years, but there has always been a consistently good participation rate from Faculty staff. Our committee currently has eight committee members who work extremely hard in preparing checklists, providing OH&S information to staff, advising staff members of the legislative requirements and any other relevant information. The current committee members are Melissa Musicka, Sarah Cooper, Amanda Hall-Griffin, Megan Tijani, from the School of Biomedical Sciences; Anna Bokey from the School of Health Sciences; John Fitter from the School of Medical Practice; Trevor White from the Faculty Electronic Workshop and Joan Brien, Resource Manager. Ms Rea Mills from the School of Population Science has recently had to resign from the committee due to a change in employment location.

Thanks to the efforts of the past and present members of our Faculty Safety Committee, and the commitment to safety of the Faculty’s research groups, our Faculty has a high level of compliance with the relevant Australian Standards, WorkCover requirements and other relevant legislation. Proof of this is the low numbers of accidents and incidents that occur in our laboratories, which by virtue of their activities are considered to be hazardous workplaces.

*contributed by Joan Brien, Chairperson, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Safety Committee

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**Cultural Awakenings**

Staff and students are invited to attend Cultural Awakenings events from August 20-25:

**Monday**
12pm – Opening ceremony with Aboriginal dancers
Shortland Union courtyard

**Tuesday**
from 11am – Brazilian drumming match and performance
2pm – Speeches by Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes and Shadow Minister for Immigration Con Sciacca

**Wed/Thur**
from 11am – celebrations at Hunter and Shortland Unions

**Friday**
from 9am – samples of international cuisine, stalls displaying cultural artefacts and performances – courtyard in front of Auchmuty Library

**Saturday**
9am-3pm – United Games with international teams competing against each other in a range of games and sports followed by a celebration party with live bands, food and dancing to 11am.

For further information contact Richard or Kelly at the University Union on ext 6015 or 4950 2134

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**The 2001 Morpeth Lecture**

*Consortium of Music Concert Hall*

**Thursday August 2 from 6pm (refreshments from 5pm)**

The University of Newcastle and the Anglican Diocese proudly present

'Mind, Body and Spirit: Pathways Forward for Reconciliation'

by Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law and Indigenous studies at the University of Technology, Sydney and Director of the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning.

A graduate of Harvard Law School, Professor Behrendt has practiced law in Aboriginal land claims and family law, taught at the University of NSW and ANU Law Schools and has worked with First Nations organisations at the UN in Canada. She has published on property law, Indigenous rights, dispute resolution and Aboriginal women's issues.

The Morpeth Lecture is free although RSVP is required to Mardi Ryan, Community Relations Officer on 4921 7433 or via email mardi.ryan@newcastle.edu.au.
The first Stuart and Sons grand piano sold overseas was given a grand reception by the Welsh College of Music and Drama at the end of May.

In the presence of College patron, HRH Prince Charles, pianist Piers Lane played a program including Schubert, Rachmaninov and Liszt to a rapt audience at St David’s Hall in Cardiff, Wales.

In a foreword to the concert program, Prince Charles said the collaboration between the Welsh College and the University of Newcastle’s Faculty of Music is "an excellent example of the College’s expanding international links and growing prestige". The Prince said he was delighted to attend the European launch of the piano.

The program also included a message from NSW Premier Bob Carr, who said the Stuart grand piano, which was developed under the auspices of the Faculty of Music, is a "proud example" of Australian innovation and craftsmanship.

"I have every confidence that the two institutions will work closely together to enhance further the collaboration between Newcastle and Cardiff that is already an important feature of Wales-Australia relations," Mr Carr said. "I look forward to learning about the progress of the Stuart Piano and the program of staff and student exchanges."

A select audience of 1500 heard the Stuart grand sing under the expert hands of London-born pianist Piers Lane, who has performed in over 40 countries and is also a well known broadcaster for BBC’s Radio 3.

Dean of the Faculty of Music, Professor Robert Constable, said the pianist performed superbly at the concert, which was well received by Prince Charles, and the audience.

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