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The June meeting of the Academic Senate provided a good opportunity to discuss future developments of the University on the Central Coast. The meeting was held on the Ourimbah campus and included an open invitation to Central Coast based staff members to participate in the discussion.

Dr Caroline Webb, the Academic Senate member elected by academic staff of the Central Coast Campuses, introduced participants to a range of topics, including the advantages for future development of higher education on the Central Coast; location issues, both positive and negative; local innovations and strengths; the perception of a lack of parity of esteem with colleagues at Callaghan; issues relating to space, facilities, management and University commitment to the campus; the need for enhancement of research leadership; student issues and local service delivery; communication and IT issues, particularly with respect to improving access to information services; and marketing of the Campus and its programs to Central Coast and North Sydney residents.

All of these matters will require attention in the future but it is important for the University to recognise priority areas that need addressing urgently, and others for which additional discussion, resources and planning will be required.

Key areas for me included issues of student accommodation, with plans to provide an additional 100 beds at Ourimbah. This will add to the academic and social 'life' of the campus and provide an important impetus for attracting international students, as well as Australian students from areas outside the Central Coast. I have also initiated discussion about the role of Deputy Dean of Students, who could directly respond to student concerns on the Ourimbah campus, without the need for travel to Callaghan.

The issue of improving research and academic leadership will require detailed planning and attention by Faculties with responsibilities at Ourimbah. The arrival of Professor Bob Catley from NTU as the new Head of the Central Coast School of Business will add considerable impetus for our business academic colleagues, however we will need further appointments at a senior level in this and other Schools to lift the profile within the local community, to raise research and research training activities and to improve the esprit des corps of academic staff on Campus.

It is pleasing to see the further development and success of the roles and activities of the Pro Vice-Chancellor with the portfolio responsibility for the Central Coast, Professor Terry Lovat, and those of the Director of the Central Coast Campuses, Dr Barry McKnight. Of particular significance have been the lobbying activities undertaken by Professor Lovat and Dr McKnight with the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, during his visit to the campus on July 4 and during an earlier visit to the Minister's office in Canberra. These were important opportunities to lobby for recognition of the Ourimbah Campus as being eligible for regional funding, and to showcase the Campus as an example of innovation in the delivery of higher education on a multi-sector site.

Professor Lovat and the other members of the Central Coast Campuses Scoping Study Group have concluded their investigation into the future of the CCCs. This study was established to develop a vision statement on the immediate and long-term future of the CCCs. The Report has been released to Ourimbah Campus colleagues for initial reaction, following which there will be further exposure throughout the University, with a request for feedback and suggestions for follow up action. I have concluded that it gives a realistic account of opportunities and challenges for the University in planning and managing, with our partner NSW TAFE Hunter Institute, the development of the Ourimbah campus, the roll out of academic programs onto other campuses on the Central Coast, and our joint activities with Central Coast Health in areas of medicine, nursing and other health professional areas. Following lots of discussion and feedback, especially with the Central Coast Campuses Board and the University more broadly, I am hopeful that an action plan will be developed, promulgated and successfully implemented.

Of major significance to our planning for the CCCs is the planned restructure of the State Department of Education and Training (DET) recently announced by the Minister, Dr Refshauge. I have made representations on your behalf requesting reconsideration of the planned move of responsibilities for Central Coast schools and TAFE institutes from the Hunter Institute NSW TAFE to the North Sydney Institute. This in my view would create a major difficulty for us in our partnership with NSW TAFE, and more importantly, it would establish a cultural and academic divide for the CCCs from the Hunter and the University of Newcastle, which have provided the leadership for Central Coast based tertiary education for more than 14 years. Let us hope that at least this aspect can be changed as a result of the consultation process with DET.

In relation to our plans for the CCCs, I invite all members of the University, and particularly those with responsibilities for Central Coast based academic and service activities to strongly participate in the discussions and planning ahead following the release of the Scoping Study Report. We must succeed in developing further these activities, and take advantage of the new policies and funding opportunities made available through the higher education reforms currently underway.

Roger S Holmes
Vice-Chancellor and President
Tribute to Godfrey

The University last month marked the anniversary of the death of Emeritus Professor Godfrey Tanner with a ceremony to bury his ashes in the grounds of the Callaghan campus he loved.

Former Classics lecturer Godfrey was an institution at the University, where he is remembered among other things for his patronage of sport and the arts, and his belief in the potential of students. The Tanner Bar in the Shortland Union is named for him. He passed away on July 10, 2002, aged 74.

The ceremony to inter his ashes was a celebration of Godfrey’s life. Friends and colleagues, including Head of the School of Liberal Arts Harold Tarrant and former Senior Lecturer in philosophy David Dockrill, spoke about Godfrey’s legacy to a gathering of staff in a garden prepared in his memory in the McMullin Courtyard.

The garden, in a corner of the courtyard lawn, has been planted by Mim Woodland with box plants and Lily Pilly trees, which will grow to form a protective grove around a stainless steel and timber bench seat. The ‘seat of wisdom’ has a plaque that reads Famaque Et Fata Neptunum, a Greek phrase from Virgil’s Aeneid that literally translates as The Fame and Fortune of His Descendants. Long-time friend and colleague, Professor Bernie Curran, said Godfrey had proposed the phrase as a possible motto when the University was first established.

The University has acquired Godfrey’s personal library to establish the Tanner Library, a collection of around 6,500 items covering five centuries of classics and humanities literature.

University Archives Officer, Gionni di Gravio, says the library is the largest and one of the most important research collections that the University has acquired.

“Hundreds of boxes were required to move the collection from his home to Rare Books and Special Collections in the Auchmuty Library,” he said. “Professor Tanner’s library was built up over his academic life and he was aware of its value and most anxious that it should be of use to his friends and scholars. In certain respects it is probably the only personal library of its kind and it would not be an easy task to assemble such a library of its range and depth today.”

Graduate salaries above national average

University of Newcastle graduates have achieved higher starting salaries than the national median in the latest starting salaries report. Newcastle graduates in electrical engineering, psychology, economics, mathematics, social work, accounting and humanities all received higher than the national median in their starting salaries.

Electrical Engineers enjoyed the highest starting salaries amongst the University’s graduates at $44,700 and ranked second only to dentistry in the national survey.

Psychology and economics graduates started at more than $38,000, over $4,000 above the national figure.

Graduates in mathematics started at $37,600, social workers at $36,500, accounting graduates at $34,500 and humanities at $33,000, all above the national median in their discipline.

Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes says the figures show the University is achieving a high success rate for its students reflected in their employability at above the national rate of starting salaries.

“University of Newcastle graduates across all disciplines had a median starting salary of $36,000, almost three percent higher than in the previous year’s annual report on graduate earnings and above the national median by $1000. It is particularly pleasing to see our female graduate starting salaries were also $1000 a year higher than the national figure and more than 97 percent of our male graduate earnings. Nationally female graduates earn only 94.6 percent of male earnings.”

The Vice-Chancellor said the starting salaries report is a great endorsement of the University’s approach to teaching and learning, and demonstrates that our graduates are highly sought after by employers, who are prepared to offer higher wages for their skills.

The Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) surveys approximately 12,000 graduates nationally to produce the annual Graduate Starting Salaries Study. It is based on the starting salaries of degree graduates aged less than 25 years and in their first full-time employment.
Governor opens Psychology Clinic

The new facilities of the Psychology Clinic at the University were officially opened last month by the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir AC.

The Clinic, which is run by the School of Behavioural Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Information Technology, offers treatment for community members suffering from a wide range of psychological problems including anxiety and depression.

Clinic Director, Dr Mick Hunter, says that the Clinic, which has been operating for over 10 years, has had a recent refurbishment that has seen facilities expand significantly.

“The Clinic is not only a training facility that provides supervision and resources to prepare students studying for the Master of Psychology (Clinical) for clinical practice, but is also an important facility for people in the community suffering with psychological problems,” he said. “This is a good example of the University’s engagement with the community, in providing a teaching facility for students and also a working clinic.”

During its operation, 70 clinical students have completed an internship in the Clinic and over 100 new clients are seen each year.

“The most prevalent psychological problems in society are anxiety and depression and these are speciality areas that our Clinic is researching into and helping clients with,” Mick said. “Community mental health teams often have long waiting lists and the Clinic can provide a service for referred or self-referred clients for a nominal fee.”

Patients have been referred to the Clinic by GPs, psychiatrists, neurologists, paediatricians, and community health staff, particularly for phobias, anxiety disorders, panic attacks, agoraphobia, depression and other mood disorders.

Governor Bashir said it gave her great pleasure to open the University’s clinic.

“As a psychiatrist working in public sector teaching hospitals for over 30 years, I want to acknowledge that I learned a great deal from my psychologist peers and teachers, and my psychologist analyst,” she said. “It is so fitting that new facilities have been developed for the Clinic, which has provided a quality and ever expanding service to the Hunter region for over 10 years.”

The Governor said the statistics indicating the range and number of conditions treated by the Clinic over one year, and its wide referral base, indicate its great value to the community.

“Equally impressive is the extent of research being undertaken, which is strongly connected to challenging issues in our contemporary society such as the effects of life-threatening illnesses, coping with motor vehicle accidents and the area in which Newcastle clinicians some decades ago were pioneers in Australia, specifically, the psychological aspects of experiencing a disaster,” she said. “In your new facility, I have no doubt that your excellent clinical work and research studies, together with teaching and training, will further extend your reputation for meeting the needs of an appreciative community.”

The Psychology Clinic is located in the Behavioural Sciences Building at the Callaghan campus. The refurbishment includes the construction of an attractive waiting room at the front of the Clinic, which is on the ground floor.

Major water pollution project

Four councils, two water authorities, two government departments and a private laboratory have joined forces with the University in a major wastewater project that could become a model for managing water catchments around Australia.

University researchers have received an Australian Research Council grant to set up the project.

Coordinator A/Professor Hugh Dunstan from the School of Environmental and Life Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Information Technology, says the researchers will look at how human and animal sewage treatment systems impact on water catchments, aquaculture and sensitive waterways.

“We want to develop a model using data from four council areas, from Port Stephens right through to Port Macquarie,” Hugh said. “There are a high number of septic systems and a great deal of animal production in these areas. The successful model will be able to determine the potential and size of the risks of contamination and that will be used by the councils and water authorities to improve management of their catchments and waterways.”

The model could be used as a blueprint approach for other areas in Australia. The partners in the project are Greater Taree, Port Stephens, Great Lakes, and Hastings Councils, Mid Coast Water, Hunter Water Corporation, the Departments of Public Works and Services, and Land and Water Conservation and Analytical Reference Laboratories. Each of the partners will contribute to the project with the water authorities and councils developing guidelines for monitoring systems in their catchments and the private laboratory establishing quality assurance parameters.

The researchers will collect and analyse diurnal and seasonal changes as well as light intensity and temperature fluctuations to provide a map of the sewage and nutrient loads throughout the year.

“At present, monitoring systems are based on a variety of differing data,” Hugh said. “We plan to establish a process that will allow authorities to quickly identify problems, reduce pollution risk and give a high quality water assurance to their customers, as well as protection to sensitive industries such as oyster farming and aquaculture.”

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Collaborative electronics research funded

Researchers from the University's School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science will collaborate with electrical equipment manufacturer Ampcontrol on power electronics research that could form the basis for a fledging Australian industry that would not only replace imports but also generate possible exports.

Chief investigator for the research into developing multilevel converters, and Head of the School, A/Professor Bob Betz, says power electronic converters are becoming ubiquitous in industrial, commercial and consumer environments.

"Variable speed AC drives are the preferred variable speed drive for most industrial applications. Inverters are used in air conditioners and microwave ovens, and virtually every item of consumer electronics now has a power electronic based switch mode power supply," he said. "In the past seven or eight years there has been increased interest in the development of power electronic systems that will operate at higher voltages from 1.1kV up to 11kV or even 33kV."

These power converter systems could be used to control large electrical machines or even to control the power flow on the national electrical grid. The different grid applications for power converters are known as Flexible AC Transmission Systems (FACTS), a rapidly growing area that will be essential to maximise the use of existing power infrastructure over the next 10 to 15 years.

"Application of power electronics at high voltage and high power is going to become a very important component in the future control, use and economic distribution of electrical energy over the next 20 years and beyond," Bob explained. "To date, very little power electronic development at high power and voltage has taken place in Australia, with almost all systems of this type being imported."

While the field is dominated by multinational companies, they have largely ignored certain niche areas requiring specialist knowledge or strict approval processes, such as underground mining. It is here that the University and its industry partner will make their initial move into the high power converter area, while at the same time developing the basic technology to support broader applications.

Ampcontrol is a wholly Australian owned company based in Newcastle that manufactures and services electrical equipment for a range of industries including coal mining, metalliferous mining, mineral processing, bulk materials handling, power generation and distribution, oil and gas, petrochemical, and heavy and light rail transport. The company aims to design and produce equipment and systems locally that are equal to, or better than, products and services imported from overseas.

"Long wall underground mine faces are usually a considerable distance from the surface and the mines are often in remote areas," Bob said. "There is often a weak supply at the mine face, which can result in equipment stalling with the consequent loss of production."

"To improve this situation, a static VAR (Volt Amps Reactive) compensator is required near the face for voltage support. The unique environment would require innovative packaging and cooling technologies to be developed."

Bob says that Ampcontrol has had many years of experience with these technologies as it is one of the premier suppliers of underground long wall electrical systems. He emphasised that the technology developed during the research project would be generic and able to be applied more generally than in underground mining.

The project to develop multilevel converters has been funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage grant totalling approximately $950,000 over the next three years. It will involve Bob working with two senior research assistants, technical staff and a PhD student, who will be funded by an Australian Postgraduate Award Industry grant.

$3.8 million boost for Hunter medical research

The Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) has won a three-year, $3.8 million infrastructure grant to help its groundbreaking research effort, Science and Medical Research Minister, Frank Sartor announced in June.

The funding is part of the NSW Government's $50 million program to provide infrastructure support to the state's top medical research institutions. HMRI is one of 15 institutions to successfully apply for funding and the only one outside of Sydney.

Mr Sartor said the money would provide the state's top researchers with the infrastructure they need to do their valuable work.

"This is an investment in discovery and the NSW Government is proud to stand behind our scientists and back them with resources," Mr Sartor said.

HMRI Executive Director John Rostas said the funding would support HMRI's vital work in the key research programs of brain and mental health, cancer, cardiovascular health, health behaviour, mothers and babies, vaccines, immunisation, viruses, and asthma. He said infrastructure funding is allocated based on a formula that is linked to the amount of Commonwealth and competitive research funding each institute receives.

"Our funding was based on $8.4 million of research grant income considered eligible in this funding scheme, which was the largest amount of any individual institute, equating to more than 17 percent of the State's total," he said.

"This highlights HMRI's importance, not only as a regional centre, but as a significant contributor to the international field of health and medical research."
Gathering data for a better life

Researchers from the University’s Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) have won an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant to develop effective tools to analyse the rapidly shifting population demographics in the Hunter region, in an effort to improve family and community outcomes.

Social geographers and statistics researchers from CURS will work with the NSW Government’s Regional Coordination Management Group (RCMG) and its Families First Initiative (FFI) agencies on the four part project. Government agencies in the Hunter region, driven by the NSW Premier’s Department, formed the RCMG to more effectively deliver state and local government services. The Families First Initiative seeks to improve the quality and outcomes of children’s services.

CURS researchers Dr Phillip O’Neill, Dr Pauline McGuirk and Dr Kathy Mee from the School of Environmental and Life Science and Dr Robert King from the School of Maths and Physical Science in the Faculty of Science and Information Technology are the principal researchers for the project, which will apply innovative statistical devices to the development of new data formats that will help the government agencies plan and prioritise their services.

“A key focus for CURS researchers is the rapid changes in settlement and economic patterns on Australia’s east coast,” Phillip said. “Our grants success comes with us reminding governments of the importance of understanding where people live and the problems and entitlements that come with that.”

The researchers say that it really does matter where you live in terms of life chances. With studies showing that much of a person’s future success in life is determined by the time they are eight years old, there is a black hole in statistics on Australians between birth and the time they begin school. With government agencies becoming increasingly aware of the need to target their services so that people are not disadvantaged by where they live, the researchers aim to try and open up that black hole to allow effective interventions in the areas that need it before a pattern of disadvantage can become entrenched.

They are seeking to work out ways of combining data collected in the 2001 Census with data held by other government agencies into a meaningful analytical device that will be shared between those agencies. As part of the process, they will use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software as a way of analysing and visualising spatial patterns of distribution.

“One of the key issues is how we combine existing Census data with a range of agency data such as educational outcomes, immunisation rates, disability incidence and school attendance, which are often collected at different scales, to make them compatible,” Phillip explains.

That’s where the statisticians come in. They are able to figure out the parameters for combining the various data sets and their different relationships to each other. The geographers have the skills for putting together and interpreting the spatial patterns.

Just as important as developing the analytical tools to help understand the patterns of settlement, however, is finding protocols for collecting and sharing the data between government agencies. There are privacy and confidentiality issues relating to data sharing that need to be considered and beyond that, certain cultural barriers to information sharing between some government agencies to overcome. The second phase of the research project will be to address these issues.

The third and fourth phases of the research will be critical analysis of the appropriateness of investigating social problems through their quantitative and geographical definition, and of the role and effectiveness of intervention by state agencies at a regional scale. Pauline McGuirk says the classic error in using this sort of data is to so stereotype a particular area (Harlem, Brixton, Redfern and Windale spring to mind) that it is vilified in public perception. The group will revisit the debate about statistical tools and their shortcomings.

“We can deal with some of the shortcomings through the use of new statistical techniques,” she said. “We will also take on an educational role in making practitioners aware of what they can and can’t do with the analytical tools we develop. We don’t want a distinction between experts and practitioners on the understanding and use of these devices.”

Phillip says the project is already the subject of a Master’s study at the University and will generate two PhD studies. The researchers hope to develop analytical techniques that can be used nationally and internationally.

“Migration and economic changes throughout the world are bringing territory into stark focus,” Phillip said. “Population and economic changes produce new settlement patterns, with new patterns of advantage and disadvantage, and GIS has proven to be an effective tool to help understand the nature of the changes.

“The eastern seaboard of Australia, and the northern region in particular, is an excellent case study to explore these techniques.”

CURS was established in 2000 and includes human geography researchers and a range of social scientists from across the University interested in urban and regional issues. It has established a reputation for its socio-spatial research through a previous ARC Linkage grant in collaboration with the NSW Department of Housing.
Moving the magical Merlion

A Newcastle surveying graduate has contributed to the relocation of Singapore’s iconic Merlion, the eight-metre high, 70-ton sculpture that overlooks the city’s harbour.

Loi Hwee Yong, who graduated with a Bachelor of Surveying (Hons) from the University in 1980, utilised state-of-the-art digital close range photogrammetry to document the Merlion’s original geometry and fine detail, as a precautionary measure against damage during its 230 metre journey.

First built in 1972, the Merlion sculpture was located at the mouth of the Singapore River. The Merlion is the legendary guardian of Singapore with an ancient myth telling of the half lion, half fish rising out of the sea to sit on a rocky throne and survey the islands he loves.

Moving the huge statue to a less congested part of the city required a high degree of precision planning Loi Hwee Yong’s company Presentus Pty Ltd needed to improvise gadgets and methods for field capture of every detail of the Merlion. Using a digital camera, more than 1,000 images were captured, with around 200 of these processed using Photomodeler to create about 20,000 3D points.

Two models of the Merlion were developed, with a new supporting base incorporating a wave form. The captured images were archived for future reference. The resulting models and 3D data provided references for restoration works, analyses of locations and orientations (before and after relocation) against planned data, verification of tilt quantam and geometrical verification of the proposed glass wave form prior to its fabrication.

“‘For a project of this nature, where concurrent activities abound, there was no room for errors and no second chances,” Mr Loi explained. “While the successful implementation of digital close range photogrammetry was attributed mainly to proficiency in land surveying, the processing tools such as Photomodeler were also instrumental.”

Mr Loi studied at the University under a Colombo Plan scholarship. He is a registered surveyor in Singapore and has served in the Singapore Police Force and the Ministry of Defence. In 1991 he founded Presentus Pty Ltd to pursue his passion for integrating computer technology with technical services. The company provides specialist consulting services to industry and government departments.

“The Merlion project called for complex handling and sensitivity as there were many constraints,” Mr Loi said. “The complexities were compounded by the limited working space, the sheer quantum of geometric details, and the need for high precision order and absolute orientation and verticality. It was an ideal project to combine surveying techniques with digital imaging.”

Critical condition for medical school places

The University will get only four of the extra 234 medical student places the Federal Government has allocated for 2004, despite it being recognised as one of Australia’s leading medical training institutions, and a severe shortage of doctors in the area.

Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes says it is a major setback in the University’s plans to educate and train a greater number of doctors, particularly for health services in the Hunter, Central Coast and New England regions.

“The University serves a metropolitan and rural area of 900,000 people and estimates from health services show a minimum demand for at least 100 new interns for 2004.

“Present Federal Government restrictions permit the University to train 80 medical students per year, at least 20 below the present need in the region we serve. The government has acknowledged the need for more doctors by allocating the extra places, however by only allocating four places to the University of Newcastle, it has missed the opportunity to train extra doctors in the region where they are needed.”

Professor Holmes says that the idea behind the extra medical school places is to increase the number of doctors in regional and remote areas, so it seems at odds with the purpose that doctors are not trained where the need is greatest and under a system that provides the best possible outcomes for doctors to work in those areas.

“The University is also a clear leader in training Indigenous doctors,” he said. “Over half of all Indigenous doctors trained in Australia went through their medical degree here.”

The University’s Faculty of Health has been a pioneer in the development of problem based learning which gets students into hospitals sooner and under conditions that would occur in practice.

Another blow to the University and surrounding rural areas is the Federal Government’s proposal to reduce the number of Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships available to the University. The Scholarships require students to practice in rural areas of Australia for six years upon completion of basic medical and postgraduate training.
International Symposium sings

Kodaly believed that musical aptitude is a characteristic of every person and should begin as early as possible, first at home and then at school. The use of the voice is one of the most defining features of the Kodaly approach.

Chair of the Organising Committee, Dr Peter Whiteman (an Early Childhood lecturer at Ourimbah), said the symposium has been made possible through a partnership between the Kodaly Music Education Institute of Australia Incorporated (KMAI) and the University's Children and Education Research Centre (CERC), which is based at the Ourimbah campus, under the auspices of the International Kodaly Society.

Dr Whiteman said the week featured strong academic discussion, challenging presentations by keynote speakers as well as practical workshops and recitals.

"Music is the right of all people. It smooths life's path in all sorts of situations," Peter said. "If we can encourage children to have an appreciation of music and musical literacy skills from an early age, then they can take an understanding and love of it into their adult lives. Also, the making of music in a social environment contributes to enhanced social skills."

The main way of teaching music with the Kodaly method is with the use of the voice as not everyone has the opportunity of learning an instrument. Singing without the help of an instrument leads to highly developed aural skills.

"We use children's songs, singing games and folk dances as an integral part of the teaching process," Peter said. "These enhance learning and enjoyment."

The symposium featured daily concerts and recitals. Performers included the Young Voices of Melbourne, the Pymble Choral, the Adelaide Girls Choir, the Bendigo Youth Choir, the Hunter Singers, Berwick Youth Choir and the Brisbane Birlace Voices. The finale was a spectacular Festival of Voices performed by all the choirs as one large group. A piano recital was given by Gilbert De Grieve, President of the International Kodaly Society.

Bill Linklater retires – and starts new career

Bill Linklater, Director of Information Services at the Ourimbah campus, has recently retired as

Usually what is written about people when they retire is a chronicle of the achievements of their career, initiatives they have put in place, etc. and can sound much like an obituary. However, it would be hard to sound such a final note on the career of Bill Linklater, who recently retired as Director of Information Services at the Ourimbah campus, because he is going on to another career.

Bill has seen some radical changes and significant growth during his career with the University. Appointed as University Librarian in 1989, he helped to smooth the transition period following the University's amalgamation with the Hunter Institute of Higher Education.

Bill was well prepared for the task with a wealth of experience from other university libraries and international consultancies. His previous appointments included the Swinburne Institute of Technology, the Papua New Guinea University of Technology, and the University of NSW, as well as consultancies in Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal, Brunei, the Maldives and Malaysia.

But it is his appointment to the Ourimbah campus that he says is closest to his heart. He praises the dedication of library and IT staff at Ourimbah.

"It's small, young and still growing," he said, "and has a vibrancy about it and a spirit where people feel they are part of something really special. I feel very fond of this place – and very loyal to it. I will miss it and the people."

And what does the future hold? Well, he is part of the growing revolution of Australians who have turned their hand to winemaking and small farming.

Quick to see an opportunity, Bill has prepared himself for retirement by studying viticulture and animal husbandry through TAFE. This knowledge will be used at Gosforth Estate, a 100 acre property located between Rutherford and Lochinvar that Bill and his wife Lynne purchased several years ago.

"I have just picked my first Shiraz crop and it has been converted into wine. In 2004 I will be picking off a further three acres of vines, making a total of six acres under vine cultivation," Bill says.

Bill has kept 15 breeding stock cattle that will also occupy his time.

"We have built a new house and when retirement clicks in, a whole new life will start. Lynne and I like the life and we are both involved in the planting, picking and pruning. You couldn't do it without the support and the interest of your partner," he says.
Research contributes to sustainability

Cross-disciplinary research being carried out at the University will contribute to environmental sustainability by establishing the effectiveness of an onsite sewage treatment system.

Phillip Geary from the School of Environmental and Life Sciences and David Stafford from the School of Architecture and Built Environment have been monitoring the performance of a low-cost, alternative onsite effluent treatment system that operates using an intermittently dosed aerobic sand filter.

Funded under the NSW Department of Local Government's SepticSafe Program, the research aimed to develop a system to treat domestic effluent onsite that operates without moving parts and requires no electrical connection. The sand filter system was located at an environmentally friendly house in Martinsville, NSW and is the first sand filter approved for domestic use by Lake Macquarie City Council.

The system design includes a septic tank to collect wastewater and treat it. The quality of effluent from the septic tank (pre filter) and the sand filter (post filter) was monitored between May 2001 and April 2002, with samples also collected in April and May this year.

"The results of our analyses suggest that intermittently dosed sand filters have a significant capacity to consistently treat domestic effluent from a septic tank to a secondary standard," Phillip said. "Many studies have previously demonstrated that sand filters can produce high quality effluent with only minor maintenance requirements. This study, which is one of the first undertaken in NSW, has shown that a high quality effluent can be produced by simple treatment technology."

The researchers expect the excellent performance of the sand filter, which includes a layer of zeolite, to continue in the longer term. There are no moving parts in the design and effluent from the sand filter can be reused around the site using a sub-surface irrigation system.

University farewells international students

The University last month farewelled more than 60 international students, who will return home after completing their studies at the end of first semester.

The Farewell Ceremony provides an opportunity for the students to have their achievements recognised, as many will not be able to return to Australia for graduation ceremonies in October. Students participating in the ceremony come from Botswana, UK, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Singapore, France, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Laos, Turkey, Japan, China, Sweden, Bhutan, Mozambique and Indonesia.

Student Support Services Director Helen Parker says the ceremony provides the University with the opportunity to continue to support its students and ensure that their time here has been rewarding.

It was also a time to celebrate the cultural diversity that international students bring to the University, with the students encouraged to wear their country's traditional dress.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Science and Information Technology Bill Hogarth presented the international students participating in the ceremony with a certificate recognising the completion of their study. Many of the students took the opportunity to have their photo taken in their academic dress.

Salary Packaging

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Engineers Contribute to Wetland Management

Researchers from the University’s School of Engineering will take part in an innovative collaborative study of the Kooragang Wetlands that could result in improved tools for wetland restoration and management worldwide.

The project – Estuarine wetland rehabilitation and ecohydraulics – will explore the link between hydraulics, sediment, benthic invertebrates, vegetation and migratory wading bird habitat in the wetlands, which are part of the environmentally significant Hunter River estuary. The Hunter estuary is the most important coastal habitat in NSW for migratory wading birds and much of the area is listed as an internationally important wetland, under the Ramsar Convention.

Lead researcher and lecturer in environmental engineering, José Rodriguez, says the research project brings together engineers and ecologists from the University, ecologists from the Australian Catholic University; wetland managers from the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project (a sub-committee of the Hunter Catchment Management Trust); and members of the Hunter Bird Observers Club.

"The hydraulics, or water flow, in wetlands is known to be the key factor in influencing ecosystem development in estuarine environments," he said. "Wetland rehabilitation is driven by the desire to improve habitat for wading birds, benthic invertebrates and fish, and one of the more successful approaches seeks to increase habitat by altering the tidal flow and other aspects of the hydraulics. But the relationship between the ecosystem and the hydraulics driving it is poorly understood."

The project includes an industry partner through the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project, which has an agreement with EnergyAustralia to provide some of the funding. EnergyAustralia needs to access the wetland to service its electricity easements, requiring roads and bridges, which affect the hydraulics of the wetland. The research has attracted an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant.

"The project comprises two linked PhD projects," José said. "The one supervised by me will focus on the ecohydraulics, while the other, supervised by Dr Neil Saintilan of the Australian Catholic University, will focus on the ecology."

The hydraulic study will involve field work to measure hydraulic and sediment transport parameters at selected locations, as well as the use of calibrated 2D and 3D modelling to calculate aggregate statistical measures for comparison with the ecological data for a variety of flow conditions.

Other researchers involved in the project are Philip Binning, Geoff MacFarlane and Brian Timms from the University, and Richard Kingsford from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Peggy Svoboda is the liaison at the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project and members of the Hunter Bird Observers Club will assist with bird monitoring.
Optical fibre link to benefit Hunter research

A recently-completed project to link the CSIRO's newly constructed Energy Centre at the Steel River site in Mayfield to the University's AARNet connection will promote a closer relationship with CSIRO and boost the University's research efforts by improving communications links with the Mater Hospital and the University's Newbolds Building.

When the CSIRO Renewable Energy Division relocated to the Steel River Centre in May, they proposed taking advantage of the University's connection to the AARNet hub in Sydney by using an unused 2 Mbps (Mbps = 1 million bits per second) side-channel on the University's 34 Mbps microwave link (future expansion of the AARNet link would be jointly funded). During discussions, CSIRO indicated their readiness to consider an extension or variation to the optical fibre link between the Energy Centre and the University that might benefit the region.

After considering various options, the CSIRO and the University decided to jointly construct a 5km privately-owned optical fibre link from the Steel River site to the University, via the Mater Hospital and the Newbolds Building. The 48-core fibre will provide a future-proof communications link between the sites, sufficient to meet needs for the next decade and beyond.

Director of IT Strategic Planning at the University, Mark Piper, said the deviation of the optical fibre link route will support joint medical research efforts between the University and the Hunter Area Health Service (HAHS) by upgrading the existing network connection from 2 Mbps to 100 Mbps initially, with future upgrades to 1 Gbps (Gbps = 1,000 million bits per second) or more, he said. "The link will be of particular benefit to the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI)."

The initiative will help develop the online research environment needed for groups such as HMRI, which has medical research collaborators spread across sites on both the HAHS and University networks. It will also promote the partnership between the CSIRO and the University in terms of joint research, closer organisational links and the sharing of infrastructure costs. The increased bandwidth will support key research activities through provision of high-speed access to online information and services and support collaborative education and research activities in the region that strengthen links with the community.

The cost for the fibre link project was just over $500,000, with CSIRO contributing the majority of funding and the University underwriting the remainder in the short term (a contribution from the NSW Government is anticipated under their BioFirst strategy for promoting biotechnology research). The ongoing operating and maintenance costs incurred for the link will be negligible, compared to other options.

"Ultimately, the project will allow the decommissioning of the existing 2 Mbps private microwave link from the University to the HAHS network," Mark said, "which had reached the end of its life and was in need of immediate replacement."

The fibre link will also allow Telstra services to the Newbolds Building to be discontinued, resulting in significant ongoing cost savings.

In the longer term, the fibre may prove to be the initial building block for a Newcastle metropolitan backbone network. Preliminary discussions are underway for a fibre network to link the Callaghan campus with the University's CBD precinct, with other HAHS sites, with the NSW TAFE Hunter Institute at Tighes Hill, and with other education, research and cultural sites within the inner-Newcastle area. The route and access pits for the fibre link were designed for future expansion and to facilitate interconnection with existing fibre networks in the area.

The optical fibre link between the University and the CSIRO was commissioned last month and the University expects to migrate the Newbolds Building onto the link in the next few weeks. The connection to the Mater Hospital is physically in place but will require careful network reconfiguration and testing in the coming months before being commissioned.

Mark Piper acknowledged the efforts of CSIRO's E-Business Projects Manager, John Morrissey as project leader and Andrew Pollack, from the University's Communications Services unit, who was technical liaison for the project.

Friends of the University present

2003 Book Fair

Continuing a 20 year tradition, the Friends of the University Book Fair is back with more books than ever, lots of records and the annual Rare Book Auction. Help the Friends to support students by visiting the Fair between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm on the weekend, and until 7pm on Thursday.

August 9-16
University Great Hall
Walking the talk – ARTnode launched

A unique collaborative art project reached its culmination with the opening of ARTnode – a trail with sculptural works and plantings created by artists and community groups – at the Callaghan campus on June 30.

PhD student Jenny Brown first conceived the idea for the ARTnode project and documented its progress as part of her studies at the University. She was one of a number of people from across the University and the community who collaborated to create the sculpture walk that winds around the Eastern edge of Oval No.4 from the Birabahn Centre to the Student Services Centre butterfly garden.

"ARTnode is a sculptural trail that takes into consideration the environment and access to all members of the community," she said.

A Steering Committee comprising Professor Anne Graham, Philip Pollard, Vlase Nikoleski, Jim Woodland as University representatives with student Jenny Brown as well as Boyd Carney of Trees in Newcastle and Helen Connors of Accessible Arts, selected artists and maintained overall artistic coordination of the project. A number of artists and community members helped to bring ARTnode to fruition. One unusual aspect of the project was the production of an audio guide to listen to as you walk the trail.

"The audio guide aims to make the sculptures more accessible to the audience and to provide a history of the processes that went into creating them," Jenny said.

Marianne Ireland was commissioned to create her work 'Spring' after a call for expressions of interest from artists with disabilities and was mentored in rock carving by Willi Haas from the School of Fine Art.

"Living with Hope" by Tim Hodge resulted from paintings, clay works and a list of words created by the Waratah/Mayfield Living with Memory Loss group. Indigenous artist Georgina Moran learned stone carving skills from Graham Wilson to produce 'Creation of Unity', which represents the figures within a family.

Newcastle and Hunter Community Access clients painted and made clay works and drew on three stone blocks as design development for 'Aspiration and Identity' by Matthew Harding.

Areas around the ARTnode paths include layered plantings by Delando Crescent Welfare Group, Trees in Newcastle, Campus Environment contract crew from the University's Facilities Management area, Newcastle and Hunter Community Access and children from Holy Family School at Merewether. Occupational Therapy (OT) students at the University participated in the project, with OT lecturer Therese Schmid asking three third year students to look at how their OT knowledge could be incorporated in terms of community access for people with disabilities. An honours student, Cindi Hankinson, asked people how they felt about contributing to ARTnode.

Trees in Newcastle were involved in plant propagation and new planting workshops and Tim Howard, a PhD physics student charted the astronomical information for International Day for People with a Disability 2001 that is recorded in one of the stone works.

ARTnode partners included the University's disciplines of Facilities Management, Fine Art, Civil Engineering, Occupational Therapy, Physics, and Umulliko, and Trees in Newcastle and Accessible Arts. Major sponsors were Australia Council for the Arts, Commonwealth Government Centenary of Federation Fund, and the NSW Ministry for the Arts, with Gosford Quarries donating a large amount of stone.

Contributors to the project included Hunter TAFE's Metal Fabrication, Sheet Metal and Disability Services, Samaritans Foundation, Trees In Newcastle, Holy Family Primary School, Newcastle and Hunter Community Access, and Waratah/Mayfield Living with Memory Loss group. Lindsay and Dynan consulting engineers, Toll Express, Newcastle Mini Cranes, Medway Cranes, Eckersley's Art Supplies, DSI International, Andrew Percival, Paragon Civil Construction Design, Hunter Water, and CSR also provided support to the project.

The ARTnode trail was opened by Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson. Two portable CD players with the ARTnode audio guide are available from the School of Fine Art office. For information, phone 4921 6578.

Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson opens ARTnode

Detail from Marianne Ireland's 'Spring'

'Living with Hope' by Tim Hodge

Creation of Unity' by Georgina Moran
Tribute to a French scholar

Dr Marie Ramsland from the University's School of Language and Media was presented with the prestigious award of Chevalier des Palmes Académiques by the French Consul-General, Marc Finaud at the Von Bertouch Galleries in June.

The award was made at the launch of the Australian version of 'La Couleuvrine' by Michel Tournier. The Culverin was translated by Marie and illustrated by full colour 'tableaux vivants' photographs by Lee Zaunders from the University's School of Fine Arts. More than 80 people attended the launch of the book, which was published through the Hartley Bequest Program. Following are excerpts from the speech M.Finaud gave at the award presentation.

"Marie Ramsland is known to all of you, so I don't have to recall her life and career in detail. I would need much more time than is allotted to me. Let me briefly emphasise a few features of her life.

She was born in a place that could not be more Australian, in rural Condobolin, surrounded by a beautiful landscape but probably not the best place to learn French. That's why she began by teaching English, including to young French students who were the children of expatriates working at the Tomago Pechiney plant. But at the same time, she undertook studies in French literature and graduated with a BA and then an MLitt from the University of New England, to follow on with a PhD at the University of Newcastle with a thesis on the fictional works of Michel Tournier.

Because she had acquired some skills in education and learnt French, she began teaching that language, first to high school students, then to adults and as a professor [lecturer] at the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Newcastle.

In 2001, from Newcastle she went to La Rochelle in France to teach English to university students there, thanks to an agreement between both institutions. She impressed her students with her knowledge not only about Aboriginal culture or English grammar, but also about French culture and literature. She befriended French writers in La Rochelle and wrote about their works for the Australian public. She returned to La Rochelle on her sabbatical.

Marie discovered Michel Tournier early and contributed to making this now classical French writer known to the English-speaking world. She translated his works: "Le Sosie de Dieu", Ébouger and now La Couleuvrine. She wrote many articles and delivered many lectures on Tournier, who I'm sure considers her as his best translator into English. But even if she specialised in Tournier, she did not restrict her interest to him. She also wrote about Mérimée, Modiano and Tocqueville. She translated works by Hélène Savoie into English. She also worked on comparing the translations of works by Australian writer Dymphna Cusack into French, not her mother tongue, but one that she now masters.

Needless to say, she was active these past years, promoting French culture and the French language in Australia, through her teaching and cultural activities at the Alliance Française in Newcastle for 20 years and through her contacts with New Caledonia.

For her achievements, she has been awarded many scholarships and prizes by the University of Newcastle, the French Government and the University of Dijon. Now I will bestow upon her the Palmes Académiques, the Order that was instituted by Napoleon in 1808 and is also awarded to foreigners who 'effectively contribute to the intellectual, scientific and artistic expansion of France in the world'.

Business scholarship opportunity

GraduateSchool.com is offering scholarships worth $5,200 for people in rural and isolated areas of NSW to undertake a Graduate Certificate Program.

The program is for people who are currently in management or will potentially contribute to management in their local business area. The scholarship is open to people from both the public and private sectors.

There will be four scholarships, made possible by funding through the Higher Education Equity Program (HEEP). GraduateSchool.com will match the HEEP funding to allow scholarship winners to continue to a Master's or Graduate Diploma upon completion of the Graduate Certificate.

Executive Director of GraduateSchool.com Professor Scott Holmes says the aim of the scholarships is to offer people in remote and isolated areas the same opportunity to study postgraduate business programs as those who have local access to universities in their geographic area.

"Applicants are required to have access to a computer and reliable internet access, because the program is offered online," he said. "The selection will depend on the quality of the resume from the applicant and their referee reports. They must also be seen to contribute (or potentially contribute) to management in their area and they must live in a rural or isolated area."

The programs include Business Administration; Information Technology; Aviation Management; Environmental and Business Management; Applied Management (Architecture); and Multimedia.

Science ‘show-offs’ compete

The science communication team from the University's Faculty of Science and Information Technology are running a Science Show-Off competition amongst local primary schools to excite them and their audiences about studying science.

Organised in association with the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) and representatives from local schools, the Science Show-Off invites up to 18 Hunter primary schools to enter a team of students to present their own science show or ‘busk’. The activity can involve several classes or even the whole school and be presented in a range of different genres. The schools compete against each other in front of parents, teachers and students in the lead up to National Science Week.

Project coordinator Terry Burns says the University has great credentials for organising the Science Show-Off, with extensive experience of successful science communication activities including the SMART program, and the Science and Engineering Challenge.

"Research has established that watching live science shows is an effective way of communicating science and technology to the public," he said. "This is enhanced if they are actively involved in the show."

Terry says that science and technology are often seen as dull and inaccessible. The Science Show-Off addresses this perception by creating tension and excitement with time constraints and competition; giving students a sense of the fun of science at an early age; attracting audiences of parents and students; and running workshops for teachers to ensure that new ideas are taken back to the classroom.

Teachers were invited to attend two half-day training sessions on science show practice and its pedagogical application, utilising the expertise of staff from the University's SMART program and the DET.

"The skill of the University's science communicators has been recognised by a 2002 Institute of Physics international award for public awareness of physics," Terry said. "They were also finalists in the 2001 Eureka awards for the promotion of science."

The finalists from the Science Show-Off heats will compete against each other on August 19, during NSW Science Week, at the Newcastle City Hall. The winners will perform their show around the Newcastle area.

General Service Charge Review

The University is undertaking a major review of the General Service Charge (GSC) paid by students each year.

The GSC is collected by the University and distributed among five student service providers - the University of Newcastle Union, Newcastle University Students Association, Newcastle University Postgraduate Students Association, NUSport, and the Central Coast Campuses Union. The facilities provided by the GSC are considered part of the provision of an education program and it has therefore been deemed by the Australian Taxation Office a GST-free supply.

The University Council last year established a GSC Review Group, chaired by Council member Wilton Ainsworth, to identify how the GSC should be utilised to provide services, facilities and support activities to students. The Group was asked to examine the cost of services provided to student groups and opportunities for extending services. The terms of reference include the Group identifying duplication of services; recommending whether the GSC should be a condition of enrolment; providing Council with a draft policy and draft agreements with the service bodies; and analysing the impact of any recommendations.

The Review Group has developed proposed principles for the use of the GSC after reviewing a broad range of material including:

- the constitutions and latest Annual Reports of the student bodies;
- the University Institutional Plan 2003 – 2005;
- details of the services currently provided by each student body, including estimates of costs;
- the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Ruling re James Cook University;
- the Australian Tax Office Private Binding Ruling re the GST-free status for the GSC;
- the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee survey of University Student Organisations; and
- the results of an online survey of University of Newcastle students which sought to measure the opinions of students on the services offered by the five student organisations.

A preliminary meeting was held with representatives from each of the student bodies, with each group discussing opportunities or issues arising from the review process. The next step is the establishment of a Consultative Group, which will include representatives of the student bodies and student representatives on Faculty Boards and Portfolio Committees.

The initial meeting of the Consultative Group will be to comment on the results of the survey of students on services currently provided, to consider the proposed principles for applying the GSC, to consider a draft timetable for consultation, and to provide feedback to the Review Group. Following the consultation phase, the Review Group will consider its recommendations, and allow the Consultative Group to comment on them before they are presented to Council through the Resources and Administration Committee.
Scholarships

Funding for future sports stars

Sports stars of the future received a financial boost last month with the presentation of University of Newcastle Sports Scholarships.

Trevor John, Chair of Newcastle University Sport (NUSport) Board said the five University undergraduate scholarships and the Friends of the University scholarship are awarded annually to recognise the exceptional sporting abilities of Newcastle students.

"The scholarships highlight the University's diverse range of sporting talent, inspiring and encouraging our students to pursue highly successful sporting careers," he said. "The scholarships not only establish a standard of sporting excellence designed to complement the University's academic achievements, they also acknowledge the students' success and commitment to the University's sporting community."

Two of this year's female recipients are involved in non-traditional sports - soccer and rugby. NSW country representative women's rugby player Tobie McGann is the pin-up girl for this year's Australian University Games, to be held in Newcastle in September. Tobie's mum Helen says her daughter played with balls from the time she was a baby but had to convince her father to let her play rugby league with the boys when she was 10.

"I tried every other sport under the sun and rugby was the one that I enjoyed, so it stuck," Tobie said. "My career goal is to play for Australia."

Previous recipients of the scholarships have included triple Paralympic gold medallist Heath Francis and Australian windsurfing champion Michael Lancey.

"This year's winners have aspirations of continuing to represent Newcastle, the University and Australia at a national and international level," Trevor said.

Each scholarship is worth $1,000. The scholarship recipients for 2003 are:

**Friends of the University Sports Scholarship:**
- Tobie McGann - football; Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science (Radiation Therapy)

**University Sports Scholarships:**
- James Beasley - swimming; Bachelor of Management
- Meagan Shepherd - soccer; Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science (Radiation Therapy)
- Peter Mauro - triathlon; Bachelor of Teaching/Tennis; Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science (Radiation Therapy)
- Ryan Stuart - tennis; Bachelor of Teaching/Physical Education and Health
- Belinda Hare - softball; Bachelor of Teaching/Physical Education and Health

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Ron MacDonald presented the five University scholarships and Friends of the University President Vic Levi presented the Friends scholarship in the Forum's Board Room in June.

Internet Music Warning

University staff members and students (and the University) may be subject to legal action by copyright owners if the University's computer network is used to download or distribute music or film files which have been copied without the copyright owner's permission.

This includes the overwhelming majority of so-called free MP3 files available on the Web through services like KaZaA and Grokster. It also extends to a range of other possibly 'pirated' material such as films, games and computer software.

Executive Director of Infrastructure Services Trevor Gerdsen warned that copyright owners could sue individual downloaders and file traders, as has happened often in the United States, and is beginning to happen in Australia. Universities could also be held liable for copyright breaches carried out over their networks by students or staff.

"There are already preliminary court proceedings in this country between major record companies and a number of universities as a result of music industry perceptions of illegal copying within universities," Trevor said.

"Staff and students are required to comply with the University's Policy on Use of Computing and Communications Facilities and Guidelines for Acceptable Use of the Internet when using any computer or other device connected to the University network."

This includes dial-up use from home via the University's modem pool as well as use within the University's facilities.

Failure to observe both the Policy and Guidelines, and engaging in illegal downloading of music or any other pirated material may render the staff member or student liable for disciplinary action or legal action brought by copyright owners or their representatives.

"The Internet is a significant resource for teaching, learning and research but staff and students should remember that not all material available on the Internet is free or legal," Trevor said.
Volunteer for friendship

The University is calling for volunteers to take part in its International Student Care (ISC) Program.

The program offers international students the opportunity to make friends with an Australian family, to experience Australian culture first hand and to share their culture with others. It also offers the students some practical support at times.

Part time primary teacher and mother of three Jennie Nolan has been an ISC volunteer for the past three years and is a strong advocate for the program. She is currently providing friendship and support to Vietnamese student Thi Lien Dinh, who is studying towards her Master of Trade and Development. The two have become close friends.

“Jennie and I are good friends and I join in many of the families’ activities, such as watching Sarah play netball, going to the movies or to family parties,” she said.

“They give me advice when I find something a problem. It’s nice having someone to talk to and makes me feel much happier.”

Lien is the fifth student that Jennie has mentored through the International Student Care (ISC) Program. The first, a Japanese student called Tomoko, returned to Australia this year to get married and Jennie organised her reception venue. She says her whole family has gained from her involvement in the program, with the only downside having to say goodbye to their international friends.

“People ask me how I find the time to be involved,” she said, “but it’s no effort to phone Lien because she’s a friend. It’s easy to fit her in.”

The International Student Care Program offers training for volunteers to introduce them to cultural issues and ensure they are well prepared for their support role. They also organise social events and excursions for the carers to participate in with the students and to meet other volunteers and their families. For more information, or if you would like to volunteer, contact Marion Allan on 4921 6467.

Bikes beef security efforts

The University’s Security Service has added another string to its bow with the introduction of a bicycle beat around the Callaghan campus.

Since May this year, security officers have been patrolling on two customised mountain bikes that increase their access to cycle paths and also provide a fitness boost for the riders.

Security Supervisor James Doolan said the bikes have been introduced to combat specific problems at Callaghan including theft from carparks and personal security threats to people using the many bushland paths.

“We have had difficulties with people coming onto the campus on bicycles to steal and to set fires, and then escaping down cycleways, where we are unable to pursue them in vehicles,” James said.

“This way we are able to patrol across all areas and it also fits well with the University’s environmentally friendly campus.”

James called for volunteers to train for the bicycle patrols and has found that a lot more officers want to complete the course after seeing their colleague’s calf muscles tighten and their enjoyment levels rise.

“Paul Taylor from the University of Sydney trained six men in safe riding procedures, bike maintenance, health and safety issues, hazard recognition, cycling skills and techniques for riding in traffic,” he said.

“The fitness levels of those patrolling by bicycle have improved and that has sparked a lot of interest among the staff. They are really keen now that they’ve seen the bikes in use.”

With a few security wins already attributed to the silent approach of the bicycles and their ability to go off the beaten track, James says he also plans to introduce plain clothes patrols on the bikes.

“Once word gets around that Security are patrolling on bikes in plain clothes, every bike on campus will become a de facto security measure,” he said.

The bicycles have been fitted with more comfortable seats as well as racks to carry a first aid kit. They are patrolling at Callaghan each day and night.
Student Services

Accommodation Service changes focus

The University’s Student Accommodation Service has undergone a change in focus since restructuring brought it into the Student Alumni and Community Services (SACS) portfolio, according to Director of Student Support Services Helen Parker.

The Accommodation Service came to SACS following the re-positioning of the original Facilities Management group after Don Foster retired last February. The Service is responsible for managing more than 1,000 beds in the four on-campus colleges as well as off-campus accommodation services for students.

Helen says the new focus is to encourage a more academic culture across the Callaghan campus colleges, as well as putting in place a staff structure that encourages self-management.

“The caretakers now report to the Head of the College they work for and not to a central administrator,” she said. “Each of the Colleges is a bit different in the way that they do things and the new structure will give them the opportunity to develop their own identities further.”

Barahineban, opened in February 2001, provides single or double self-catering rooms with private bathrooms and fully equipped kitchens along with TV, VCR, telephones, voicemail facilities and computer/internet access points.

Edwards Hall, named after George Alfred Edwards in recognition of his contribution to the University, provides accommodation for up to 774 students. The two major residential houses (Burnet and Cutler) were opened in 1972 and subsequently five self-catering houses were constructed between 1983 and 1988. More recently, northern wings have been added to Burnet and Cutler Houses to increase the number of beds in the catered section of the Hall.

Evatt House is self-catering and provides single room accommodation for 212 students from country NSW, interstate and overseas. Founded in 1990, it takes its name from Justice Elizabeth Evatt, a former Chancellor of the University, and Dr H V Evatt, the former politician and statesman.

International House was established by the church, the University and the community working together. It provides 222 places for an equal mix of Australian and overseas students with 174 of these semi-catered.

Student Support Services is also responsible for off-campus accommodation, which includes properties in Shortland and Jesmond that the University leases to provide short-term accommodation solutions for international and domestic students. The University also liaises with local real estate agents to provide a database of rental opportunities.

“There are always more applications than there are accommodation places,” Helen said. “We have to set priorities when allocating beds in colleges and we are aiming to encourage a campus culture that values academic pursuits. In line with that, we’ll seek to increase the number of postgraduate students and post doctoral research visitors using on-campus accommodation.”

An inter-collegiate Arts Shield has been instituted and competitions including debating will begin in Semester Two.

Helen says that students’ expectations of college life vary widely, with many American students prepared to be in a much more structured environment than Australian students and those of other nationalities. She said that the demands of housing students from around the world leaves only limited opportunities to use the colleges for other purposes such as conference accommodation during semester breaks.

“The first of the students each year come for orientation in January and many don’t leave until the end of November,” she said. “Some areas of the University now operate on a trimester system as well and many of the international students who have a 12-month licence for college accommodation don’t want to go away in semester breaks. The brief period between one group leaving and the next arriving is usually spent in a frenzy of cleaning and organisation.”

Student receives international recognition

Josh is part of the University’s Study Abroad Program and is enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment. He will return to the University of South Carolina in the USA to complete a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering.

“Studying at the University has been an invaluable experience,” Josh said. “I believe that the opportunities and acknowledgment that this award will bring will be highly beneficial to my future endeavours when I return home.”

Josh’s essay will be published by the London branch of the SCI and he will receive a cash prize of $A750 and a years’ free membership to the society as well as attaining international recognition for his achievement. John Fowler of the SCI and Professor Adrian Page, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, presented Josh with the SCI award in July.
Sports Physiotherapist Rosemary Riley, from the University's Faculty of Health, will represent Australia at the Fifth International Dragon Boat Federation World nations Championship Titles to be held in Poland in August.

Rosemary, who manages the University Sports Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Clinic at the Forum Sports and Aquatic Centre, was selected to be part of the national team despite having only taken part in the sport for 14 months.

Dragon boats are propelled by 20 paddlers, with a sweep operating a long steering oar and a drummer to beat the stroke. The sport originated in the 4th century BC in China to commemorate the patriotic poet, politician and activist Qu Yuan, who is said to have drowned himself in protest at the corrupt Qin dynasty. Upon hearing of Qu Yuan's actions, panicked villagers rushed to boats and rowed to the centre of the river to search for his body. To scare off the fish, fishermen beat drums and slapped at the water with their oars, throwing rice dumplings into the current as a sacrifice to his spirit. Today, there is still a strong ceremonial aspect to dragon boat regattas, including blessing the boats, which have a decorated dragon's head and tail at either end.

Rosemary came to the sport through a combination of circumstances. It began when she was working as a physiotherapist in Townsville in northern Queensland. A keen hockey player who found the tropical heat unsuited to hockey and wanted a paddle sport, Rosemary took on a master's degree in Physiotherapy through the Australian Institute of Sport and the University of Canberra, Rosemary sold her outrigger, thinking the weather would be too cold. But she never lost her interest in outrigger canoes, both in team events (six paddlers) and individually.

When she took on a Master's of Sports Physiotherapy, the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, Rosemary sold her outrigger, thinking the weather would be too cold. But she never lost her interest in paddling and had another try at outrigging in Bunbury in Western Australia, while touring as the physiotherapist with the musical Cats. Her move to Newcastle to take up her position in the Physiotherapy Clinic saw her looking around for an opportunity to paddle in a team again. With the nearest outriggers at Port Stephens, she took up the suggestion of a client and joined the Newcastle/Hunter Dragon Boat Club, which was formed three years ago.

"This year, for the first time, they decided to select paddlers for the New South Wales team individually, on the basis of time trials, rather than selecting the winning regional team at State finals," Rosemary explained. "I'd had no experience of time trials but I thought I'd give it a go."

In individual time trials, the competitor paddles the 250 kg dragon boat alone for 180 metres, with the sweep and another person to tilt the boat so the paddler can reach the water. Rosemary and Newcastle teaching graduate Helen Maurie were the only Hunter women selected for the NSW team, with Steve Dawes and Richard Thomson representing the Hunter in the men's team.

Despite being rated as the underdogs for the national competition, held in Adelaide in April, the NSW teams swept the pool, winning the premier men's, women's and mixed titles, and securing themselves the right to compete at the World Championships. Rosemary also won medals in all mixed events contested in the club competition as a guest paddler with a Sydney team.

Although she was delighted to have won, Rosemary has had to overcome enormous barriers to take her place in the national team. First there is the training, four times a week in Black Wattle Bay at Glebe in Sydney - a difficult task for the non-Sydney team members. The team has been building their endurance by dragging a sea anchor behind the boat during training to create resistance. Add to that a workout in the Forum's gym three times a week, another session with the local club and use of a kayak hired from the mountaineering club, the work with her physiotherapy clients, as well as hospitalisation for a serious medical condition requiring surgery in April, and Rosemary's physical regime this year has been intense and demanding. She hopes others will be inspired to join a University Clinic team at the next Maritime Festival in March 2004.

Secondly, there is the financial strain of finding airfares, equipment fees and accommodation costs for the world championships in a non-Olympic sport that attracts very little sponsorship and no government funding. If that weren't enough, there was the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) scare that saw the world titles shifted from the original venue of Shanghai, China to Poznan in Poland and has Rosemary scrambling to pick up some crucial phrases in Polish.

The Australian team will train in Poznan for four days before competing in the world championships from August 27-31. The competition is expected to be stiff with quite a few Olympic kayakers and canoeists paddling for other nations. Good luck Rosemary and the Australian dragon boat teams!

If you are interested in paddling locally or advancing yourself in your chosen sport, contact Rosemary at 4921 6879 or Rosemary.Riley@newcastle.edu.au.
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