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Two graduation ceremonies are
being held in Newcastle in October,
which will highlight the successful
completion of studies for our
graduates in mid-2003, and the
awarding of a number of honorary
doctorates and an exceptional
service medal.

These ceremonies are very
special occasions for the university,
particularly for our graduates,
their families and supporters,
staff and Council members,
eminent professors, honorary
degree recipients, local members
of Parliament and other supporters
of the university who can all join
together in celebrating the success
of our graduates.

Four distinguished Australians will graduate from
the University with honorary doctorates, including:

Ms Patricia Davis-Hurst who is an Aboriginal
cultural teacher, journalist, historian, author and
publisher, health and social worker, and a Councilor
in Legal and Community Affairs. Ms Davis-Hurst is the
current Chair of the Gillawarra Aboriginal
Corporation and is a highly respected and long­
standing advocate for Indigenous peoples;

Mr Michael Elfick who has made a significant
contribution to the development of photogrammetric
instrumentation worldwide and is highly regarded by
the surveying profession. Mr Elfick was a lecturer/
senior lecturer in civil engineering at the University
from 1977 to 1996. The worldwide sales and
distribution of his inventions have considerably enhanced Australia’s reputation as a surveying and
photogrammetric nation;

Archbishop Philip Wilson who was born in
Cessnock, ordained as a priest in the Maitland
Diocese in 1975, and became the 8th Archbishop of
Adelaide in 2001. Archbishop Wilson is a prominent Canon lawyer and a member of the
Canon Law Societies of Australia, New Zealand,
America, Great Britain and Ireland, as well as the
Society for Medieval Canon Law; and

Mr Peter Kleeman who has played a pivotal role
in the development of civil engineering at the University and has made significant contributions
to the University over many years. He was one of
the founders of the Sports Union, co-founder of
the Hockey Club, and has served the Sports Union
in a variety of roles including as President.

A distinguished Novocastrian, Mrs Pat Flowers,
will receive an Exceptional Service Medal in
recognition of her outstanding commitment and
service to the University over a long period. She
joined the staff of the Newcastle Technical College
in 1943, was Librarian in Charge from 1947 until
1960, and was Foundation Librarian of the
Newcastle Conservatorium of Music for 13 years
up until 1983. More recently, Mrs Flowers has
coordinated the Book Fair, which has significantly
collected the University since 1983.

The University will also hold the 2003 overseas
graduation ceremony in Singapore in October.
It will be the largest overseas graduation ceremony
to date, with over 100 international students
participating from countries such as Hong Kong,
Malaysia, Thailand, India and Singapore. Among
graduates from many degree programs, we will
recognise the first cohort of engineering graduates
who have completed their studies in association
with our partner, PSB Academy.

An honorary doctorate in engineering will be presented to Mr Chew Heng Ching David,
one of our Colombo Plan scholars, a University
Medallist and currently Deputy Speaker in the
Singapore Parliament. Besides having an active
career in the public sector, Mr Chew has worked
in various corporations involved with a wide range
of industries, including banking, manufacturing,
commerce, real estate, construction, food and
beverage, education and media, and was the
Foundation President of the Singapore
Institute of Directors.

The Annual Profiles meeting with the Federal
Department of Science, Education and Training
(DEST) took place in Newcastle in September.
The major topics for discussion included resource
management; the Capital Development Pool
(CDP) submission for 2006; the Strategic Plan
for the University (2003-2006); student load
matters, particularly our plans for growth in
Newcastle and on the Central Coast, medical
places and the University Department of Rural
Health, and our plans for higher education delivery
in Port Macquarie, in partnership with the North
Coast Institute NSW TAFE; quality assurance,
particularly the 2003 AUQA Audit and the
University’s response; research and research
training issues; and a range of other matters,
including Indigenous education, equity issues, our
commitment to enabling programs, and the need
for growth in subsidised places for nursing and
midwifery from 2004.

Even though we were unsuccessful with our
submission for recognition of regional loading
support for the Callaghan and Ourimbah
campuses, I remain confident about our future
under the new funding arrangements, which will
of course be subject to the passage of legislation
by the Senate.

There will be significant opportunities for us to
participate strongly in the growth planned for the
higher education sector by the Federal Government,
particularly from 2005, as well as in the major
growth which we will generate ourselves in
providing for additional coursework postgraduate
and international student places into the future.

Best wishes for the rest of 2003.

Roger S Holmes
Vice Chancellor and President
Walking an ethical fault line

Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue delivered this year's Human Rights and Social Justice Lecture on the topic 'Walking an ethical fault line: Where is Australia headed?' to a full house in the Griffith Duncan Theatre last month.

A member of the 'stolen generation', who was taken to an Aboriginal mission in Adelaide when she was two, Professor O'Donoghue said her life has been deeply affected by the discriminatory practices of the past.

"It is also unfortunately true that there is still a culture alive and well in Australia that seeks to discredit my people. The consequences of these discriminatory practices and policies are still felt in the day to day racism that we experience."

She said racism is felt in ongoing assumptions of white superiority, shattered connections with family and culture, in hardship and economic disadvantage, and in alienation of young people.

"It is a legacy that continues to impact on each successive generation, causing immeasurable grief and trauma and loss of culture."

Professor O'Donoghue said the 10-year long process of reconciliation had been shut down by the Howard Government and that there is a risk that an Indigenous under-class is developing in Australia.

"And there is a very real danger that this under-class will become permanent, their deprivation and poverty perpetuated by neglect, institutionalised racism and the tunnel vision of governments."

Alongside reconciliation, she sees the issue of the treatment of asylum seekers as one of the biggest social justice challenges facing Australia today.

"A climate of fear and populist prejudice has been created around the refugee crisis. Fear and ignorance are very potent forces. They allow some groups of people to demonise other groups of people. They provide a rationale for racism and, ultimately, for warfare."

While not advocating an open border approach, she said that people should not be detained for months and years behind razor wire, children should not be in detention, and that people should be treated with dignity and respect and be given appropriate support and access to services.

"It is a myth that asylum seekers would escape in their droves if they were housed properly in the community. They desperately want connection and links with authorities, in order to get their visas and arrangements sorted out. And it is a myth that asylum seekers represent a threat to Australia's sustainability in terms of their numbers."

Australia takes in many fewer refugees than other nations and there are many more unauthorised residents who came to Australia on tourist visas from Europe, she said. This group of 'illegals' causes no comments at all from our political leaders.

"In spite of overwhelming challenges, we need to reclaim our humanity and to make human rights and justice a priority in our lives, precisely because our leaders will not do it for us."

"It is time to stand up and be counted and to vigorously reject the lies and half-truths we have been told in recent years, and to assert some control over where we as a nation are headed."

Professor O'Donoghue was born a member of the Yankunjatjara Peoples at Indulkana in the remote northwest area of South Australia in 1932. Brought up in a children's home, she was denied the opportunity to begin nurse training, which proved a turning point for her. She joined the Aborigines Advancement League, which eventually lead to her being accepted as one of a number of Aboriginal trainee nurses at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. She graduated in 1954 and later became a charge sister at the hospital. She joined the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1967 and became the Regional Director in 1975.

Professor O'Donoghue was the inaugural Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC); was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1977; was Australian of the Year in 1984; was named as a National Living Treasure in 1998; and received the Companion of the Order of Australia in 1999. She holds honorary doctorates and fellowships from eight universities and colleges and is currently an Honorary Professorial Fellow at Flinders University of South Australia.

The Human Rights/Social Justice Lecture was held in the Griffith Duncan Theatre on September 4. Previous lecturers in the series were Justice Marcus Einfeld last year and Mr Rick Fairley, who delivered the first in 2001.
Top medical researchers honoured

Almost $150,000 raised from corporate and community support was awarded to the region's best health and medical researchers at the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) annual awards night in August.

The Sparker Helmore Prime TV Award for Research Excellence went to Professor Peter Gibson, PULSE Young Medical Researcher of the Year to Dr Amanda Baker, PULSE Education Prize to Sabrina Pit and the Outstanding Achievement in Cancer Research from the NSW Cancer Council to Professor Allan Spigelman.

Professor Gibson is a medical scientist who combines his full-time clinical position with remarkable productivity in research. He is among the top two or three experts in the field of asthma research in Australia and has published 163 papers in 13 years. He was recently awarded the Research Medal of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand. The Award for Research Excellence recognises his outstanding research excellence in medical and clinical science and his contribution to the understanding and management of asthma and other respiratory diseases.

Dr Baker was recognised for her collaboration, leadership and excellence in research in the psychological management of alcohol and other drug problems. Her research has been primarily concerned with tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and other drug use problems among people with major mental disorders, especially psychosis. This group's problems involve high service usage at high cost, and they are very difficult to treat. The treatments designed by Dr Baker have reduced substance abuse, improved mental health outcomes and reduced the burden on families and treatment services.

Sabrina Pit, a fourth-year PhD student from the Netherlands, has won a prize to attend two key international meetings to assist with her research on the use of multiple drugs in the elderly. Her study involves a randomised trial to develop a convenient mechanism for GPs to conduct medicines review within routine general practice and to implement a program to investigate the effectiveness of various interventions on the quality of life of people over 65.

Professor Spigelman received his award for his outstanding achievements, dedication, care and leadership in the field of cancer research, particularly colorectal cancer. An internationally recognised and highly regarded clinical researcher, he was instrumental in establishing the Hunter Family Cancer Service, which has grown from catering for eight families to around 600 extended families across New South Wales. He is known for his study of the preventative anti-cancer effects of components of cruciferous vegetables and has recently been appointed head of cancer services of Hunter Health.

Ten HMRI grants were announced at the awards night, to fund research in the areas of brain and mental health, cancer, cardiovascular health, public health and health behaviour, reproduction and asthma. HMRI Executive Director John Rostas said the awards night was an opportunity to honour the hard work of HMRI's researchers and supporters.

"It allows us to acknowledge our top researchers, nurture our up-and-coming researchers and importantly, thank the individual and corporate sponsors who make it all possible," he said. "There were almost 60 applicants for this year's HMRI grant round, making it a very challenging selection process for the independent assessment panel."

The 2003 grant recipients are:

**Dr Andrew Lojczyck Memorial Grant**
Novel genetic and environmental risk factors in thrombosis: Dr Chris Levi, Professor David Henry, Dr Trish McGettigan, Dr John Atia, Dr Mark Parsons, Dr Michael Seldon and Professor Rodney Scott

**Production of diagnostic quality x-rays**
A/Professor Martin Ebert and Dr Peter Greer

**Methods for developing new anti-cancer drugs**
Professor Leonie Ashman and Dr Adam McCluskey

**Investigation of a novel molecular target for a new anti-asthma therapy**
A/Professor Alistair Sim

**Identification of brain pathways that control stress:** Professor Trevor Day

**Study of receptor interactions which may trigger schizophrenia:** Dr Fraser Ross and Dr Paul Tooney

**Older women and alcohol use: a longitudinal exploration of behaviours and consequences**
A/Professor Julie Byles and Dr Lynne Parkinson

**Identifying patients at increased risk of adverse post-surgical outcome:** A/Professor Peter Schofield and Dr Ross Kerridge

**Gallerie Fine Jewellery Family Cancer Grant**
Evaluating a new genetic risk factor for hereditary colon cancer: Professor Rodney Scott

**Lion's Club of Adamstown Young Investigator of the Year**
The genetic role of the father in recurrent early pregnancy loss: Dr Brett Nixon

**Newcastle Permanent Building Society**
Bowel and prostate cancer research grant
Continuation of a grant to Professor Spigelman and his team for their trials to find and test anti-cancer components in vegetables.

HMRI has also identified 11 high quality and valuable projects to put on a reserve list and hopes to source funding for them over the next 12 months.
Making dreams come true

Eight lucky students and two researchers received a financial boost in the form of scholarships, along with a hug, from generous benefactor Mrs Jennie Thomas last month.

Jennie, who has previously made substantial donations to Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI), presented the scholarships in memory of her late husband, Philip Emlyn Thomas. The scholarships are providing funds to scholars in Fine Art, Music, Environmental Studies and Health.

Both Jennie and her husband Philip, known as Em, are Newcastle graduates. Jennie attended Newcastle Teacher's College and Em studied chemistry at Newcastle University College at Tighes Hill. To honour Em's successful career as an industrial chemist, Jennie decided to endow scholarships and fund a number of important research programs in the areas that interested them. She approached Dr Bernie Curran, Director of the Foundation Unit, who took her to meet people in the relevant areas.

“T was her dream to go to University through Bernie and the staff in the Foundation Unit,” Jennie said at a presentation ceremony held in the University's Fine Art Gallery in August. “We worked together as a team to put together what I like to think of as dreams.”

Head of the Conservatorium, Professor Robert Constable, dreamed of lifting the profile of Newcastle as a centre of excellence for the study of church music. He elected to inject Jenny's donation into five scholarships for international students to undertake postgraduate studies at the Conservatorium. The students were recruited from church music programs at South Korean theological colleges with affiliations with the University.

“Despite the Korean tradition for around 100 years, they have a strong musical heritage and support their church music programs,” Professor Constable said. “Newcastle is already renowned as the church music capital of Australia and these students will enhance our reputation. They are all brilliant and will have a major influence right across the country.”

By way of a thank you for the financial boost, Jennie donated an electronic organ to the Conservatorium.

The five students, including two organists and three singers, are Hung Yong Cho, Eun Pha Cho, Sun Woo Pak, Sueng Yoon Choi and Eun Joung Choi. Jennie also donated an electronic organ to the Conservatorium.

Fine Art students Alexia Sinclair and Linsey Gosper will travel overseas next year to further their art thanks to the Jennie Thomas Travelling Scholarship. Jennie selected the artists, both photographers, from auditions and has followed their careers with interest.

Alexia, who will use her scholarship to study photographic portraiture, is the third generation of female artists in her family. Linsey, who grew up in Lismore, studied communications at the University, majoring in photography, before completing Fine Art honours. She plans to pursue her interest in fashion photography. The women will travel together to New York and London.

Honours student in Environmental Science Sean Phillipson has won a $2,000 scholarship to assist with his studies of how benthic communities in Swansea Channel are affected by dredging and sand movements.

“Benthic invertebrates are at the bottom of the food chain and are therefore an integral part of the ecosystem of Lake Macquarie,” Sean said. “They provide an indicator for what is happening further up the food chain.”

Sean said he became interested in environmental studies while spending a lot of his childhood on the Central Coast outdoors - bushwalking, fishing and playing sport. He currently travels from Newcastle to the Central Coast each weekend to work and says the scholarship will ease the financial burden of studying.

Researchers Dr Amanda Baker and her PhD student Frances Kay-Lambkin are studying depression treatments. Em Thomas suffered from depression during his life, which Jennie described as ‘a terrible thing to live with’. Frances spoke on behalf of the scholarship recipients at the presentation.

“When Jennie came into Amanda’s office and asked ‘what is your dream’, we were speechless,” she said. “It isn’t often that someone comes along who is prepared to remove the barriers to what might be possible. Your interest, enthusiasm and encouragement for all our work - across a diverse range of areas - means so much but beyond that, you are enabling us to pursue our dreams.”

Jennie said she got to go to University through winning a scholarship sponsored by the Government, which are no longer offered today. She wanted to give that opportunity to other young people.

“I’ve retired and Philip has gone to what my family likes to call his ‘sheltered harbour’ and now it’s time to hand the baton on to you,” she said. “I’m so proud of you all, congratulations, you are part of the family now.”

In addition to presenting the scholarships, Jennie donated a new piece of equipment to the John Hunter Hospital Cardiac Unit as a thank you for their care of Philip.
Justice Kirby discussed the many social, economic and legal problems that arise out of the discovery of DNA and the mapping of the human genome. He talked about international property law, particularly the law of patents and how it affects the inventions relating to the unfolding knowledge about the genome, the tests developed to identify the likely operation of genes and the potential therapies that emerge to eliminate genes that cause disease and death.

"Such knowledge has enormous economic value. In fact, what we are talking of is nothing less than the future of medicine and pharmaceuticals and the tests and therapies that will chart its course for all future time."

Justice Kirby has eminent qualifications on the topic of international patent law in the area of biotechnology. As early as 1974, he was a member of the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) that looked into the legal issues of human tissue transplantation — technology that was then at the cutting edge of science. He has subsequently been a member of the Ethics Committee of the Human Genome Organisation, based in London, and has served over the past five years on the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO, and co-chaired a working group to assist former UN High Commissioner Mary Robinson on the human rights aspects of biotechnology.

"To the extent that, in practice, intellectual property law restricts access to tests, therapies and knowledge developed from the researches of pure science on the genome, they affected the human rights of millions of people in the world, most notably the right to health and to life," he said.

In his lecture, entitled Patenting Human Life — God or Mammon?, Justice Kirby welcomed the current ALRC review of patent practices in Australia. The Commission has been asked to investigate the practices to ensure that they encourage genetic research and development and do not cause undue costs to the health care system.

"If Australia faces difficulties in fixing up its own laws on this subject, and in asserting its national needs in the context of trade treaty obligations and negotiations, the position of the least developed countries in the world is most acute, and even desperate."

He called on the audience to support the ALRC investigation and quoted the Commission President who noted that "many concerns about the impact of patent laws on the provision of healthcare relate to claims of monopoly control over clinical genetic testing — not merely the right to set the price, but the right to limit the number of labs which may conduct the tests."

Justice Kirby said it is essential that Australia, and the world, are as inventive in the lawmaking process as they are in the laboratory.

"Unless we can do this, the bold aspiration in the Universal Declaration of 1967 that the human genome 'underlines the fundamental unity of the human family' will be just empty words," he said. "And beyond countries like our own, there will be extremely poor countries which feel the injustice of a lack of proper benefit sharing and see the human genome being diverted, in its commercial application, from a source of scientific experimentation and investment of use to all humanity, to an endeavour that responds only, or substantially, to the health needs of the minority rich countries of the world."

The University and the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle have jointly presented the Morpeth Lecture since 1967. It is a free, public lecture in which a noted speaker is invited to reflect upon a Biblical topic or to examine a social issue in a context that is accessible to members of the community, regardless of their academic or religious background.

The name of the Morpeth Lecture comes from the College of St John the Evangelist at Morpeth, the ministry training and education centre of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle. The Lecture's long history reflects the strength of the partnership between the Diocese and the University.

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**Tree marks collaborative venture**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Brian English planted a tree at Callaghan in August to mark the University's involvement in the Wellbeing of Older Men Project, an initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of older men.

The tree was presented to the University by representatives of the Older Men: New Ideas (OMNI) groups in Charlestown and Toronto. OMNI is an initiative of the NSW Council of the Ageing to establish support groups for men over 55 years of age as they move through new life experiences. The tree was one of three presented by OMNI to the partner organisations in the Wellbeing of Older Men Project — the University, Hunter Retirement Living and the Hunter Area Health Service.
Newcastle leads $47 million research centre

Leading researchers from the University's Faculties of Engineering and Built Environment, and Science and Information Technology, have been awarded an $8.3 million grant for a new Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre.

The grant for the new Centre is the largest of the nine new centres announced recently by Dr Brendan Nelson, the Minister for Education, Science and Training.

Professor Rick Middleton is the lead researcher in the joint bid with BHP-Billiton Innovation and Matrikon which won the grant to establish an ARC Centre for Complex Dynamic Systems and Control at the University.

“The Centre will become a world leader in the analysis, design, optimisation and control of complex dynamic systems following on from the existing ARC Special Research Centre for Integrated Dynamics and Control at the University,” Professor Middleton said. “Dynamic Systems refers to the way industrial, chemical, biomedical, environmental and mechatronic systems exhibit time dependent behaviour.”

From driving a car to steering ships at sea, to delivery systems for medicine, modern society increasingly depends on the safe and efficient operation of such systems. The new centre will be working to eliminate the complex and unpredictable behaviour of these systems. The recent blackouts in north east America are an example of a complex dynamic system out of control, where after some overload incidents dynamic instability caused a major power system outage.

“Our unique team combines engineers, mathematicians and statisticians and will incorporate expertise in systems and control, mathematical systems theory and statistical methods,” Professor Middleton said.

The team includes Professor Graham Goodwin and Professor Iain Raeburn who were both identified as world top scientists as ranked by the Institute for Scientific Information, and Professor Kerrie Mengersen who is an internationally renowned expert in statistics. Applications of the Centre’s research will include: mine production and transportation systems, process control and optimisation, operator guidance systems, advanced process control tools for industry, automotive systems, electromechanical systems including nano technology and robotics, and biomedical systems.

“One potential application of the Centre’s research in conjunction with BHP-Billiton is bacterially enhanced mineral extraction,” Professor Middleton said. “Improved dynamic control of this process may significantly improve the environmental impact and economic efficiency of some mineral extraction processes.

“The research will add value to Australian society by enabling new technology based industries; reducing pollution; improving production and efficiency; and allowing safer operation of complex processes.”

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**Good scholarship and clear heads**

When Professor Lyndall Ryan answered the telephone in the early hours of the morning about a year ago, she could not have realised that her involvement in the 'history wars', an ongoing debate about the history of Tasmanian Aborigines, was about to begin.

The call, from a journalist keen to catch the press, was to ask her to comment on allegations by historian Keith Windschuttle against her academic integrity and scholarship. Windschuttle accused her of fabricating footnotes and making false estimates of the number of Aborigines killed during the white settlement of Tasmania in her book published in 1981, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*.

As Lyndall says "the claims seemed so ridiculous that I could not believe they were being taken seriously". It was the beginning of a media-fuelled debate that continues to rage.

The publication of a new book, *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* has contributed to the debate. Edited by Robert Manne, well known historian and writer, the book is a collection of arguments from noted and emerging Australian historians, including Ryan, refuting the claims made by Windschuttle.

Recently launched in Melbourne and Sydney, the local launch by Professor Anne Graham, which was sponsored by the Co-op Bookshop, was held last month at the Ourimbah Campus.

Anne, Acting Head of the School of Humanities, pointed out that the new book presents the work of some of Australia's leading writers on Aboriginal history to examine Windschuttle's work. "The result," she said, "provides not only a demolition of Windschuttle's revisionism, but also a vivid and illuminating history of one of the most famous and tragic episodes in the history of the British Empire - the dispossession of the Tasmanian Aboriginals."

"From Windschuttle's assertion that the indigenous Tasmanians were primitive, maladapted and dysfunctional and had survived for 35,000 years by luck, we now have a truer picture made abundantly clear by these writers, and in particular by our own Lyndall Ryan," Anne said.

"The facts are not comfortable for us to live with, but in order to grow as a nation we need to come to terms with painful, even shameful truths about our national history and identity - and then we can move on."

Lyndall said that those who have published comment on her work seem to have overlooked that fact that her book does not argue genocide but dispossession and survival.

"There is no doubt that my book has changed attitudes about the Tasmanian Aborigines. Over the last decade, the Aboriginal community in Tasmania has negotiated the return of land and has gained recognition as the survivors of dispossession. So my original book, Windschuttle's book and now this book, provide solid evidence that Australian history is highly contested political terrain...the debate about Aboriginal history is really about who owns the past and how they can lay claim to it."

Lyndall says that historians and journalists are at war over ownership of the past and that historians must not avoid the issues but use the resources at their disposal - good scholarship and a clear head. "So, this book is the result of good scholarship and clear heads. It was produced under fire, so to speak, and has brought out some of the best scholarly writing in the field," she said.

In the new book, Lyndall says that Windschuttle used outdated research, misread sources, denied the existence of an Aboriginal tribe, refused to accept evidence of killings of Aborigines and had been unable or unwilling to re-locate readily available sources.

"In assessing the contribution of historians like myself, he invariably adopts the most malicious of intellectual interpretations, in a manner almost unprecedented in Australian historical scholarship. These are the transparent tactics of an opportunist seeking to claim credibility as a historian in a field in which he has conducted no previous historical or archival research, nor demonstrated an understanding of the relevant historical debates."

Lyndall says Windschuttle is a propagandist, determined to impose his political agenda of denial about the past.

*Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* is edited by Robert Manne and includes contributions from James Boyce, Martin Krygier, Robert van Krieken, Henry Reynolds, Shayne Breen, Marilyn Lake, Greg Lehman, Neville Green, Cathie Clement, Phillip Tardiff, David Hansen, Cassandra Pybus, Ian McFarlane, Mark Finnane, Time Murray, Christine Williamson and A Dirk Moses.

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**Steel book shortlisted for Premier's Award**

A University historian has had his book shortlisted for a prize in the NSW Premier's History Awards.

Dr Erik Eklund from the School of Liberal Arts has been shortlisted for the Premier's Community and Regional History Prize for his book, *Steel Town: The Making and Breaking of Port Kembla*.

"Steel Town, through oral evidence and written history develops our understanding of the processes of industrial and social change," Erik said.

"To most Australians Port Kembla is a grimy, polluted, industrial wasteland located down the coast from Sydney, but Port Kembla is unique in Australian terms. It's an urban environment where industrial society shaped local life and politics like nowhere else."

The winners of this year's awards will be announced on October 15.
High-tech systems to aid medical research

Minister for the Hunter Michael Costa last month marked the establishment of the University's and Hunter Medical Research Institute's biomolecular research facility as an Amersham Biosciences' Strategic Reference Centre.

State-of-the-art biotech analysis systems installed in the Centre will help researchers better understand and diagnose a range of diseases and disorders including cancer, asthma, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and infertility. The five new systems, based at the University, were supplied by internationally renowned Amersham Biosciences. They were funded by the UK's leading supporter of biomedical research, the Wellcome Trust, and will be used by many HMRI researchers.

HMRI researcher and Deputy Head of the School of Biomedical Sciences in the Faculty of Health, Associate Professor Alistair Sim said the equipment would help researchers to quickly and efficiently profile specific personal conditions.

"The new equipment is faster and more sensitive by several orders of magnitude than our existing technology," he said. "We will also be able to analyse many genes and proteins simultaneously, which is critical for understanding the complexity of human physiology."

He said the association with Amersham provides a major industry link for biomedical researchers in the Hunter. The Centre will become a showcase for the world's leading researchers and will allow the joint development of methodology, and of undergraduate and postgraduate training.

Peter Leonard, Regional Vice-President of Amersham Biosciences, said the University and HMRI were to be commended for their commitment to such advanced research, which could potentially have a beneficial impact on the lives of many Australians. He praised their vision in establishing such a high-tech facility.

"The Biomolecular Research Facility, which is now an Amersham Biosciences' Strategic Reference Centre, will play an important role in supporting the work being undertaken by the University in genome research, while at the same time giving other research groups an opportunity to use advanced technology that would not otherwise have been available to them."

The Minister officially launched the Reference Centre in the Life Sciences lecture theatre in September.

University leads way for Indigenous health workforce

The future health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians received a boost recently when researchers from the University secured over $100,000 in funding.

The funding, from the Department of Health and Ageing, will enable research into ways to increase the numbers of Indigenous health care professionals in Australia. Gail Garvey, Assistant Dean from the Indigenous Health and Education Unit at the University, says the study will look at the issues that affect decisions to enter the health workforce and the choice of health discipline training by Indigenous students.

"One barrier in gaining entry to health programs may be related to the small number of Indigenous secondary school students, the small proportion of these students who elect to study science, and the even smaller number of students who successfully complete their studies," Gail said.

"Most universities have an affirmative action program in place for Indigenous applicants. However, it wasn't until the University of Newcastle introduced a specific medical program that the numbers of Indigenous students enrolling in medicine began to change."

Today the University has approximately 50 percent of the nation's total Indigenous medical students currently enrolled. This success has been attributed to many factors, including a specific admissions policy, student support, and involvement by the Indigenous community.

"Our research will look at ways to create a much wider interest in health programs and careers through appropriate recruitment strategies and programs such as those introduced for medical students at Newcastle," Gail said. "Most certainly the funding of specific health scholarships for all programs, the development of a national health training strategy and the introduction of bridging programs and targeted support programs, would assist in making significant increases to the total numbers of Indigenous health professionals."

Gail says the researchers plan to identify and develop recommendations for similar approaches to assist in targeting future training support and recruitment strategies to encourage Indigenous people to enter the health care workforce.
Chronic fatigue syndrome breakthroughs

Scientists at the University have made some exciting breakthroughs in the study of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) that could lead to improved diagnosis and treatment methods.

Thanks to the generosity of benefactor Judith Mason, the researchers from the Bioanalytical Research Group (BRG) have been exploring ways of categorising CFS patients into subgroups, using objective biochemical measurements; as well as examining the role of pathogenic bacteria in the little-understood disease.

Associate Professor Hugh Dunstan from the University's Faculty of Science and Information Technology said CFS is primarily diagnosed on the basis of exclusion from other possible causes of prolonged fatigue and pain.

"The primary symptoms are not specific and can arise from many possible causes," he said. "Because their condition is unexplained, there is a shroud around people with chronic illness that can lead to suggestions that their condition has a psychological basis. It's very frustrating for these patients and their doctors, who don't understand their condition."

The BRG researchers have been using a mass spectrometer, purchased with funds donated by Ms Mason, to look for evidence of the disease in the biochemical make-up of the body. They have carried out widespread analysis of as many metabolites (body chemicals) as possible to try and look for patterns and differences in CFS patients.

"CFS patients have different kinds of illnesses with their multiple symptoms driven by their infective history," Hugh explained, "such as whether they have had lots of viral infections, or whether they have had adequate nutrition, exposure to chemicals from the environment, or have genetically based susceptibilities. We have shown that there might be at least six different groups that we are able to differentiate on the basis of patterns."

The key issue in the research is finding what sustains illness in CFS patients. With the majority of research in Australia centred on finding a causal agent and with an emphasis on the psychology of patients, the Newcastle team believes there are multiple factors that lead to CFS. Their research has shown that some CFS pain is associated with the response of the body to stress challenges. So, the initial trigger might be a viral infection, which is then compounded by work stress or the physical stress of an accident or injury, which can in turn affect the body's ability to properly absorb food, thereby causing more stress and setting up a vicious cycle that can drain the body's reserves and leave the patient unable to recover.

"When the body responds to a stressor, it sets up a catabolic response that switches on reserves to help it fight infection," Hugh said. "We have established the markers for this response and can measure it in urine. Our research shows that the higher the pain reported by the patient, the higher the catabolic response and the lower the reserves of essential nutrients. This might be one of the mechanisms sustaining chronic pain and fatigue."

In another breakthrough, the group has found that the usual harmless bacteria found on the surface of skin are replaced in CFS patients by toxin-producing Staphylococci, Streptococci and fungal pathogens. Their research is now seeking to answer the question of whether these bacteria are present as a cause of CFS symptoms or as a result of patients being weakened by the disease.

Having conducted clinical tests on around 100 CFS sufferers in conjunction with the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, the scientists plan to return to the laboratory in an attempt to better understand the pathological and biochemical anomalies in symptoms. The University's restructure will help in the research as the new Faculty of Science and IT brings together researchers from different disciplines to share facilities and research projects.
Out of the CFS wilderness

Adelaide woman Jo Tankin was just 18 when she was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in 1987.

Having suffered a series of viruses at school, the former A-grade tennis player and active teenager was unable to recover her health. She lost massive amounts of weight and became so ill she was forced to withdraw from her Bachelor of Science studies at the University of Adelaide.

Seven years later, Jo's health had deteriorated to the point where she was bed-ridden and sometimes needed oxygen to breathe. Her experience of being referred to the in-house psychiatrist of an Adelaide hospital she had come to when she was unable to breathe is typical of the frustrations experienced by CFS sufferers and the doctors who try to treat them.

Then Jo saw a television report on research into CFS being conducted by scientists at the University of Newcastle. Hugh Dunstan and others from the Faculty of Science and Information Technology's Bioanalytical Research Group (BRG) were finally able to offer Jo and her parents some real answers to her bewildering and life-threatening condition.

"I was virtually allergic to the 20th century and was unable to leave my parent's house," Jo explains. "We had to be our own doctors and were struggling on in the wilderness when we heard about the Newcastle scientists. They got me up and out of bed. I hate to think what would have happened to me if it weren't for them."

The scientists tested blood samples and found that Jo had a lot of bio-chemical abnormalities including a large amount of DDE (a metabolic byproduct of pesticide DDT) in her blood, viral traces, abnormal fatty acid metabolism and altered gut bacteria. By understanding the multiple factors contributing to her condition, Jo and the scientists, working together with her doctors, have been able to begin specific treatment that she says is making her stronger every day.

"People think that CFS only happens to sickly people but I was very muscular and strong before I became sick," Jo said. "They think that it just means you get a bit tired but I have had one friend die from it and my best friend is fighting for her life now."

Jo longs for the day when diagnosis of CFS is easy and treatments are readily available. Although she has struggled with the disease for 16 years, she has never allowed herself to accept defeat and always believed she would recover. Now, with the help of the Bioanalytical Research Group and their network of international contacts, she is able to spend the mornings out of bed and to take her dog for a walk. She hopes one day to return to university.

"Science has so much to offer and the medical community can be very insular," she said. "I have a dream of studying health science education so that one day I can work with a research group that helps to bridge the gap between science and medicine."
Challenging musical boundaries

The festival pushed those boundaries giving a fresh, new perspective on music and performance,” said Helen. “The annual event is a mix of student-based project work, including concerts from many of our ensembles, and events and performances from our professional staff and distinguished visiting artists.”

Highlights of the festival included:

• Snap – a Martin Wesley-Smith multimedia event including works inspired by events in East Timor, with Ros Dunlop (clarinet) and Julia Ryder (cello) and including a pre-concert lecture from the composer.

• Ensemble Sirius – a tribute to Stockhausen in his 75th year, by Michael Fowler (keyboard/electronics) and Timothy Constable (percussion);

• Out of the Blue – a cabaret show taking a whimsical and wicked look at Australia’s musical history with The Song Company, directed by Roland Peelman; and

• Challenging the Boundaries – a feast of live and electronic music, sculpture, drawing, installation and dance.

The University challenged musical boundaries during its annual Conservatorium Music Festival. Thousands attended the ‘Challenging Boundaries’ Festival, which ran from August 16 to 21. Festival Director, Helen English, says the festival aimed to investigate the artistic and cultural boundaries that define our musical experiences.

The potential of cultural industries

The importance of cultural industries to urban and regional development strategies was the topic at the ‘Cities, Popular Music and Urban Cultures Symposium’ hosted by the University’s Cultural Industries and Practices Centre (CIPS) in August.

“Governments are realising the potential of cultural industries to transform the local image, identity and economies of communities,” said Dr Deborah Stevenson, CIPS Deputy Director. “Cultural industries, whether they be fairly traditional forms such as the performing arts or more innovative approaches like popular music, play an important role in local economies. They are also central elements of the way a place defines itself and increasingly they underpin many city re-imaging strategies.”

Many Australian cities, including Newcastle, have recognised the potential of the cultural industries. The key is not to fall for ready-made solutions, but to look at the energy and creativity of the local community and to use this as the basis for developing the city’s profile and economy. According to Deborah, this energy and potential may be found in surprising places.

“For instance, Newcastle is undoubtedly the garage band capital of Australia and Silverchair are a high profile example of this phenomenon,” she said. “Silverchair did not emerge from a vacuum, but are a product of the energy and creativity that defines the live music scene in Newcastle, which at the moment is largely unsupported. This is surely an untapped cultural resource.”

The Symposium heard that cities need to find ways of helping local people do what they do better. In the case of young musicians, this could mean providing them with subsidised studio and rehearsal spaces and making sure there are plenty of venues for them to perform in.

“The Symposium looked at the potential of these cultural industries and looked beyond ready-made solutions to city imaging,” Deborah said.

The Symposium, held at Callaghan on August 23, was followed by the Newcastle launches of ‘Cities and Urban Cultures’ by Dr Stevenson and ‘The Mayor’s A Square: Live Music and Law and Order in Sydney’ by Dr Shane Homan.
Sports person of the year award

Badminton player Wang Chiung Siang (Yeye) was named University Sports Person of the Year at the University Sports Awards dinner in August.

Yeye, an international student from Indonesia who is in her second year of a Bachelor of Commerce degree, has been a member of the University Badminton Club since enrolling at the University and was its Vice-President last year. She competed in the Eastern University Games and the Australian University Games in 2001 and 2002, and was selected in the Eastern Universities Merit Team and the Australian Universities Green and Gold team on each occasion. Her dominant play helped the University team to win the gold medal at the 2002 FUG games.

Yeye was selected in the NSW women’s badminton team in 2001 and represented NSW in the Australian teams championships in Launceston, receiving a ranking of No 7 in women’s singles in Australia. Last year, she was selected as No 1 player for the NSW women’s badminton team, which won the interstate Clermie Shield competition. In August 2002, Yeye crowned her achievements by winning the women’s singles title at the Australian championships in Perth to be named No 1 female badminton player in Australia.

Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes presented Yeye with her award at the 2003 University Sports Awards dinner, held in the Brennan Room in August. She was one of four finalists in the Sports Person of the Year awards, with Belinda Wright (softball), Peter Mauro (triathlon) and Philip Reid (water polo). Sporting blues and colours were also awarded.

Blues are awarded each year for excellence in sport. This year’s blues winners were Wang Chiung Siang (badminton), Tobie McGann (rugby union/touch), Elly Goodwin and Jenny Kachel (both for water polo).

Jenny Kachel’s father Terry received a colour for rugby league in 1975. This is only the second time that a father and his offspring have both received University sports awards. The first was when Jock Armstrong received a colour for squash in 1977, the same year that his son Raymond won his blue for squash.

Colours are awarded to members who have made an outstanding contribution to the organisation and administration of a NUSport club over a period of at least three academic years. Colours were presented to Eduardo Carvajal (La Pena), Don Cockburn (rugby union) and Louise O’Brien (women’s soccer).

Funding for HIV/AIDS research

The Faculty of Science and Information Technology has been allocated funding to further social research into the needs of people affected by HIV/AIDS in the Hunter, mid north coast and Northern Rivers regions of NSW.

Dr Kate Hartig from the School of Environmental and Life Sciences says the $15,280 grant will allow further research into the support, health care and treatment needs of people affected by HIV/AIDS in rural and regional NSW. She says that due in part to society’s perception, there has been a tendency to consider HIV/AIDS as an urban issue rather than a rural one.

The project will identify the social interpretation of HIV/AIDS as an illness and the way these representations can lead to discrimination in rural areas, and secondly, determine the way in which people affected by HIV/AIDS access services within rural and regional NSW.

"Currently, the project is investigating the needs of people affected by HIV/AIDS who have migrated from the city into rural areas," Dr Hartig said. "This 'sea change' is creating additional pressures on health services."

The decision to live in rural and regional areas is based on lifestyle choices. Affordable housing in a perceived healthy environment, prompted many of the people interviewed by the researchers to state that relocation from the city has improved their health and quality of life. Dr Hartig says that the trade-off is that they are now accessing health care that provides fewer services and less choice than metropolitan areas.

The original project was an initiative of the NSW HIV/AIDS Health Promotion Plan 2001-2003, which aims to enhance the health of people affected by HIV/AIDS and to minimise the personal and social impact of HIV infection. The research is being conducted in conjunction with the local area health services, the AIDS Council of NSW, NSW Users and AIDS Association Inc and People Living with HIV/AIDS NSW Inc.

"The project’s findings will impact on the development of appropriate support, care and treatment services and hopefully advance understanding of the representation of HIV/AIDS in regional and rural NSW," Dr Hartig said.
Vice-Consul presents Goethe Prize

Language student Ann Moore was presented with the Goethe Prize in German Studies by German Vice-Consul Ms Ines Reising last month.

The Goethe Prize is awarded by the German government for outstanding performance in German studies. It is available to undergraduate language students from around Australia.

Ann became interested in German when she studied it at high school. She did further studies in the language via correspondence while working in pathology and it was the possibility of studying German through the Open Foundation Course that attracted her to enrol at the University. With a double major in linguistics and German language studies, Ann should complete her Bachelor of Arts mid-way through next year.

"The German language course at the University is very demanding and required a lot of work for me to do well," she said, "but it wasn't hard to do because I'm passionate about German. It was a labour of love."

Ann was presented with a certificate and 10 books including a pictorial guide to Germany, a dictionary and a cross-section of German language works. She plans to travel to Germany and hopes to continue her German studies.

Healthy future for medical education

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) has recognised the quality of the University's Bachelor of Medicine program by awarding it an unusually long full accreditation period until 2013.

The AMC commended the School of Medical Practice and Population Health's vision, combining social responsibility, research and community involvement. Head of School Michael Hensley says the re-accreditation is a recognition of the School's commitment to preparing students for rewarding careers as medical practitioners in metropolitan, regional and rural areas of Australia.

"The AMC accreditation provides assurance to medical registration boards that our Bachelor of Medicine program satisfies national guidelines," he said. "A graduate of an AMC accredited program is eligible for registration as a medical practitioner in any State or Territory of Australia."

The AMC's assessment of the Bachelor of Medicine program highlighted areas of strength including the School's strong community focus, the diverse range of assessment methods and its relationships with the medical community.

The Bachelor of Medicine is a five-year program characterised by an innovative problem-based and integrated curriculum with early clinical exposure and substantial community involvement. Preventive care is pursued as the most effective approach to complement treatment. The program has a reputation for innovation.

Professor Hensley says the AMC also recognised the School's successful recruitment of Indigenous medical students. The majority of Indigenous doctors in Australia have been trained at Newcastle.

"The School's commitment to making a difference to the health of local and wider communities will remain a primary focus of the Bachelor of Medicine program," he said. "In order to uphold the high standards acknowledged by the AMC, we continually assess and evaluate our programs for relevance in the workplace, focusing on areas which would benefit from future development, in order to maintain our position as a leader in medical education."

Do you have hyperactive platelets?

A Hunter Medical Research Institute researcher at the University is looking for patients with type 2 diabetes who are currently not taking anti-platelet medication for a new study involving tomato juice and fish oil.

Sherri Lazarus from the Faculty of Health is investigating the effects of diet and food components on cardiovascular health, in particular on people with type 2 diabetes, as they are known to have hyperactive platelets. Platelets are responsible for the preservation of healthy blood vessels and the clotting of blood after injury to stop bleeding. When the health of blood vessels is impaired, as in the case of diabetes, platelets are recruited and stick to the lining of the vessel wall. The continual build up of platelets over time can lead to the development of cardiovascular disease, which can lead to angina (chest pain) or heart attacks.

"This study aims to determine whether dietary supplementation with tomato juice and/or fish oil can decrease platelet activity in type 2 diabetes patients," said Sherri. "Participants will be supplemented for three weeks with tomato juice, fish oil capsules or both." Interested participants should phone 4921 5644.
Arts scholarship awarded

North Coast artist and Fine Art student Soozie Coumbe has been awarded the $5,000 annual Windmill Trust Scholarship to further her burgeoning artistic career.

Prim Moss, Trustee of the Windmill Trust says the Scholarship was established in 1997 to assist both male and female regional NSW artists, whose careers have been interrupted due to extenuating circumstances, with the costs of mounting an exhibition or undertaking further study in the visual arts. Soozie applied to Windmill as a mature student to undertake an accredited study as part of her Fine Art degree and was delighted when she was successful.

"The scholarship enabled me to participate in a field trip to Echigo Tsumari Arts Triennial in Japan, as part of a team of 18 postgraduate and undergraduate students lead by Professor Anne Graham, to assist on a sculpture work," she said.

No stranger to travel, Soozie returns to her rural home near Macksville on the NSW north coast as often as possible, after leaving family and friends three years ago to fulfill a longstanding ambition to study Fine Art at the University.

"I chose Newcastle because of my background in textile design," she said.

"The University has an exceptional textile fibre studio and a strong reputation for fine art."

Soozie's connection with the land is evident in her work, which transforms natural forms such as paper bark, twigs and wax into sculptural artworks and paintings. Prim Moss says the judges chose Soozie as she epitomises what the Windmill Trust Scholarship represents.

"She is a very worthy recipient with an outstanding talent for interpreting the environment with creative sensitivity," she said.

Miranda Lawry, Head of the School of Fine Art says the School places enormous emphasis on supporting students in the development of their artistic careers.

"We are extremely proud of Soozie's success," Miranda said. "Student achievements at regional and national levels continue to build the excellent reputation of the School."

Soozie launched her first solo exhibition, 'Tree Bark and Shedding', in March this year at student gallery Watt Space. She is now working on a second solo exhibition, inspired by her visit to Japan, to be held in 2004.

Academic joins Prime Minister's science elite

One of the University's leading academics has been invited to join the Working Group on Science Awareness and Education for the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC).

Associate Professor John O'Connor from the Faculty of Science and Information Technology will join this elite group, formed by the Government to provide independent advice and advance issues in science and technology awareness and education throughout Australia.

The goal is to develop a presentation to be made to the PMSEIC later this year on the current state of affairs in science awareness and education, and to offer advice on future directions and needs.

Fresh from initial meetings with the PMSEIC's Working Group in Canberra, John says he feels privileged to be part of this process, which is directly contributing to science awareness and education, and ultimately improving understanding of science, engineering and innovation.

Advancing understanding of science and engineering is an area John is committed to. The increasing success of the University's Science and Engineering Challenge and the Science, Maths and Real Technology (SMART) program, speaks for itself.

"The Challenge, aimed at year 10 students, combines creative and interesting activities to make science fun and has been directly responsible for turnarounds of year 11 enrolments in physics, chemistry and maths," John said. "There is no other program succeeding at this level to address the declining participation in the enabling sciences in Australia. It is our view that the Science and Engineering Challenge is the best exemplar in the country and will surely impact on the deliberations of the Working Group."

He believes that every high school student in Australia should have the opportunity to participate in the Science and Engineering Challenge. The Working Group will meet four times between now and November when the presentation to the PMSEIC is due.

"It is a rare opportunity to have input into a presentation which can directly affect the thinking of the most senior levels of government," John said.
**People & Places**

**Schools excel in science and engineering challenge**

He said that 128 schools competed in the various regional challenges, with the top eight going through to the Super Challenge Cup and the runner-up teams to the Super Challenge Plate.

"The teams were the best performers in their regions and the focus and intensity of their efforts was simply amazing," Bob said.

Warriors Bay High School won the Super Challenge Cup, with St Josephs High School Aberdeen (The Aberdeen Invincibles) coming second and Narrabri High School taking out third. The runner-up teams competed in the Super Challenge Plate with Tomaree High School winning first place, Newcastle High School second and St Pauls Kempsey third.

Overall there was a very focused and outstanding level of competition, Bob said. In one of the challenges, where students had to make a bridge to hold a certain weight, the strength of the materials available to the students was halved in order to make it more competitive. Four schools still got the heaviest possible load over the bridge. The halved strength of the materials did not hinder the students’ ability.

Rotary International, Young Engineers Australia, the Regional Museum, Engineers Australia, Forsythes, the Faculties of Engineering and Built Environment and Science and Information Technology all contributed to the Challenge.

The Science and Engineering Challenge was developed by the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment and the Faculty of Science and Information Technology. The program is aimed at Year 10 students combining fun and interesting activities, from building a styrofoam glider and making a chair to hold a certain weight to cracking codes. New activities are planned for 2004.

**Challenge organiser recognised by Rotary**

Organiser of the University’s Science and Engineering Challenge Bob Nelson has been named as a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary.

The Rotary Clubs of Dubbo awarded Bob, from the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, with the high Rotary honour in recognition of his work on the Science and Engineering Challenge, particularly the regional challenges held in western New South Wales.

The regional challenge held each year in Dubbo is a three day event involving 450 students from 20 schools across the west of the State. These range from small central schools to Dubbo’s ‘super school’, from Coolah and Wellington in the east, to Byrock and Bourke in the west.

Mr Brian Pattinson OAM, Chair of the Dubbo Challenge Coordinating Committee, nominated Bob for the award on behalf of the Rotary Clubs of Dubbo. Brian indicated that the award clearly showed the value placed on this great event by their local community.

District Governor Cheryl Bentley-Howard, when presenting Bob with his award, said that his dedication and commitment was the most significant reason for the success of the Science and Engineering Challenge.

“He’s attention to every detail and his capacity to enthuse everyone involved, and to make things happen, will ensure the growth and continuing viability of the program,” she said.

This year, the Science and Engineering Challenge expanded outside of New South Wales for the first time to South Australia.
Anatomy book launched

A 15-year project came to fruition for retired Fellow in Surgery and Anatomy Dr Franklin Gray, with the recent publication of his book ‘Anatomy for the Medical Clinician’.

A book of practical anatomy, the text is designed to meet the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students and clinicians in medicine, nursing and the allied health professions to acquire anatomical knowledge in the context of clinical experiences. It relates structure to function, and to symptomatology, diagnosis and treatment of disease processes as they are encountered.

“To be consistent with modern curricula, my emphasis is on everyday clinical practice rather than on purely academic knowledge,” Dr Gray wrote in the book’s preface. “Far from being a daunting mountain of minutiae as, regrettably, many a student has regarded it, anatomy is a treasure house, a magic key to the understanding of our patients’ ailments and their treatment.”

Dr Gray did his medical training at the University of Newcastle and in hospitals in Sydney and Newcastle, before studying surgery in Melbourne. He tutored in anatomy at the University of Sydney and in hospitals in Sydney and Newcastle, before studying surgery in Melbourne. He spent until he retired. He has also worked in general practice in the lower Hunter and was Fellow in Anatomy and Surgery at the University of Newcastle for five years. He won an Order of Australia Medal in 2001 for his services to medicine as a surgeon and for services to medical education.

“I’ve been tied up with anatomy all my working life,” he said. “My experience has convinced me that time spent learning about it is time well spent.”

In a Foreword to Dr Gray’s book, the University’s former Professor in Surgical Science Robert Burton, currently Director of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, Professor of Surgery at Monash and Professor of Public Health at Melbourne, says the book is “an exemplar of the way in which anatomy should be learned in the new century”.

“I recommend the book enthusiastically to all future undergraduates in medicine, nursing and the allied health sciences,” he said.

UMAP scholar studies ‘morning after’ pill

Social Science graduate Sascha Fuller has won a UMAP (University Mobility in the Asia-Pacific region) scholarship to undertake a study of contraceptive use in Mexico.

Sascha, who graduated with her Bachelor of Social Science majoring in anthropology and sociology this year, will research how poor, adolescent women use emergency contraception such as the ‘morning after’ pill.

“The morning after pill was introduced to Mexico in 1999,” she said, “so there is a lot of statistical information about its use, but not much qualitative work that takes into account women’s health.”

In association with the University of Mexico and MEXFAM, the Mexican family planning agency, Sascha will spend three months talking to women in Guadalajara, Mexico’s second largest city. Her UMAP scholarship covers her airfares, Spanish language lessons and some accommodation.

The UMAP scholarships were established by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries to promote mutual accreditation for studies undertaken around the Pacific area.

Anatomy lecturer in the University’s Faculty of Health Dr Hersko Povea-Pacci has promoted the UMAP scholarships to students since 1999 and more than 50 Newcastle students and staff members have travelled to Mexico and Chile as a result of the scheme.

“Last year we attracted eight scholarships to study in Mexico and nine for Chile,” he said. “Some of those who were successful, like Sascha, postponed their trip until this year. We have applied again this year for 10 scholarships each for Mexico and Chile.”

To win a UMAP scholarship, the applicant needs to be Australian (or a permanent resident of Australia), undertake a minimum 12-week placement and must take advantage of an academic agreement between a university in the host country and their Australian institution. The University has agreements with three institutions in Chile and with the University of Mexico, the largest university in the country with more than 250,000 students.

Sascha, who comes from Gulgong, near Mudgee in north-western NSW, hopes to travel to other parts of South America during her stay.
University hosts international coal symposium

Researchers and industry representatives from across the world converged on Newcastle for the University's International Symposium on 'Utilisation of Coal and Biomass: Energy and Environment' in August.

The Symposium attracted more than 75 national and international attendees including representatives from China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Jordan, the Netherlands and the USA.

Conference Chair, Dr Rajender Gupta says that the Symposium aimed to strengthen international links in the coal industry leading to more sustainable use of our resources in terms of efficiency and environment.

"Australia currently mines around 300 million tonnes of coal per annum and coal is the single largest export commodity bringing revenues of approximately $12-$14 billion each year. So it is important that we look at ways to improve the performance of coal for energy conversion processes, keeping the environment in mind."

The Symposium was held to celebrate the achievements of the University's Professor of Chemical Engineering, Terry Wall AM, on his 60th birthday. Professor Wall is a leading coal researcher and in 2001 was the first Australian to receive the prestigious Pitt Award for Coal Conversion from the University of Pittsburgh.

Professor Wall received the award for discoveries, research, process and device development and new methodologies relating to scientific and engineering achievements in the area of coal conversion. This is a topic that Professor Wall has been researching for the past 30 years.

The Symposium was sponsored by the University, the CRC for Coal and Sustainable Development, the Centre for Energy and Fuels at Curtin University of Technology, the CRC for Clean Power from Lignite, and the Process Safety and Environment Protection Research Group Newcastle.

Uni life as easy as ABC

Improving health and safety at work

Improving health and safety in the workplace for local business was the topic of a seminar held at the University in August.

The University, in partnership with the NSW Workcover Authority, hosted an International Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) seminar titled 'Improving Health and Safety is Your Business - A Global Perspective'.

Professor Mike Capra, Head of the School of Health Sciences says this is the first time that distinguished international and local speakers in OHS have come together to present the latest OHS trends and share information with local businesses within our community.

"The statistics speak for themselves," he said. "Over 500 people die in Australia as a result of a workplace incident each year and more than 2000 die as a result of some prior exposure to a workplace substance. Many more suffer injury and illness."

Hazards in the workplace and the risks to the health and safety of employees need to be identified and strategies then need to be devised for hazard control, to minimise or eliminate the risks. The aim is to try to reduce the rates of accidents and work related illness to zero.

The seminar gave OHS professionals the opportunity to discuss methods of promoting and maintaining the highest level of physical, mental and social wellbeing of workers in all occupations, says Professor Capra. The free public seminar included national and international keynote speakers providing perspectives on improving OHS in the workplace. Key topics included:

- Workplace consultation for better OHS outcomes – a European perspective – by Professor David Walters, Chair of OHS, Cardiff University, Wales UK.
- Changing work arrangements and OHS risk management – Professor Michael Quinlan, School of IR/OB, University of NSW.
- Meeting the OHS challenge – Dorothea Betts, Manager, Services Coordinator, Team Workcover NSW.
Designs for Amnesty

The breadth of the University's design talent was on display last month at the launch of a unique exhibition entitled 'Amnesty'. The 'Amnesty' exhibition showcased the results of an exciting collaboration between final year design students and Amnesty International.

Roger Dunstan, Design Lecturer from the Faculty of Science and Information Technology, said the concept behind the exhibition was for students to design a publicity poster reflecting the work of Amnesty International, the worldwide campaigning movement working to promote human rights.

"The students utilised different mediums including photography and illustration to produce the A2 sized posters with messages ranging from basic human rights to furthering the awareness of Amnesty's activities," he said.

"The project offered our design students the opportunity to broaden their experience through dealing directly with a 'real life' client and encouraging them to consider the impact their work could have on the wider community."

Frances Howley from Amnesty International's Newcastle Group says the posters provide an opportunity to extend the community's awareness of human rights issues and promote the work of Amnesty.

"The collaboration between the students and Amnesty International has resulted in the emergence of some impressive work that sums up what Amnesty is all about," she said.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian English officially opened the poster exhibition in the foyer of the University's Design Building in August.

Volunteers pitch in on weed removal

The University has undertaken weed removal along creeks at the Callaghan campus over the winter, in partnership with the Trees in Newcastle group.

Campus Environment Services Manager Mim Woodland says the weed removal program in the riparian (creek) zones began in April and involved two paid workers and up to eight volunteers in removing lantana and other pests.

"The damp edges of creeks encourage the growth of weeds and the workers have done a great job in removing them," she said. "This is the first time the University has subsidised weed removal and our arrangement with Trees in Newcastle means that we get more than we pay for."

The Trees in Newcastle (TIN) group is a non-profit community group committed to greening the local area and removing noxious weeds. Manager Boyd Carney says TIN is the oldest landcare group in the area, having operated since 1989.

"We have four different areas in which we operate - a nursery where we propagate native plants from seeds collected locally; a bush regeneration team; an education program involved in schools; and the key to it all, our volunteers."

Boyd says TIN benefits from 1,500 hours a month of volunteer time, with their volunteers undertaking a huge range of activities, including helping remove weeds at the University.

Mim says the workers will keep working on the weeds up to the end of October, when it begins to get too hot, and will begin again in March next year. She called on students and staff to get involved and help to clean up the creeks.

Anyone interested can contact Mim on 4921 7038, Boyd on 4969 1500 or Coordinator of the Weed Removal Program, Tasman Willis, on 0404 089 973.
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