December edition

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2000 Schedule

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Recent events in the United States and New Zealand have highlighted the increasing roles being played by animal rights activists in demonstrations, vandalism and exhibitions of violence against scientists who use animals in their research and teaching programs. Threats and violence against individual biomedical researchers, which have been previously reported in Britain, are now also occurring more commonly in the United States, particularly for scientists using primates in their research programs.

Most recently, the Chair of the Animal Ethics Committee of the Victoria University of Wellington had his home and car vandalised by animal rights protestors. This unfortunate occurrence preceded a joint Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC)/Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) Conference in Wellington entitled Innovation, ethics and animal welfare: public confidence in science and agriculture.

I attended this conference as the AVCC representative on the ANZCCART Board and observed such demonstrations at first hand. What was particularly disturbing about these activities of animal rights demonstrators was that they were being directed at scientists, teachers, administrators and students who were meeting to conscientiously discuss key issues of animal welfare, the role of animal ethics committees in universities and other institutions, and the implementation of the three R's of animal research and teaching. The three R's include the principles of Replacement (by replacing animal use with other methods where appropriate); Refinement (by refining experimental protocols to minimise and preferably remove any pain or discomfort to the animals); and Reduction (by reducing the number of animals used to a minimum consistent with experimental and statistical considerations).

ANZCCART is particularly conscious of its important role in promoting the ethical use of animals by scientists, teachers and students in research and teaching protocols, and has made a special effort at its conferences in Australia to include leaders and representatives of animal welfare groups in its planning. This has been successful in promoting discussions about the ethical use of animals in research and teaching with a range of community groups, with an emphasis upon the application of the three R's, ethical practice in the use of animals, and studies which benefit human and animal health and well being.

The University of Newcastle is seen as an exemplar for the Australian university system in the way in which animals are maintained and managed, and in the operation of our Animal Ethics Committee.

This approach of inclusiveness of animal welfare groups has also been effectively implemented by the State Government in its current review of the Animal Research Act 1985 here in NSW. The Review Group is broadly representative of relevant government departments, animal welfare groups, relevant industry bodies and NSW universities. As the NSWVCC representative on the Review Group, I have actively participated in this process, which will bring forward recommendations to the Minister early in 2000 in relation to the ethical use of animals in research and teaching within NSW. The public meetings and interviews with relevant representative and public groups
Winning poet announced

Rob receives his prize from Fran

have played an integral role in raising awareness of animal based research and teaching activities within NSW universities, schools and research institutions, and the essential role of animal ethics committees in the enforced self-regulation approach embodied in current legislation.

It is my view that the inclusive nature of our current review processes, conferences and the operations of animal ethics committees have served us particularly well, and have provided alternative vehicles for animal welfare groups to express their views about the practices and use of animals in research and teaching in NSW and Australia, and to participate in the process of reviewing current State legislation.

As this is the last edition of Uninews for 1999, may I take this opportunity to thank all staff members of the university for their work and support of our teaching, research and community programs. This has been a challenging year, but I trust one that you can take satisfaction from, in that your work and support of our teaching, members of the university for their work and support of our teaching, is from the United States. "When people ask what part, I say most of it," he said. He was in the US Navy for 10 years and lived on the east and west coasts and in Minnesota, near the Canadian border, before "choosing to become an Australian".

Director of Marketing and Media Services and Uninews publisher, Dr Fran Flavel, presented Rob with the Folio Society edition (1970) of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. A first version of Edward Fitzgerald, with drawings by Virgil Burnett, the volume is beautifully bound in rich maroon and gold, with gold leaf and slipcase and was generously donated from the publisher's collection.

Rob's poem, This heat, is reprinted below. We have also included Muting Paths by James Stuart, who sent his poem before our closing date but too late for publication in the last edition. The poets who entered our competition are as follows:

1. Dreaming design – Herbert Heinrich
2. This heat – Rob Riel
3. Language – Andrew White
4. Between the Spaces – Leonie Wellard
5. Life’s Rich Tapestry – Clark Gornley
6. His and Hers – Matthew Fenwick
7. Heatseeking – Ryan Webb
8. Muting Paths – James Stuart

This heat

Two days after the stroke which tossed him thrashing, foam-flecked and blind across the hardwood floor, I remember my dog coming home from the vet, innocent and doomed, his wide brown eyes filled with apology for his hind legs now worked so badly, and how the shame burned me to be loved like that.

Muting Paths

for John, Paul and Shaun

Beyond four wheel drive tracks marked with the petals of bleached dry kelp, we are searching for pipis, burrowing into the surf’s edge with our heels, seeking out clamped shut shells and their fat tongues of sinew and flesh. It is only distraction, though, from the water’s icy ribs. Perhaps we might return to search another sun-licked day, but now is now.

A lighthouse adorns a rock on the horizon, its slender colourless shape, a presence shaved away from view, over and over by the rising crystal blue swell we swim through, find shape in.

We ponder its source back to something we might call understanding then let the liquid sands slide back down into themselves.

A few metres to the right, a caimn of broken beer bottles is arranged in a glinting brown folly to the sun. Its electric glow slices our eyes apart, glass shards flash storms inside the head. We search this graveyard for meaning too which tossed him thrashing, foam-flecked and blind across the hardwood floor, I remember my dog coming home from the vet, innocent and doomed, his wide brown eyes filled with apology for his hind legs now worked so badly, and how the shame burned me to be loved like that.
First national family strengths conference

Michael Murray, Executive Officer of the Hunter Regional Development Organisation, speaking at the conference.

The first national conference to address the issues faced by Australian families was held in Newcastle in November.

The First National Family Strengths Conference was attended by policy-makers, researchers, practitioners and community members, who discussed the latest family-related research and practice.

Over 80 papers were presented during the three days of the conference, which was organised by the Family Action Centre (FAC) and the Department of Social Work.

Highlights of the conference included a performance by Hunter students, produced by Star Struck Entertainment during the opening ceremony and the presentation of initial outcomes of a national study of Australian families, undertaken by the Family Action Centre under the guidance of Professor of Family Science from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Dr John DeFrain.

The Australian Family Strengths project involved developing an inventory of factors that contribute to strong families. Run with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, the 12-month project began by running focus groups in three states to develop an 85-item inventory.

Presenting preliminary findings at the conference, FAC Assistant Director Judi Geggie said the centre had been working with families in the community since they began the caravan project in 1986. "We developed Homestart from an English model, which involved training volunteers to link with the families of young children and it was then we realised there is certainly a need to be working on building family strengths."

While John DeFrain had developed a family strengths inventory in America, the FAC group found that it didn't quite fit the Australian model. "We took our inspiration, enthusiasm and passion from John," Judi said, "but we had to develop our own language."

Since March the FAC team has sent out 1,360 packages to Australian families, which include a demographic survey, as well as a qualitative survey that offers them the opportunity to write about their experiences in more detail. They have also undertaken 36 of an intended 50 in-depth interviews with families and gathered a collection of "How do you picture your family" maps and memorabilia including photographs, poetry and songs to help them identify the qualities of a strong family.

Judi said the group was looking for cooperative researchers interested in using the enormously rich resources being generated by the study. She said that possible outcomes of the project include developing education programs and curriculum; running a media campaign on the qualities of strong families; books, documentary videos and games on strong families; and future studies looking at the strengths of Indigenous families, immigrant families and fathering strengths. Judi paid tribute to the unpaid work done by three social work students and other volunteers.

The conference, which was attended by more than 100 national and international delegates, included a session on policy development to strengthen families, featuring the Federal Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Jocelyn Newman, and the Director-General of the NSW Department of Community Services, Carmel Niland. It was held in the Richardson Wing Lecture Theatre from Monday 22nd to Wednesday 24th of November.

Are we lifelong learners?

The University of Newcastle Research Associates (TUNRA) and Newcastle City Council have joined forces to create the Lifelong Learning Project, encouraging local residents to become lifelong learners.

Seventy eight percent of Australians aged 21 or over participate in adult education at some time in their lives, with increasing pressure on individuals to re-train and acquire marketable skills.

Megan Lugg, Lecturer in Vocational and Industrial Education at the university, says lifelong jobs can no longer be assumed.

"The changing nature of work and the labour market require employees to be flexible, demonstrate initiative, and be willing to retrain, to adapt to the economic and social changes in Newcastle," Megan said. "Recent research in Australia has highlighted opportunities in the workforce for people with strong communication, interpersonal and technology-related skills. This is where community-based adult education is playing a critical role in providing entry-level employment skills, and meeting the informal and 'life-related' learning needs of the community."

Part of the Lifelong Learning Project is an audit of lifelong learning activities across Newcastle. The activities may be run through a school, community organisation, library, workplace, or professional organisation.

"Lifelong learning involves people from all walks and stages in life," Megan said. "It can occur in almost any setting, from knitting groups to Scouts and Girl Guides."

The university would like to hear from anyone with details of a lifelong learning activity. For further information on the Lifelong Learning Project, contact Megan Lugg on ext 6396.
Owner attitude determines business growth

Researchers and policymakers have overlooked a key element in the development and growth of small businesses in Australia – the control attitudes of owners – according to Professor Scott Holmes.

About one in three people start a small firm to be independent, with studies in Australia, Britain, New Zealand, Norway and the US consistently concluding that the primary reason for business ownership is so the owners can have more independent control over their lives, he said.

While small business is the “lifeblood” of the capitalist system, providing a “seedbed for new ideas and innovation”, it is the most undefined and misunderstood sector in our economy – rife with misconceptions that have been largely fostered by research.

Delivering his inaugural address as Professor of Accounting last month, Scott said that the lack of an insightful research base had inhibited the ability of Australian governments to make effective policy directed towards small firms.

“The key aspect of individual and isolated management decision-making has been largely ignored when collecting and interpreting data,” he said. “The control preferences of small firm owners override decision-making processes and influence every aspect of business management.”

“This concept of control is a recurrent theme, within the debate concerning the definition of small firms, within the motivations for ownership and therefore it is not surprising that the need for control will influence the structure and activities of these firms,” he said.

Scott conducted 30 case studies with small firms operating in Brisbane as part of a research project for the Queensland government. Fifteen of the firms were identified as growth firms, having experienced growth in the past three years and having articulated plans for future expansion. These were matched with 15 non-growth firms that had not recently experienced growth and that had no plans to grow.

“The process of conducting the interviews was valuable in itself, as we quickly discovered how inaccurate responses to mail surveys could be,” Scott said.

“Firstly, the common academic terminology we adopted was confusing to owners and often required detailed explanation and discussion. Secondly, the owners often misconstrued the questions or provided answers based on their perception of our purpose in collecting the information.”

The research revealed three categories of business:

Non-Growth – focus on retaining control, avoid contracts (including employment) and will only seek information and support that keeps the business operational within these constraints.

Growth Capped – growth is sought but will be financed by additional equity inputs of the existing owners or bank debt, with additional new equity not an option.

Growth – have growth plans and fund growth with debt and owner’s equity.

Scott also exposed a number of common misconceptions about small businesses, including that they have a high failure rate. The real rate is in the range of three to three and a half percent per annum, nowhere near the 30-40 percent often reported in the press, he said. Banks did not charge small firms more interest for loans and the cost of regulation was offset by the fact that many businesses simply failed to comply. Small business owners were keen to learn but want highly focused training and information on topics directly relevant to their business.

“As one researcher put it, ‘If you are training a fish and chip shop owner, every second word should be ‘fish’ and every fourth ‘chips’,’” he said.

Scott, Head of the university’s Graduate School, has been interested in the small business sector since the third year of his Bachelor of Commerce studies in Newcastle. In introducing his inaugural lecture, local MP and shadow Minister for Small Business, Joel Fitzgibbon, said Scott had moved to the Queensland University of Technology in 1990 to take up a chair in accounting at the age of 28, making him one of the youngest people to be appointed as professor in Australia. He is the author of five books, has been awarded 16 research grants, has held visiting positions at three Australian and three American universities, consulted for Coopers and Lybrand, was a Director of KPMG, and has made numerous contributions to government policy.

“Scott has never been accused of being orthodox, predictable, conformist or boring,” Joel said.

“He is very passionate about education and the University of Newcastle, which gave him his first chance in life. He has had an impressive career so far and there is more to come.”

Scott concluded his lecture (held at University House on November 16) with a number of recommendations including a call for a national coordinated study of small firms and for new researchers to adopt a behavioural rather than financial perspective in their methods and analysis.

“Financial outcomes, firm value and management processes are all functions of human behaviour and this should be where we start in any attempt to understand the small firm sector.”
David Alexander, the university’s Energy and Mechanical Engineer, hates waste and his aversion is saving the university hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in energy costs.

Since joining Physical Planning and Estates division in September 1997, David has contributed to energy and cost savings in the order of $300,000 a year to the university, which spends more than $2 million per annum on electricity, gas and water supplies.

"I don’t like to see things wasted," David, who graduated from the university with a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (Honours) in 1994, said. "I’m always the one nagging my wife and daughter to turn off the lights at home.

“You wouldn’t walk out of a room and leave a tap running, but people regularly walk out and leave the lights on. And it isn’t just money that is being wasted, it is contributing to the greenhouse effect.”

David took his message to staff at an Energy Awareness Seminar, held in the GP Building in November. He told staff about the work being done to reduce the university’s power bills, including a 40 percent reduction in electricity costs gained by negotiating with suppliers.

The university carried out an energy audit of part of the Callaghan campus in 1995, with financial assistance from the federal government. With Australia committed to a national target (established as part of the Kyoto Protocol) of an eight percent increase in consumption above 1990 levels to be achieved by 2010, the government needs to effectively achieve a two percent reduction in greenhouse gas emission each year. The university’s consumption has increased by 50 percent since 1992.

The audit report recommended a two-pronged strategy for reducing energy costs, involving reduction of tariffs and reduction of usage. When David came on board, he organised a second audit, this time for the whole campus, and the subsequent report has formed the basis for a five-year energy reduction strategy.

"Part of my role is to negotiate with our energy suppliers to achieve savings," he said. "We have already cut costs by reconfiguring how we receive some supplies. For instance, we reduced the number of water mains from four to two and that saved us $30,000 a year. And we moved to a gas contract rather than a tariff structure and saved another $38,000. Since I have come here, we have spent around $500,000 and saved $500,000, including $300,000 in ongoing savings per annum."

PPE also won an inaugural Green Globe Award for their energy saving initiatives, as part of the Energy Smart Business Program of the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA).

SEDA has begun issuing energy ratings to buildings in the same way they are used on appliances. The new nursing building, which was passively designed using natural cooling and lighting, has a five-star rating. It uses just 70kW hours per square metre while the Chancellery building uses 190kWhm2.

David says that while the university has around 12,000 pieces of computer equipment using 1200 kWs of electricity a day, it is air conditioners that are the major power users.

Refurbishing air conditioning systems has led to substantial energy efficiencies, with the Auchmar Library upgrade alone yielding $30,000 a year in savings. The refurbishment of the University House air conditioning system reduced the energy costs for the building from $11,000 a month to $4,000. As well as reconfiguring old and inefficient air conditioning systems, where it is cost-effective, David plans to implement a campus-wide energy monitoring system at Callaghan to measure improvements and losses.

“We’re fortunate in Newcastle to have a good environment. There are only about six months of the year when you might be too cold or too hot," he said. “People expect workplaces to be a constant temperature. If they are at home on the weekends, they adjust to changing temperatures by putting on a jumper or opening a window. We need to educate people to be aware of energy consumption.”

The university plans to invest $2.4 million over a five-year period to achieve around $2.8 million in energy savings. But as David points out, consumption is in the hands of the user.

“I can’t go around turning people’s lights off,” he said. “But if they do the right thing and turn off unused equipment, they are saving dollars for the university that can be put back into research and employing people.”

David’s power tip:

Conventional screens don't save power. Depending on the age of your computer, you should be able to set it to go into a waiting state that deters the monitor (which uses about 85 of the 125 W your computer requires) when you aren’t using it. To activate power saving features on your PC, click on your right mouse button on the Windows start-up screen and choose Properties. In this dialogue box, if you have an energy saving feature section, click on Settings to select an option to put your monitor or standby after a specified interval of non-use. If you select the Advanced tab in this dialogue box, you can elect to have a power metre included in your task bar that either puts your monitor on standby or shuts it down when you clicked.
Centre working to define Asia Pacific role

CAPSTRANS (Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies), an ARC-funded Key Centre of Teaching and Research designed to examine developments in the Asia Pacific Region and their impact on Australia, is set to become an important national resource.

A joint initiative of the University of Newcastle and the University of Wollongong, the centre aims to examine how globalisation and regional integration are affecting local communities and national societies in order to increase our understanding of the complex processes of social and cultural change, which are shaping the region in which we live.

According to Deputy Director, Associate Professor Charles Stahl, the centre represents a turning point in our approach to dealing with our Asian neighbours.

"A lot of our early contacts with our Asian neighbours were economically-based and what's been lacking in Australia is a deeper understanding of the processes of social change in all its dimensions - political and cultural - and the impact of issues such as the emergence of civil society, the new face of nationalism and other factors," he explained.

The Asian financial and economic crisis of 1997-98, and in particular the recent events in Indonesia, East Timor and Pakistan, have given Australia considerable cause for concern. Trade and investment links with the region are also affected by social unrest to the point where Australian business now has an abiding interest in social stability and stable governance.

CAPSTRANS is working closely with scholars, policy-makers and non-government organisations within Australia and around the region and providing information, analysis and policy advice to a range of regional government agencies.

As well, it plays an important role in research networks linked to international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation, UNESCO, APEC, PECC, the World Trade Organisation, International Organisation for Migration, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

CAPSTRANS will also aim to inform public debates on crucial issues through seminars, publications and information for the media. To this end, the centre runs four research programs - Migration and Multicultural Societies; Labour Relations, Regulation and Organisation; Human Resource Development; and Managing the Production and Diffusion of Knowledge. As well, it has designed a teaching program for both Australian and international students with research and professional interests in social change and development in Asia Pacific countries.

The Master of Social Change and Development, the Graduate Certificate of Social Change and Development and a Masters or PhD by research are available on a full-time or part-time basis and are undertaken via a flexible delivery mode through both universities. Courses will also be taught at partner universities in Asian and Pacific countries from 2001.

"Our unique teaching program will ensure that Australian business and government can draw on a pool of graduates with expert knowledge on social change issues in the Asia Pacific region," Professor Stahl said.

Farewell to international students

Around 130 students from over 40 countries in Asia, Scandinavia and America were farewelled from the university in a special ceremony in November.

The event was for international students who have completed their study but may not be able to return to Australia for their official graduation ceremony. It included students studying a full degree, as well as Exchange and Study Abroad students who study at the university for six months to one year.

Student representatives Erik Friberg (Sweden) and Arvin Yana (Philippines) spoke about their experiences in Newcastle and Convocation representative, Frances Kay welcomed the students to the graduate association. Arvin is pictured receiving his award from Professor Scott Holmes. The ceremony was held in the Great Hall on Thursday, November 18.
The Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah recently celebrated the opening of Gibalee, the newly established Aboriginal Learning and Development Centre. It was a time for coming together, or in the meaning of the name of the centre itself, to 'come along'.

The centre has been established to provide learning and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve their goals in university degree programs, TAFE courses on campus and in other centres around Australia. Gibalee hopes to provide the level of support that the Indigenous way to identify with family and culture,“ he said, adding a greeting in the local Aboriginal language.

“Gibalee is about commitment and cultivating community. It is important to ask what the centre can do and what we can do for the centre. It is also very important to cultivate culture in education. “I unveil the plaque not as a Senator but for the Darkinjah people,” he said.

Professor Les Eastcott told guests that 43 students enrolled in TAFE courses on campus and 14 in university degree programs, were from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. “I am delighted to see the centre up and running and happy to pay recognition to the Aboriginal community. I also most heartily endorse Gibalee’s goal to be the Australian benchmark,” Professor Eastcott said.

Adding their support were the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Brian English, the Shadow Minister for Education, the Hon Michael Lee and Ms Jan Waugh representing the Hunter Institute of Technology.

A painting by local Aboriginal artist, Kevin (Gabbye) Duncan was presented to Gibalee by the Central Coast Campus. The painting depicts local Aboriginal totems and incorporates the traditional name of the area, ie. Durin meaning, “learning belt” and Ruh meaning, “place of”. It also portrays Aboriginal cultural tradition and values as well as the meaning of Gibalee – ‘come along’.

Fred Maher (left) and Senator Aden Ridgeway with a painting presented to Gibalee by the Central Coast Campus.

“We are at the crossroads of Australian political and social development,” Senator Ridgeway said. “I have the experience of being both Indigenous and Australian, so I recognise how important the goals of this centre are,” he said. “It is not the Indigenous way to identify with success and achievements, rather with family and culture,” he said, adding a greeting in the local Aboriginal language.

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Fred Maher (left) and Senator Aden Ridgeway with a painting presented to Gibalee by the Central Coast Campus.
Evidence-based medical practice research

An investigation into the ways in which doctors prescribe medications could have far-reaching consequences for the future of patient care in Australia. Dr David Henry and his team from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are examining determinants of variation in prescribing as part of a research project funded by the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) and the General Practice Evaluation Program (GPEP).

The project was proposed in response to a desire in the community, and in the medical profession, to improve the quality of prescribing, to reduce adverse effects of drugs and achieve cost-effective use of potent modern medicinal drugs.

"We're looking at the variations in prescribing between old and young doctors, city and country doctors and the impact of factors such as which medical school they attended, with the overall intention of making improvements to the current situation," Dr Henry explained.

Their findings will then inform the preparation of the National Prescribing Curriculum, which will be introduced to each medical school program around the country from 2000 onwards.

Dr Henry and his colleagues are involved in a number of other collaborative research projects including the development of indicators of good prescribing, and the high-profile national Integrated Care Program, which involves trialling computerised guidelines for the management of chronic diseases.

At present the computerised decision support is being evaluated in the treatment of a limited number of conditions - congestive heart failure, depression and asthma.

"Doctors have been quite slow to exploit the decision support which computers can offer when it comes to managing complex diseases and keeping up-to-date with newly available drug and treatment options," he explained.

Another project underway is the NHMRC-funded national guidelines program in which Dr Henry and his team are assisting in the incorporation of best evidence during the development of clinical practice guidelines.

"Evidence-based medicine is a growing phenomenon that involves moving from opinion to acting on the best formally-assessed evidence which is synthesised, and then applied," Dr Henry explained.

Arts and Social Science shines in graduate survey

The Faculty of Arts and Social Science has outperformed similar faculties around Australia in the latest course experience survey conducted by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia across graduating students.

The faculty has one of the four highest national ratings for overall student course satisfaction, equalled only by similar faculties in the Universities of Tasmania, Western Australia and La Trobe.

Its teaching performance is streets ahead of other arts and social science faculties in Australian regional universities. In this vital respect, the faculty is also far ahead of those in other high-profile universities, including Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide and Monash.

The satisfaction of Newcastle's history graduates, for example, is in the top four of Australian universities, with La Trobe, Wollongong, and New England. In the teaching of European Languages (French and German) Newcastle rated second, with only New England ahead.

The teaching of linguistics is rated third, behind the Australian National University and New England.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Professor John Ramsland, said Newcastle achieved so well in national comparison because of the dedication and expertise of its staff.

"Good teaching is based on dedicated research," John said. "Our research effort is outstanding and good research makes for effective, vital and inspired teaching."
Student curator

A third year fine arts student recently curated an exhibition at the Newcastle Region Art Gallery under a Directed Study program.

Patience Yu, an overseas student from Hong Kong, was given the opportunity to research and curate an exhibition of screen prints by John Coburn while working at the gallery as part of a unit of work in her course.

A photography major, Patience had no gallery experience before she spent second semester at the Newcastle gallery. She chose the seven screen prints, which were designed by John Coburn and printed by his wife Barbara, from the gallery's collection.

Based on a series of tapestries with the same title, Seven Days of Creation, the screen prints were made from hand cut stencils onto fine Arches paper with up to 12 colours on each print.

"I didn't know the artist's work until I saw it in the collection," Patience said. "They are about God creating the Earth and its people in seven days and although I'm not a Christian, I found them very meaningful. I think they are very special."

Third year fine arts student, Jasmine Cleaver, has demystified the environment of the hospital operating theatre in a dramatic series of photographs taken during a stint as Artist in Residence at the John Hunter Hospital.

Jasmine, a photography major, approached the hospital earlier this year with the idea of producing a body of work that captures the atmosphere of operating theatres. "I was attempting to expose what is behind the closed doors of surgical procedures and to promote the human side of surgery," she said.

The resulting 22 sets of photographs were taken as part of Jasmine's course elective. Each set includes an image with intimate lighting and a focus on staff, and one that reveals the intricacies of the theatre environment.

Jasmine's works were created as part of a unique program being run by the John Hunter, Arts for Health, which began in April this year. They are being exhibited on Level Three, opposite the Operating Suite. Hers is one of three exhibitions currently being run at the hospital as part of the program, which is directed by the Arts for Health Research Centre.

Project coordinator, Pippa Robinson, said that Arts for Health is a very broad ranging program that wants to encourage a variety of artists to work in the hospital.

"We've been really successful in finding funding for each project," Pippa said. "Newcastle is a generous community and part of our aim with the project is to build links with that community. Hospital corridors can feel so sterile but if you hang a variety of artworks in those spaces, they become very lively and interesting."

Jasmine spent one day a week at the hospital from July to November this year.

She praised the Directed Study subject, which gave students the opportunity to get some hands-on experience in the art world.

"I enjoyed the course and I was very happy to get the chance to go and see how a gallery works," Patience said.

The John Coburn exhibition ran at the gallery from October 1 to November 28.

Art for health
Consumers are subject to the influence of design every day, often in very subtle forms, but don't realise it,” said Allan Morse, Head of the Department of Design.

"Web sites and product branding - the packaging and labels on goods - are the result of graphic design; the furniture we use or the interior of a car is the work of an industrial designer; the design of the environment we live and work in owes much to an architect. This exhibition is a chance to show just how design adds value to a product.”

Students of the Faculty have completed a number of externally sourced projects throughout the year, which are complimentary to work created in the professional arena.

“We have created large graphically striking murals for the 50th anniversary of the Greta Migrant Camp, websites, publicity material for conferences, from an applied research scholarship, product branding for the Hunter Grove Olive Co-operative and a new image for the Hunter School of Performing Arts,” said Allan.

This year is the first time an end of year exhibition for the faculty has been held at Newcastle Regional Museum. Newcastle Lord Mayor John Tate opened the exhibition on Friday, November 5.
Twelve steps to global competitiveness

Top industry thinkers from 16 countries met national business leaders at the university in November, to seek answers to the question of what holds so much of Australian business and industry back from being globally competitive.

The occasion was the second international Managing Enterprises conference, hosted by the School of Management from November 17-20.

A special Business and Industry Day held on Friday, November 19, saw a debate on whether global competitiveness is primarily a question of technology, products, processes and planning – or whether it is chiefly about intangibles like leadership and creativity. Participants teased out 12 steps that companies need to become globally competitive.

One of the great lateral thinkers of Australian business, Lend Lease Chairman Stuart Hornery, spoke about why his company had no choice but to go global. He looked at why the lessons are transferable to all business, and why Lend Lease’s attitude to staff – which goes beyond the lip service of caring – is appropriate for every enterprise.

Hornery and other business leaders were joined in a freewheeling panel session by three leading international experts: Professor Mark Fox, Director of the Enterprise Integration Laboratory, University of Toronto, Canada and a world authority on e-commerce and business process re-engineering; Professor Jim Browne, Director of the Computer Integrated Manufacturing Research Unit, University College, Galway, Ireland, a specialist in the application of information technology and systems in manufacturing; and Professor Peter O’Grady, Director of the Electronic Commerce Laboratory, University of Iowa, an innovator in the design and manufacture of modular products and author of the recent book The Age of Modularity.

Head of the School of Management, Professor Janet Aisbett said the conference confronted the real issues that companies need to address to survive. “The discussions and workshops were quite high level and conducted by experts in their field,” she said. “Those who attended found the same issues being faced by all countries, but some countries are doing better at addressing them, and there were some inspirational (and practical) ‘how to’s’ for small and large firms presented at the conference.”

A lunchtime session on the key Business and Industry Day investigated what Australian business will be like fifteen years from now – whether it will call itself the first global nation, or sound the retreat.

These were two of the four scenarios investigated in the Australian Business Foundation’s “Alternative Futures – Scenarios of Business In Australia to the Year 2015”, launched at the conference.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Business Foundation, Narelle Kennedy, delivered the report on November 19 at Newcastle City Hall.

“It is the end result of a twelve-month scenario-building project commissioned by the Australian Business Foundation, with the help of the international network of futurists and management specialists, GRN Australia,” Ms Kennedy said.

The report looks at four possible futures that business in Australia could face: First Global Nation; Sound the Retreat; Brave Old World; Green is Gold.

The conference also examined the importance of call centres to regional areas such as the Hunter. Recent figures from the Hunter Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) indicate call centres are rapidly relocating to the region, covering a range of industries such as telecommunications, insurance, wine distribution and energy supply. The workshop held on November 17, addressed the wave of change generated by call centres, and different approaches to improving people and technology management of the centres.

“HEDC research shows the flexible workforce and lower labour costs available in the Hunter are a major attraction to call centre operators,” said workshop convenor, Dr Jacqueline Flint. “This region has many commercial sites available at competitive prices, and the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to support these centres.”

The workshop reflected a move away from a technological focus on call centres, to one that recognised their strategic role in business, and the importance of properly managing the people who operate them.
Spotlight on the Deans

Professor Terry Lovat
Faculty of Education

Background
I started to think about teaching while being taught by the De La Salle brothers in the southwestern suburbs of Sydney. They were wonderful teachers and very dedicated to their craft and when I left school, I trained for the ministry. I worked with an international missionary order, the Passionists. I began teaching theology and upgraded my qualifications to Masters level at the Melbourne College of Divinity, then became a lecturer at what is now the Australian Catholic University.

When I left the order, I worked as a head teacher at Monte Sant' Angelo College in Sydney before taking up a position as a lecturer at Newcastle. I came here for two years and have stayed for 15.

Challenges
Teaching is a very industrialised, politicised sector with strict ideas of what's required and it isn't always easy to harmonise that with the more liberal environment that exists in a university. Universities like to have the autonomy to construct courses that they think will do the job and so it can be difficult making a fit between this and requirements expected by an external government body. More than ever, we have to demonstrate to students not only their knowledge, can work in under-resourced times is still a challenge.

Our entrepreneurial activities are strong. The faculty has reached out to professional partners including in some unexpected settings, as seen in the BHP program. Our retraining programs have been successful in terms of the development of our undergraduate courses. I became Dean as we started restructuring and the new courses have proved to be popular in terms of student numbers. Trying to keep up the quality of courses in under-resourced times is still a challenge.

The faculty also has a very good research output that belies our size. We have the second highest number of publications per staff member in the university. Education has managed to attract and maintain some national and international research staff and our PhD candidates are now being attracted from all over the nation and the world. Another strength has been our involvement in the Managing for Performance program that is encouraging a client/customer service focus amongst our general staff.

Work
I feel as though I've spent much of my working life trying to avoid administrative work but it seems to chase you a bit. At the end of the day, however, it is a way that you can have some impact. If you can see a better way of doing things and want to pursue your ideas, you need to accept some responsibility. The best parts of academic life are teaching and research and I hope to get back to them one day. I am on the board of the NSWr Teacher Education Council and am Secretary (sometimes acting President) of the Australian Council of Deans of Education. I also have international links with the Deans of Asia and the National Council of American Teacher Education.

Leisure
My family is a huge priority. I like to be home for tea and to put the kids to bed. My 10-year-old daughter, Amy, has been selected as a Junior Associate of the Australian Ballet, so we regularly travel to Melbourne. I enjoy ballet and we go a lot. I enjoy cooking because it's really relaxing, reading and watching movies. I like being with the kids and watching them grow up.

The Future
I've just been reappointed for another four years as Dean. There is a lot happening in the teaching profession and in teacher education in Australia and around the world. We are coming into the most severe shortage of teachers ever.

A national report on teacher education came down in 1998 and is yet to be implemented. If it is, it will have a huge impact on many aspects of teacher education. There is also a state government review underway and the federal government seems keen to withdraw from frontline responsibility for teacher education. I feel as though my job isn't finished.
Monitoring power to save

A device which monitors how much your electricity is costing you, and a robotic arm which can play draughts against a human opponent, are two of the final year projects that were on display at the Faculty of Engineering Open Day held last month.

All students undertaking bachelor degree programs in electrical and computer engineering demonstrated their final year projects over two sessions, on Tuesday 9 November, and Thursday 11 November.

Computer engineering student David Cowan (above) designed and built the Domestic Digital Power Monitor, to enable electricity consumers to accurately monitor their power usage.

“...The electricity market in New South Wales is moving towards deregulation, giving all consumers a choice of power supplier,” explained David. “But each supplier will have different pricing schemes. The Domestic Digital Power Monitor will enable customers to monitor their usage and demand for electricity, therefore choosing the most cost effective plan for their needs.”

The monitor can determine the load and cost of any electrical appliance plugged into the home according to David. Dr Ian Webster coordinated this year’s open day and says the event provides valuable insight into engineering.

“Industry representatives can identify potential employees, and the public has a chance to see just how engineering affects us in every day life,” Ian said.

Dealing with redundancy

A renowned clinical psychologist in the Hunter says the effects of redundancy on women and the wider family unit are often underestimated.

Deputy Chancellor and Director of the Hunter Institute of Mental Health, Professor Trevor Waring, last month addressed a workshop on how redundancy affects families.

The workshop was organised by the Women’s Forum of the Newcastle Hunter Business Chamber, and focused on women who are feeling the impact of downsizing in the local economy.

“When the male partner of the relationship is the principal income provider and loses his job, there is a massive shift in the relationship arrangement,” said Professor Waring. “The man will try to find a new role and can often interfere with established routines. The family system works because there are balances. If you change one major aspect of this system, you force a rethink of the way the system operates,” Professor Waring concluded.

The workshop looked at help provided by the church, psychologists, financial planners, employment placement agencies, government assistance and educational institutions for retraining.

Open Foundation student Jan Will from Bolwarra outlined her redundancy experience, and how returning to study for an alternative career has improved her life.

Redundancy is not an end, but a beginning, Professor Waring said. It is a chance to do the things you may not have had time to do in the past, and to look at how you can return to maximise the time you have left in the workforce.

“Every relationship and family unit needs independence and space. Dealing with redundancy is about control, challenge and commitment, to ensure everyone maintains their sense of worth and independence,” Professor Waring concluded.

The “Life After Redundancy” workshop was held at Newcastle Workers Club on Wednesday, November 17.

Media graduates winners

Six graduates from the university’s communications degree have won awards at the 33rd Annual Prodi Awards in November.

The Prodis are northern NSW media awards supported by the Prodi Trust, which is made up of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) and regional employers, and coordinated by the convenors of the national media awards, the Walkley Awards. They are open to all MEAA members in the northern NSW region, which stretches from Gosford to the Queensland border.

Head of the Department of Communication and Media Arts, Lynette Sheridan-Burns, said the performance of Newcastle graduates at the awards was outstanding. “Six of our graduates were winners in 10 categories. It was particularly rewarding to see their excellence rewarded across the genres,” she said.

The winners were:

Jane Worthington (Newcastle Herald), graduated 1992
1999 Journalist of the Year
Best Print Feature Article
Best Sports Feature
Best Feature Series
Donna Page (Newcastle Herald), graduated 1996
Best Print News Story
Philip Ashley-Brown (ABC), graduated 1991
Best Radio Feature
Andrew Lobb (NBN), graduated 1995
Best TV Feature
Renee Valentine (Maitland Mercury), graduated 1998
Highly Commended – PF Adams Memorial Cadet Prize
Chad Watson (Newcastle Herald), graduated 1992, part-time teacher at Newcastle
Best Three Headings
Best Feature Layout
Best Sub-editing
Women and work: new directions

Research has shown that a continuing pattern of disadvantage characterises women's employment in Australian universities.

About fifty staff members attended a workshop focusing on this issue at the university in November. Entitled Women and Work: Reflections and New Directions, the workshop was inspired by the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee Action Plan for Women. The workshop explored the role of women in universities and what has been achieved in the nineties, focusing on the University of Newcastle within the context of the higher education sector as a whole.

The keynote speakers were Professor Eleanor Ramsay, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Equity and Development at the University of South Australia and Professor Eileen Doyle, Chairman of the Hunter Valley Research Foundation and conjoint professor with the Faculty of Economics and Commerce.

Professor Ramsay drew attention to findings from several recent studies that were brought together in a paper, by Professor Margaret Gardner, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Business, Equity) Griffith University. The paper concluded that:

- there is a need for further investigation of the classification structures for general staff;
- there is evidence that qualifications of women and male academics and general research and publication productivity form an important part of the difference in employment outcomes;
- the assumed standard for academic career success highly values years of uninterrupted research experience, which is difficult to achieve for many women academics because it does not take account of the current general distribution of responsibilities within families.

A panel explored the issues of equity, diversity and workplace culture. One of the guest panelists was Di Fruin, Assistant Director of the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment, who drew attention to the insidious forms of discrimination and harassment that can occur when morale is low or when equity issues are not a priority on the national agenda.

Small group workshops spent the afternoon developing strategies for improvement in areas including work and family, management and organisational change, overcoming barriers and maximising opportunities, and research and postgraduate studies.

Outcomes from the day will be taken to the Senior Management Group along with the AVCC Action Plan for Women. It is hoped this type of workshop will become an annual event. Outgoing Manager of the Equity and Diversity Unit, Vincia Martin said, "While there has been real progress over the last few years in some areas with increases in the number of senior academic women, and more women moving into the middle HEW classifications, there are still significant barriers to women's career progression."

Director of Affirmative Action, Dr Marj Kibby said, "One of the important outcomes of the day was the highlighting of issues, processes and strategies relating to women and work. What is critical now is that these be kept on the agenda, and that we continue to consider women's participation in the workplace as a critical issue in planning and decision making at the university."

Raw power in motion

The Forum has introduced a new way to burn calories and tone up with RPM (Raw Power in Motion) indoor cycling classes.

RPM is a non-impact workout for men and women at all levels of fitness. Professional coaches lead the group classes to upbeat music.

Fitness coordinator Samantha Martin says the Forum is one of only a few sports centres around Australia to have introduced RPM. "The outlay on the equipment is fairly substantial, which turns off the smaller clubs," Sam said. "The Forum has 30 bikes with classes running for around 45 minutes."

Indoor cycling provides an athletic cardiovascular workout. The bikes are adjusted to suit the rider before the class begins. Classes are held in the RPM studio next to the gym with sessions most days of the week. For details, contact the Forum on ext 7001.
Mayor calls for closer links

The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Cr John Tate, called for closer links between the university and the city when he spoke in a meeting at the Purdue Room last month.

Cr Tate, speaking at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM), said the city and the university can benefit from each other. He suggested a week of events some time in the first half of next year to bring together the city, university, TAFE and Department of School Education. The idea was supported by Professor Jenny Graham, Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations), who welcomed Cr Tate and Lady Mayoress, Cathy Tate, to the university.

ATEM is the only professional association for administrators and managers working in tertiary education in Australasia and is dedicated to advancing professional practice. The Association’s activities include professional development courses, annual state and national conferences, an active website (http://www.atem.org.au/) and email lists where members from Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific islands, Papua New Guinea and Asia can discuss matters of mutual interest.

The university’s ATEM group holds bimonthly lunchtime seminars. For information contact David Donnelly, donnell@pamcelsus.newcastle.edu.au or ext 5561.

Quality teaching recognised on national stage

Two university teaching programs have been recognised at a national level, taking out awards in this year’s Australian Awards for University Teaching.

A joint initiative by the university, BHP’s Rod, Bar and Wire Products Division, and the NSW Department of Education and Training in which former steelworkers are retraining as Technological and Applied Studies teachers has received a $50,000 institutional award. The award is for innovative and practical approaches to the provision of educational services to the local and/or regional community.

Teacher Anthony Williams has won a $40,000 individual teaching award in the Physical Sciences and Related Studies Staff category. Only eight awards were given in this category from a field of 34 nominations.

Vice-Chancellor, Roger Holmes, welcomed the formal recognition of the university’s efforts to provide quality relevant education, and congratulated the winners.

“The awards are a strong endorsement of the university’s programs for increasing the teaching profile and expertise of staff,” he said.

The awards, announced last month by Federal Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs Dr David Kemp, recognise the work of university teachers who are deemed by their peers and students to have made an outstanding contribution to student learning.

Speaking out

Staff from the Finance Division recently completed an eight-week public speaking course conducted by the Port Hunter Toastmasters Club.

The Speechcraft course, held on Friday afternoons in the Chancellery, included impromptu speaking skills, listening skills, how to use visual aids, how to introduce a speaker, the art of evaluation, how to verbalise thoughts and how to construct a speech. Staff agreed the course would help them at seminars, meetings and in personal interaction with management and colleagues.

Gone were the sweating palms and shaking legs, as participants delivered their ‘graduation’ speeches with poise and confidence. Pictured are some of the graduates with their section managers at a ceremony held in the Purdue Room on September 3.
Throughout 1999 the Communications Services Group of the IT Infrastructure Program have been running a large project to establish data communications to previously unconnected buildings on the Eastern side of the Callaghan campus.

This project is now complete and has provided the supply of data communications to buildings which, until now, have had either no access to the campus network, or limited access via modem links. The buildings we now have online are Ceramics, Special Education, Art, Visual Arts and the Hunter Gymnasium, which is soon to be converted into office space.

Some of the network services which most of us take for granted can now be accessed from within these buildings. This includes the use of email, the internet and the ability to use online systems such as Finance I and Promaster.

Data Cabling Solutions were the successful tenderer for the project and they carried out the majority of the installation. This included the installation of underground cable pits and conduit as well as fibre optic cable installation, termination and testing. For the installation of the underground conduits, it was decided to "underground bore" the majority of the project so as to have minimal impact on the environment and the university community. An underground drilling machine was used to create a pathway for our new conduits to be installed. This eliminated the need to excavate or dig trenches using large machinery and therefore was a better solution for the environment. This method also proved to be cost-effective.

Many people worked hard towards the delivery of this project and although IESD managed the project, a successful outcome could not have been achieved without the help and cooperation of other units: Physical Planning and Estates, the Central Store and Finance. This project had been long awaited by the various departments and faculties it concerns. It was decided that IESD should undertake this project this year and the project was carried out and completed within the estimated budget and timeframe.

Andrew Pollack (centre) supervising the installation of underground conduits for the network extension.

Music Librarian Award

Music Faculty Librarian Gary Jones has recently been awarded an ALIA Merit Award during a ceremony at Parliament House in Sydney. The award acknowledges commitment and considerable contribution to the profession. Recipients are selected by their peers.

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is Australia's leading organisation for library and information specialists. Gary has long been involved with the Hunter Region branch of ALIA, acting at one time or another as President, Secretary, Editor and Treasurer. He has also been involved in organizing or assisting with regional, state, national and international conferences and seminars on behalf of ALIA.

Uni Tunes win again!

A university team once again won the annual Race for Research in October. The women's corporate team, Uni Tunes, won the challenging five kilometre race, which winds its way around a circuit from the Newcastle foreshore to King Edward Park, for the second consecutive year.

The university fielded three teams in this year's event, which is held annually to raise money to fight breast cancer. The men's team took out second place in a hotly contested race and a mixed corporate team acquitted themselves well.

Pictured are members of the university teams at the foreshore park.
For sale

By tender

The following item is available for sale by tender:

Printer, HP Laserjet 4M Plus. For further information please contact Lorraine Alley ext 5202. The goods are sold in “as is” condition and the university reserves the right to reject any or all tenders.

Tenders close on Wednesday, 22nd December, 1999 at 3:30pm and should be forwarded to the Finance Officer - Assets, Financial Accounting, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan 2308.

Please mark clearly on the envelope “TENDER 0399”.

Bollinger TrimmRider, as new, $60 (would make a great Christmas present). Tel Anne on ext 6444 or (ah) 4975 2139

Housesitter available

Visiting Canadian academic available to housesit from January to May 2000. Contact via email: caoeter@interchange.ubc.ca

Staff GST Seminars

During October and November 1999, Brian Penfold (Executive Director, Finance & Property) and Christina Murdoch (Director, Financial Services) conducted a number of staff GST overview seminars. An audio tape of a recent seminar will be available for loan in December and January. The tape may be borrowed from the Audiolibrary Section of the Achnacarry Library.

Altered staff parking areas

From 4/1/2000 staff parking spaces will be altered in the areas adjacent to Event House. The southern end of the car park will all be designated as Student Resident parking (opposite Special Education). The eastern half of the North Bay will be designated as Student Resident parking (the row closest to the residences). The front row facing the Hunter Building will remain staff parking.

The General Parking area adjacent to the tennis courts will be redesignated as Staff Parking. There will be no reduction in the amount of staff parking available in the vicinity of the Hunter Building.

These changes are required to provide for growth in the number of students who reside on campus.

Sandra Jones
Sr Facilities Officer (Space Management)
Physical Planning and Estates

PhD Scholarship

Chemistry Department, Otago University, New Zealand.

Transition metal compounds as potential nano switches and memory devices: a scholarship is available to a high quality BSc Honours or MSc graduate (or equivalent) in chemistry. Knowledge and interest in transition metal chemistry would be an asset. Tenure of the scholarship is three years starting in 2000. Those interested in joining “Brookers Bunch” should contact Dr Sally Brooker, Chemistry Department, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand, email: sbrooker@alkali.otago.ac.nz, phone (64 3) 479 5378, fax (64 3) 479 7906, http://neon.otago.ac.nz:801/Chemistry/research/SAB/SAB-RES.HTM

Australian Technology Awards

Nominations are sought for eleven categories in the Year 2000 Australian Technology Awards. For information visit the awards website at www.austechawards.com.au

Ezyfind.com innovorR 2000 Development Grant

Nominations are sought for this inaugural national grant to encourage Australian innovators to develop their bright ideas. Entries close March 31. For information visit the website at www.ideinternational.com.au.

Year 2001 Churchill Fellowships

Applicants are sought for around 100 Churchill Fellowships to be awarded in 2000, for travel in 2001. Closing date: February 29. For information, visit the website at http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/churchill_fellowships.

Christmas cheer

The Hunter/Chancellery Staff Association (HSCA) held its annual Christmas Lunch on November 25 in the Hunter Cafeateria. The lunch was well attended with 140 members joining the fun. There were four major prizes and about 60 Christmas tree prizes.

The major prizewinners were:
1st - flight for two from Sydney to Cairns (kindly donated by Ansett Australia) and accommodation for two nights at the Righa Colonial Club Resort at Cairns (kindly donated by Traveland) - Ron Hunter.
2nd - $200 open travel voucher - Linda Tracey.
3rd - $100 gift voucher from David Jones - Jenny Williams.
4th - 10 free visits to the Forum (kindly donated by The Forum) - John Sanderson.

Representatives from Ansett and Traveland joined staff for the lunch and presented the major prizes. The HSCA has raised a fair amount of money this year for some very important causes: Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea (Cancer Council) $254.10, Red Nose Day (SIDS) $200.00, Jeans for Genes Day (Children’s Medical Research Institute) $241.50, Difficult Day (Cancer Research) $322.00 plus an additional $100 donated in memory of Martin Haggis and other staff and families who have been touched by cancer.

If you are interested in joining the HCSA or would like further information, or if you are a member and have a suggestion please contact either Troy Walker on ext 6467 or email troy.walker@newcastle.edu.au or Bridene McGregor on ext 5324 or bridene.mcgregor@newcastle.edu.au.

Call for hosts

Families who live near the university are called on to host international students for a short time at the start of 2000. A group of Korean students arriving in January will need to be hosted for approximately five weeks. If you can help call Helen Bryce, Coordinator of Homestay Pilot Program on ext 6617.

Junior Cricket Clinics

Junior cricketers aged 8 to 15 years are invited to attend a series of coaching clinics during summer school vacation to develop skills and promote favourable sporting attitudes. Callaghan campus, December 20-22, January 12-14 and 17-19. For details contact Dr Kerry Thompson (Physical Education) on 4952 7827.

University Basketball Club

The University Basketball Club is one of the most progressive junior clubs in Newcastle and its growth has contributed to some excellent results this year.

Much of this success is due to the support of the University Sports Union and The Forum. Other factors include the work of the Committee, supportive parents and guardians, outstanding facilities, trained coaches with specific credentials and the enthusiasm of the players.

The club will purchase new uniforms for 2000 that will reflect the university’s support. If you are interested in basketball as a sport for your child (aged 4 to 18 years), contact Kim Hartley (President) on 4943 2681 or Robyn Connell (Registrar) on 4943 5869.
Health, Safety and Development

February 1 to 4
Australia and New Zealand Industrial Relations Society Conference 2000 - Noah's on the Beach, Contact Julia Connell, School of Management, ext 5011

February 1 to 4
Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand - the University of Newcastle, contact John Burgess, Department of Economics, ext 5026, fax 6919

April 2000
National Drug and Alcohol Prevention Conference 2000, venue TBA, contact Jenny Knight 4924 6349

April 27 and 28
The History and Sociology of Eugenics Conference, the University of Newcastle, http://www.newcastle.edu.au/department/isoconf.htm

January 22 to 23, 2001
Asia Pacific Carnival - Odyssey of the Mind, the University of Newcastle, contact Elaine Street, 4963 3575

April 2001
3rd International Conference on Gas-Liquid-Solid Reaction on Engineering 2001, venue TBA, contact Prof G Jamieson, Department of Chemical Engineering, ext 6181

December 2001
4th Asia-Oceania Symposium on Fire Science Technology, the University of Newcastle, contact Dr Bogdan Dlugorski, ext 6920

July/August 2002
7th International Conference on the Structure of Surfaces, City Hall, contact Prof John O'Connor, Department of Physics, ext 5439, fax 6907

What is “ChemWatch”? In its research, teaching and support operations, the university makes use of a wide range of chemical substances. Many of these are classified as “hazardous” under the NSW Hazardous Substances Regulation (1996). Staff and students using these substances need to have ready access to information about their potential health and safety effects. This information is usually provided in the form of a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

There are several ways to get an MSDS for the substance(s) you use. Anyone who supplies you with a hazardous substance in NSW is obliged to provide health and safety information, so the first point of call should be the supplier. If you can’t identify the supplier, you might try other sources like the internet, although these may not provide information in the form that is required by the regulation. If you are using a number of substances, and want access from your desktop, then an MSDS database may be the best way to get the information you need.

ChemWatch is such a database and is available to staff and students. It contains health and safety information for a large number of pure substances, as well as commercial formulations or mixtures of pure substances. The database can be searched using formal names, as well as common and trade names. A variety of reports are available in languages other than English.

Users need to be familiar with the information in an MSDS before they start to handle a substance. Health and safety information must also be displayed on the containers holding hazardous substances. This is a requirement of suppliers, and of users who transfer substances from the original containers. To assist with providing the information required on the containers, ChemWatch also provides a facility for generating labels for use in laboratory and workshop situations.

ChemWatch also allows the user to create electronic inventories for work areas, which help meeting the requirements for maintaining a register of hazardous substances. This information can subsequently be used to produce manifests and determine placarding required by the Dangerous Goods Code.

ChemWatch is being released in two forms. The first is a Web-based package that provides the MSDS and labeling functions discussed earlier. While there have been a few teething problems experienced with the software, a URL that is accessible from all machines should be available very soon. Meanwhile, a demonstration site is available at www.chemwatch.net/chemweb.

The second form is a CD-ROM-based version, updated every quarter, which is available through the Huxley and Auchmuty libraries. The database is loaded on other machines (PCs) around campus. In order to make updating the software as simple as possible, it has also been loaded onto a server on the university network, which, with an appropriate client, would be accessible to both PCs and Macs. It is envisaged that eventually this server will carry all of the local (ie department-based) and the amalgamated university registers of hazardous substances.

ChemWatch is a tool that can help you manage the risks associated with handling chemicals. Although the majority of users will be drawn from our laboratory-based research and teaching, there will be other important operations, such as maintenance, where health and safety information about substances is required. For further information about access to, or using ChemWatch, or about the requirements of the Hazardous Substances Regulation, contact Health, Safety and Development on ext 6846 (email: gbyrant@mail.newcastle.edu.au)

Next Month: Clearing the air - our non-smoking policy.

Large internal envelopes wanted
Please help us to recycle by donating your large internal envelopes for Uninews mail-out. Envelopes should be mailed or dropped in to Rose Roohan at Marketing and Media Services in the Chancellery building.
The university has placed fourth in the State in terms of UAC first preferences. As at October 30, Newcastle had received a total of 7,461 first preferences, representing 11.8 percent of the total pool in the UAC system. The figures represent a 0.31 percent increase in first preferences on last year's performance, with overall preferences increasing by 2.56 percent.

Eighteen students from the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences and Nursing are currently on an exchange in Chile. The exchange program is funded by APEC under the University Mobility in the Asia Pacific (UMAP) scheme. The students will spend at least 12 weeks working in a variety of health care settings in Chile, with community health and Indigenous health forming important components of their visit.

Christmas in Australia is an important season because it occurs at the height of the holidays, right at the beginning of the summer months when families are together, Hilary says. “Our current obsession with Christmas, including Santa Claus, massive present exchanges and the Christmas colour scheme of red, white and green comes largely from the US,” she said. “It is one measure of the growing influence of the U.S. in our culture.”

Regardless of whether changing customs are religious or not, the rituals of Christmas are significant, according to Hilary. “The impulse to think deeply and spiritually about our current condition to ritualise major times in their lives - these things are still important,” she said.

Unibriefs

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Grant coordinator, Dr Heraldo Povea-Pacci from the Discipline of Anatomy, visited Chile to set up the exchange and to strengthen links with four health faculties there.

Director of Marketing and Media Services, Dr Fran Flavel, has been selected to serve as a community member on the NSW Legislative Assembly Standing Ethics Committee.

Former librarian and cataloguer, Giles Martin, has been appointed as assistant editor of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), Giles, who will be based at OCLC Forest Press in Dublin, Ohio, is the first member of the Dewey editorial staff from outside the United States.