Thousands of students and their families celebrated the completion of their studies at graduation ceremonies at Callaghan and the Ourimbah campuses this month. The University presented awards, medals and honorary degrees to outstanding students, former staff members and prominent Australians. Uninews looks at just a few of the many inspiring stories relating to graduation.
UNINEWS - May

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Uninews is written in an informal and friendly style that includes the use of Christian names for the staff and students interviewed and written about. Where honorifics or titles are used, it is at the request of the person involved.

1998 Deadlines and Publishing Dates

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OPEN DAY

Sunday, August 9, 1998
10am - 4pm
Central Coast Campus
Chittaway Road, Ourimbah
Ext 4139

Saturday, August 22, 1998
10am - 4pm
Callaghan Campus
University Drive Callaghan

Hands-on displays, demonstrations, music, food, course information, entertainment, drama, fun and lots of advice if you want to get serious.

Vice-Chancellor's Column

The Semester 1 graduation and recognition ceremonies have been successfully completed thanks to the excellent work of many staff of the University, particularly those of the Student and Academic Services and the External Relations Divisions, and the strong participation of academic and general staff of the faculties and other divisions. May I express my appreciation to you all and to our members of Council who support these events so strongly.

Our graduates and successful enabling program students have recognised by their attendance in large numbers that these ceremonies are extremely important to them and their families and friends. Our ceremonies are excellent events and we are very fortunate to have the Great Hall as a venue for the Callaghan campus. In addition, community involvement and media coverage is at a high level, and I consider it a privilege to participate in all of these ceremonies. Discussions with our graduates, and their families, reveal the significance of these events, as well as an appreciation of being able to hold these ceremonies on our campuses. The support of the University Union in hosting the post-graduation functions, and that of Convocation members to promote membership and involvement in alumni based activities, is also appreciated by the University.

1998 was a special year as well for our enabling program students from 1997 (Newstep; Open Foundation; and International Foundation), in that we held recognition ceremonies on both our Callaghan and Ourimbah campuses. These programs play an important 'enabling' role for members of the regional, national and international communities, who would not normally be able to enter our academic programs. We celebrate this year the 25th anniversary of Open Foundation on the Callaghan campus, and the University recognised the important contribution of Dr Brian Smith, the founding Director of this program, with an Exceptional Service Medal. Congratulations Dr Smith.

I am sure that you all join me in wishing our successful graduates, graduates, diplomas and enabling program students all the very best for their futures. Our standing as a University is based in large measure on the success and standing of our graduates. Based on the graduate speeches at our graduation ceremonies, we can be very proud of them.
Our wines reflect the synergy of knowledge, skills and experience of our award-winning winemakers. The comfortable blend of modern technology and the great traditions of the Hunter is best appreciated by our customers...

“It was a rainy Sunday morning - freezing cold, but the wines were spectacular, bringing some liquid sunshine into the day.”

Thomas K.Hardy,
Australian Wine Pictorial Atlas

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25 years of adult education celebrated

The University’s Open Foundation Course (OFC) this year accepted its 25th intake of mature-age students. Several outstanding events have marked this anniversary in the past month including presentation of University Medals to three OFC graduates, the inaugural University Exceptional Service Medal presentation to the man who established the OFC at Newcastle, Dr Brian Smith, and the presentation at a seminar of a Faculty of Education study of mature-age students.

When Brian Smith, as the foundation Director of Community Programmes, first developed the OFC at Newcastle he was motivated by a belief that it was part of the University’s public responsibility to support adult education and maximise the effectiveness of education provision to the public. Beginning in 1974 with just 40 students studying two subjects, the OFC has grown to an enrolment of approximately 1,000 part-time and 300 full-time students each year, who can choose from 25 subjects and study at two locations. There are 36 lecturers teaching in the OFC.

In Newcastle to receive his medal, Brian remembered being given a lot of freedom by the then Vice-Chancellor, James Auchmuty, to develop his adult education program. “Almost all the other universities had some sort of terms and conditions for admitting mature age people, as well as requiring them to do an examination,” he said. “At Newcastle I was able to do all the things I believed in and so I set about making sure that people were not only offered special admission to the University without any conditions but that they were properly prepared for it.”

The OFC was innovative from its inception, preparing students for university life rather than offering a “catch-up” course in secondary education. Brian specified that they were to study two subjects “within, or closely related to, an established discipline within the university and with a specific content that could be, but in fact is not, offered as a first year unit”.

Enabling Programs Unit Director, Dr Ralph Robinson, said that students have always been recognised as adults with life experiences and personal objectives, who should be communicated with equally and not ‘taught down to’. “In the past 25 years, the OFC has provided a significant pool of students to the University,” Ralph said, “which has enriched the culture of the undergraduate population. It has also provided an introduction to tertiary studies to mature age people who once thought a university education was beyond their reach.”

But how do mature age students, particularly those who begin their experience of university life through the OFC, fare? Do they perform as well academically as students entering university directly from school? And do they experience any specific difficulties?

A recent study conducted by Jennifer Archer, Robert Cantwell, and Sid Bourke from the Faculty of Education addresses some of these issues. Students in their first or second year of a university course were asked to complete a questionnaire. Seventy one (22 males, 49 females) OFC graduates and 61 (10 males, 51 females) non-OFC students responded. The drop-out rates for the OFC vary from 30 percent to 40 percent, although some student re-enrol in a subsequent year. But of those who complete their final examination, around 95 percent are successful and are eligible to be offered a place in an undergraduate degree program.

The researchers found that compared with the non-OFC students, OFC students were motivated to understand what they were studying, rather than to pass their subjects with a minimum of effort and thought. They also indicated more confidence to solve problems that arise in their lives, to plan a desired course of action and to accurately appraise their strengths and weaknesses. There was no significant difference between the grade point average of the two groups of students, which reinforces other similar findings and provides further evidence that enabling programs are producing students able to cope with university level study.

As well as the quantitative study of students who answered their questionnaire, the researchers also undertook a smaller qualitative study of a group of seven women who were enrolled in the OFC. Presenting the results at the Mature Age Students seminar organised as part of the Learning and Development Program last month, Robert Cantwell said the women had been interviewed in March and June to see if their orientation changed during their studies.

"Most of the women came to university because they perceived a need to regenerate an identity," Robert said. "While they wanted to achieve this they experienced enormous self-doubt. They tended to have a reasonably naive approach to what university is about and found the mind set involved completely different to any they had experienced."

The women had a limited array of study skills and experienced time management difficulties. They also encountered family and relationship difficulties during their studies. Among the five interviewed, one of the seven were divorced and two separated. Comments recorded by the interviewers included: "I'm here to prove to myself that I'm not stupid" and "It's hard when for so long I wasn't allowed to have my own opinion".
Despite the difficulties that can be experienced by mature age students, there is no doubt that four of the Arts and Social Science graduates who received University Medals at this month’s graduation ceremonies were able to triumph over them. The four women have 12 children between them and have not only achieved the highest recognition of their academic excellence by receiving Medals but all have won Australian Postgraduate awards with stipends to proceed to postgraduate study.

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) graduate Sandy Darab left school at 14 and after a brief secretarial course began work in an office. “I came from a very poor background,” Sandy said. “I had a great sense of wanting to be autonomous, to earn my own money.” When she returned to study by enrolling in the OFC in 1992, she was a sole parent with one child at home. “I was living a very austere lifestyle and I wanted to do something for myself,” Sandy said. “OFC was very rewarding. The lecturers were asking questions like ‘Is there life after death?’ and I had to start thinking, they wouldn’t accept any hedging.” Concerned about her study skills, Sandy did bridging courses in essay writing and statistics. She began to see an improvement in her results, which encouraged her to persist.

“I won the Vice-Chancellor’s Honours scholarship last year and I also won a summer vacation scholarship,” she said. Sandy won her medal by retaining a High Distinction average throughout her course. She majored in sociology and will work as a tutor in the sociology department while completing her PhD studies. “It feels excellent to be paid for doing something I love,” she said.

Bachelor of Social Science graduate Nicki Saroca has also secured a job tutoring in sociology while she works towards her PhD. Although she completed her HSC in 1972, there was never any question of Nicki going on to university. “I came from a poor background and I wanted to go into paid work, to have money of my own,” she said. After doing a year of training to become a registered nurse in the mental health area, she fell pregnant with her first child before she qualified to register. “When I started my undergraduate degree I thought for once I’m going to finish something. It’s been a long time coming but it’s a big boost to my self esteem.”

Nicki attributes much of her success to the support of her husband and three children. She began the OFC to fill an emptiness in her life. “OFC provided a turning point for me. I think it’s tremendously important that governments continue to support these enabling programs,” she said. “So many people can benefit so much from a university education and are unable to get in by the normal channels.”

When Nicki discovered sociology she found something to be passionate about. “Sociology gave me the tools to analyse what was happening in the world around me and what was happening to me personally in different relationships,” she said.

For Bachelor of Arts graduate Rosemary Melville, the OFC is a family affair. Not only did Rosemary (who completed her Honours studies in history) begin her university experience with the OFC, but her oldest son John, 23, completed it last year and is now studying towards an arts degree at the University and his brother Richard, 21, is doing the OFC this year. “It’s just such a gentle introduction to university life,” Rosemary said.

Mother of four children, Rosemary left school at 16 and worked in an office until she began her family. She was out of the workforce for 15 years and started the OFC in 1989 when her youngest child started school. “I loved being at home with the kids but I was getting depressed having nothing to do. OFC gave me a purpose, it really got me in.” Not content with her outstanding academic results, Rosemary accepted a commission at the end of her first year of history studies (during which she topped the year) from the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Pharmacists’ Association to write a history of local chemists. She will undertake her PhD studies on early settlers in the Hunter Valley.

Medallist, Debbie Smith, is not a graduate of the OFC, although she did come to university as a mature age student. A nurse, Debbie began her studies to fill in time while a badly broken ankle was healing. She found it easier to pursue her studies when she split from her first husband. “I was a wife and mother and I felt some pressure to conform to that traditional role, so when I went off to university I always felt I was being a bit selfish.”

While working and studying as a sole parent of two children, Debbie discovered a passion for sociology. “What I loved most about university was learning to question the assumptions that underlie things and to understand what makes things the way they are,” Debbie said. She second husband in the sociology department and the two now discuss their theories while raising their extended family. Debbie will pursue her postgraduate studies at Macquarie University, where she also tutors part-time.
Professor Catherine Smith, recently appointed Foundation Professor of Business at the Central Coast Campus, has made the most of her opportunities, both educationally and professionally.

Her academic career started as a mature-age student at Middlesex University in the UK following five years in the workforce in the field of personnel management. Graduating with honours from what she describes as a "sandwich" degree in business (where a year of relevant employment is incorporated into the degree), Catherine had gained valuable experience in industrial relations while working at the Esso head office in London.

After completing a Masters in Industrial Relations at the London School of Economics, she was appointed to a lecturing position at Thames Polytechnic (later Greenwich University), in the area of industrial relations. This is where her life began to change. A sabbatical appointment to 3M gave her the opportunity to observe a company which was at the forefront of industrial relations, was committed to motivating and encouraging their staff, was tuned into new developments and used an incentives and reward system in the workplace. "It was an interesting culture change," said Catherine. "It was an opportunity to see what was happening in industry, particularly with regard to workplace issues for women."

This experience fuelled her other interests in using management skills and practices to benefit specialised areas. Catherine, as well as being involved in organisational development of women for leadership and management roles, developed a specialist health service course to provide management education for nurses, paramedics, administrators and doctors in the National Health Service in the UK.

After a year in Spain with husband, Alex and son, Michael, Catherine took up an appointment in the School of Business at Edith Cowan University in Perth in 1989. The move not only provided new lifestyle options, it opened doors for her academically. Catherine's PhD studies at the University of Western Australia explored the career transitions of dual-career couples. "What came out of it," said Catherine, "was the importance of the employing organisation in facilitating career development for its employees. In most cases the woman in the marriage or partnership has traditionally been the one who compromises her career if there are choices to be made. With an enabling and understanding employing organisation this need not necessarily be so."

In 1993, Catherine was commissioned by the Karpin Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills to prepare an MBA curriculum package on "Gender Issues in Management". This research led to Catherine publishing a book entitled "Gender: A Strategic Management Issue" jointly authored with Jacquie Hutchinson. She sees her move to the Central Coast Campus as another opportunity to progress her career.

"The Central Coast Campus is growing very rapidly and has an important role in the region. Its multidisciplinary School of Business is particularly well placed to respond to the needs of the growing small business community, as well as larger public and private enterprises. I see many challenges ahead. For instance I see a healthy interaction between local businesses and the School of Business at the Central Coast Campus as vital. There are so many ways that we can work together and assist one another. In fact, the development of partnerships, relationships and consultancies with local businesses will be a major focus of my role. The School of Business is looking forward to providing tailored programs in consultation with local businesses." Catherine is currently developing collaborative research with a UK university to examine changing experiences of work. In her spare time she is enjoying her new surroundings. "We have brought a small property and are looking forward to developing it. The move will be good for the whole family," she said.
University bands triumphant in national championships

The University's Wind Orchestra and its Junior Concert Band have successfully defended their titles at the National Band Championships held at Monash University in Melbourne at Easter.

Conducted by Ian Cook and with a membership made up predominately of tertiary music students, the Wind Orchestra won the Senior A Grade championship for the second year in a row, by a large margin over its nearest competitor. The Junior Concert Band, conducted by Michael Bell and made up of high school aged children, won the Junior A Grade title.

Dean of the Faculty of Music, Professor Robert Constable, said the success of bands was a cause for much celebration and pride for the University and particularly for the Faculty. "Our wind ensemble has been so successful in recent years that it provides an excellent training ground for young performers."

In addition to the success of the bands, Newcastle performers captured a huge array of individual and small ensemble awards over the course of the four day championships. "Our success was nothing short of staggering," Robert said.

There is a high level of interest in band performance in the Newcastle region with the tradition going back over 100 years; he said. "The success of the bands is due to the excellence of teaching and of the direction the performers get from the conductors."

Another of the Faculty's students, Laura Parsons, took out the Open Woodwind Champion of Champions at the competition.

Medicine hosts Norwegians

A group of seven academic and administrative staff from the Norwegian National University of Science and Technology (NTSU) visited the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences last month to check on the progress of 12 medical students sent here to train under a cooperative venture.

The students, who are studying towards their Bachelor of Medicine degrees, are being funded by the Norwegian government. Newcastle was selected as one of only two Australian universities (and only nine worldwide) to train the medical students as part of a partnership with NTSU.

Professor David Powis from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences said Norway has a severe shortage of doctors in rural areas. "There is presently not the capacity in the four Norwegian medical schools to train the numbers of doctors required," he said. Their solution was to seek the help of overseas universities in order to ensure that doctors continue to be trained while they are upgrading their facilities. "Following an initial inquiry to an International Office staff member, we went to Trondheim (where NTSU is based) to talk to them about the University and our Faculty," David said. "To our delight we found that their philosophy and teaching methods were almost identical to our own, including problem based learning and a strong community orientation."

David travelled to Norway again in December to interview students and selected 12, who began their studies this year. Each student will be enrolled at Newcastle for five years, with the chance to return to Norway to complete the elective component of their studies. "This allows them to train in the clinical setting in which they will ultimately work," David explained.
More than 3,000 students graduated from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in eight ceremonies held at the Centre for Continuing Education in May. Nearly 200 graduates attended the Student Prize-giving Ceremony at University of New South Wales. The University of New South Wales awarded prizes to six prominent people including瘦子, 爱德华, 菲利普, 杰克, 克里斯廷, 西蒙, 丹尼和吉姆. 

There were 12 University of New South Wales graduates who received honours. The students with outstanding academic results in their respective courses. The medallists come from the Faculties of Arts and Social Science (5), Engineering (6), Music (1), Science and Mathematics (1).
Youth and leadership

Justice McHugh’s plea

Justice Michael McHugh was awarded Doctor of Laws at the May 8 graduation ceremony of the Faculties of Law and Medicine and Health Sciences. Born in Newcastle, Justice McHugh did a variety of jobs after leaving school at 15, before completing his Leaving Certificate at night school. He worked as a clerk while studying for the Barristers Admission Board examinations and in 1961 was admitted to the NSW Bar.

Distinguishing himself in his career at the Bar, Justice McHugh became the 38th Justice appointed to the High Court of Australia in 1989. In 1994 he returned to Newcastle to deliver the Sir Ninian Stephen Lecture. He retains strong ties with Newcastle. Following is an excerpt from the address delivered by Justice McHugh on the occasion of receiving his honorary degree.

"If Australia is to become and remain a just as well as a competitive society, if it is to provide a life that is worth living, its self interest requires that we nurture and encourage our young people, not isolate, denigrate and alienate them. It is here that today’s graduates and their fellow graduates around the nation have such an important part to play. They have the capacity, the training and the opportunity to be the leaders of this nation, if not today, then certainly tomorrow. It is they who by example and leadership must give our youth a sense of destiny and a sense of belonging to a just and caring community. It seems evident that my generation has failed to set that example and to give that leadership. At all events, that seems to be the perception of many of our youth.

Leadership is concerned with persuading people to achieve goals that are wanted or desired by the followers of the leader. It is the giving effect to the goals of the followers that distinguishes leadership from the brute exercise of power. There are several forms of leadership. But I want to talk about what has been called transforming leadership. Transforming leadership brings people to realise that they now want or desire goals which hitherto they have ignored or even rejected. I am not speaking, therefore, of leadership where people are persuaded to follow someone because to do so will promote the existing interests and values of the followers. I am speaking of that form of leadership that seeks to raise the standards or elevate the conduct of a community by changing its opinions and practices often by reference to ultimate ethical values. By ultimate ethical values, I mean universal and enduring values such as justice, freedom in all its aspects, equality, and respect for the human rights and the dignity of every individual, irrespective of colour, race, creed or nationality.

...For too long, young people have been kept out of leadership roles. Hopefully, one recent event indicates that this may be changing. We recently witnessed the Constitutional Convention in Canberra. One of the highlights of the Convention was the positive leadership role played by the young delegates on both sides of the republican debate. We saw Australian youth at its best, young thinkers and leaders unsullied by cynicism and party loyalties and inspired by a moral vision of the sort of nation that Australia should become. Despite our social, economic and other problems, these young people, like Tennyson’s Ulysses, thought ‘tis not too late to seek a newer world’. Justice Frankfurter of the United States Supreme Court once said that, ‘Wisdom too often never comes, and so one ought not to reject it merely because it comes late’. I would add that it should not be rejected for coming in the guise of youth."

First graduates from speech pathology course

The first intake of students into the University’s speech pathology course graduated this month. After completing the four year course offered through the Department of Linguistics in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, speech pathology graduates are qualified to work with people with communication disorders, including speech, voice fluency, language and swallowing difficulties. Significant proportion of children and adults in Australia require the services of a speech pathologist. They are able to work in a variety of settings including hospitals, education placements and in private practice.

Speech pathology lecturer Dr Berenice Mathisen said a need to offer the course at Newcastle was identified by Jenny Johns from Royal Newcastle Hospital, who with the head of the linguistics department, Dr Peter Peterson, was one of the prime movers in planning it. “Students study medical subjects (including neuro-anatomy and neuro-science) as well as linguistics, psychology and speech pathology,” Berenice said. “There is a strong clinical emphasis in the course. We offer one of the newest speech pathology courses in Australia and have tried to address special issues for rural regions by targeting enrolments. Many of our graduates are going back into the rural communities they came from.”

Berenice said that while speech pathology was trying to keep numbers down to ensure they are able to retain high quality teaching and learning opportunities for their students, the course is enrolling well and they never had no problems attracting students to their sought after field.
Dutch visitor dedicates doctorate to children

Dutch visitor, Dr Rien van Gendt, was very pleased that the University chose to present him with an honorary doctorate on May 7. But his pleasure was not for himself but for the recognition it provided for his work as Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, an international charity that funds projects in early childhood development.

“I’m very pleased for the work we do here, for our mandate,” Dr van Gendt said. “Through receiving the doctorate, I hope to get care for young children on the public agenda.” Since joining the Foundation in 1988, Dr van Gendt, who holds a doctorate in economic science from the University of Amsterdam, has worked to develop a leading role for the Foundation in the area of early childhood development. Established by Dutch industrialist Bernard van Leer in 1958, the Foundation funds around 130 projects in 45 countries aimed at improving the educational, social and developmental opportunities of children between birth and eight years of age.

Since 1986 the Foundation has contributed $1.75 million to the University to support the Hunter Caravan Project and the National Dissemination Program of the Family Action Centre (FAC). The programs have pioneered work with mobile communities and assisted in having their needs put on the national agenda. The FAC has a track record of successful programs which attract national and international attention and replication. “At the Foundation we don’t see grants as an end product,” Dr van Gendt said. “Rather they provide an instrument to make a sustained change. We measure our own success in terms of the sustainability of our partners and we invest a lot into making sure that the programs can continue long after the Foundation has withdrawn.”

Dr van Gendt was presented with an award for Outstanding Contribution to the Australian Community by the Chancellor at a separate ceremony at the FAC. He also found time to meet some of the volunteers and children involved in the FAC’s Homestart and Homelink projects.

Setting the standard
University’s first Aboriginal Honours graduate

Bachelor of Medicine graduate, Robert Witherspoon, decided to study medicine because he wanted to help people. The first Aboriginal student to graduate with Honours at the University, Robert was interested in science at school and made his decision to pursue medicine towards the end of his HSC year.

“I never thought of studying anywhere other than Newcastle,” Robert said. “The medical faculty has an excellent reputation and I found the program was really good. I never encountered any prejudice and I think that incorporating an Aboriginal health course helps raise awareness of those issues.” Robert also found the Aboriginal Liaison Unit a great asset to the medical faculty. It was supportive of all students, not just Aboriginal students, he said.

Robert, who is currently completing his internship, sees two ways to approach his role as an Aboriginal doctor. “I could be active and work at the coalface with Aboriginal communities,” he said. “Or I could work in the hospital system and educate other doctors about Aboriginal health problems.” Having grown up in Gateshead, Robert sees his success as providing an example not only for other Aboriginal students, but for people from a low socio-economic background.

“When people talk to me, I try to let them know about Aboriginal culture. I think I can act as a role model for others,” Robert hasn’t made up his mind yet which field he will specialise in but he likes surgery.
Degree success for external students

You could be forgiven for thinking that studying a problem-based course through distance learning would pose problems in itself. But that certainly has not been the case for the first group of students who have just graduated with the Bachelor of Construction Management (Building) external degree. The 18 students come from a variety of different backgrounds and age groups and are literally spread across the nation, from the Northern Territory to Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and throughout NSW.

The first national external degree was established in 1992 in response to concerns from building industry employees about the lack of educational opportunities. Due to the nature of the industry, many were working in remote areas with little or no access to tertiary education. According to graduand Mr Alan McCavana, this was the precise reason why he chose to enrol in the Newcastle degree.

"I was working in Karratha (north-western WA) where the options for study were obviously very limited," he said. "I'd read about the Newcastle degree and thought I would give it a go."

That was four and a half years ago and now, still living and working in Western Australia, Alan is more than pleased with the outcome. "My job is demanding of my time so I needed a course which offered flexibility and enabled me to fit in study with my work commitments," Alan said. "Overall, it was a very good course with excellent documentation."

Simon Waugh of Bolton Point also chose the option of distance learning, despite the fact he lived comparatively close to the University. "It was the flexibility attached to the degree which attracted me," he said.

Distance learning uses a wide variety of media in addition to course notes, including videos, audio tapes, computer disks and teleconferences. According to both Simon and Alan, the tele-tutorials were an essential learning tool and helped guide students in the right direction. "When you're studying externally it's important to have that interaction with other students to help reinforce your ideas and give you the confidence to know you're on the right track," Alan said.

First Class Honours graduand Peter Trainer of Sydney said he believed the course was so well received due to its problem-based learning approach. "It was by far the best course that I've undertaken when I compare it to my time at Sydney University and UTAS (University of Technology, Sydney) and that is largely due to the problem-based learning structure," Peter explained. The other courses were highly impersonal and quite traditional in their approach but this course was more interesting and challenging even if it did require more self-reliance and discipline.

In Peter's view, distance learning is the way of the future as more employers demand further qualifications and yet less time is available for employees to engage in face-to-face learning. "The role of distance learning will take off exponentially in the next few years as business requirements increase and employees need study options to suit their daily schedules," Peter said.

Sustainable future harder than it seems

Dr John Wamsley, managing director of Earth Sanctuaries Ltd and a graduate of the University, delivered the Occasional Address at the graduation ceremony on May 1.

He worried graduates about the dangers of being seen to care, rather than taking proper action to protect the environment.

"The facts are very clear. We simply cannot continue to use non-renewable resources at an increasing rate. It is a mathematical impossibility. Yet the alternatives are so clouded and confused. Great ideas are often taken over and exploited by those who have no interest in them. What may seem to be a straightforward solution may be counter-productive in the end."

Dr Wamsley highlighted a number of environmental projects to illustrate how people were often wrongly criticised for questioning appropriate courses of action. One project he had been involved in was the fencing of 1,000 square kilometres of land in western NSW to form Scenic Sanctuary. The fence required a small electricity charge to make it effective in keeping feral animals out but due to its isolation, the fence had to be solar powered, which cost 30 times the grid electricity rate. "Yet if you dare to stand up and say, 'It takes more energy to produce a solar panel than that panel will produce in its own lifetime' you will be instantly disowned by those who claim to care," he said.

Another example was the breeding of golden lion tamarins by zoos. "About 10 a year are released back into the Brazilian jungle," Dr Wamsley said. "Each year hundreds are sold in the market place because they are perceived to make cute pets. I do not know of one successful release back into the wild by any zoo anywhere in the world ever. Yet if you dare to stand up and say, 'There is no evidence that zoos save wildlife', you will be instantly disowned by those who claim to care."

"From where I stand in my 50th year, I can see that you must really care," he concluded. "To be seen to care is only a facade. The best advice I can give you is simply to believe in yourself and to go out into the world and follow your heart."
Books

Researchers from the Department of History have been busy in the past 18 months, with three books published, including one that won a prestigious international history award.

Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean by Dr Nicholas Doumanis

Winner of the prestigious Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History for 1997, Nick’s book was the result of research done for his doctoral thesis. A microhistory focusing on the effect of Italian colonial rule on Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, the book examined the effect of history on ordinary people, and equally, how ordinary people shaped history.

“I wanted the work to deal with real people and their feelings,” Nick said. “I also addressed mythmaking and memory. For instance the current Prime Minister and the previous Prime Minister have very different views of history and use their views for political mileage.”

The book concentrates on the period 1912 to 1945. While it was an advantage for Nick that he spoke the local dialect, he had to deal with local myths as well as myths about Italian colonialism.

“I was faced with the stereotype of the brutal Italian fascists but that was too simple,” he said. “While the local people didn’t like being ruled by them, there is an appreciation of what they brought to the islands.” The Italian colonists constructed roads, buildings and garden towns.

One innovation Nick brought to the book was in uncovering and interpreting the positive relationships between the Greek islanders and their Italian rulers, something that is not usually highlighted in such works. He won the Fraenkel Prize for the best book by a first time author. The highly sought after prize is awarded by the Institute of Contemporary History and the Wiener Library in London.

Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean is published by McMillan, UK and St Martins, New York.

Believing in Australia: a cultural history of religions by Hilary M. Carey

Hilary wrote her book after an approach by publishers Allen and Unwin inviting her to contribute to their prestigious series, The Australian Experience, which includes Richard White’s Inventing Australia and Geoffrey Bolton’s Spoils and Spoilers. Published in 1996, her book looks at religions as they have been experienced and practised in Australia.

While other writers have attributed Australian spirituality to our unique landscape or linked it to Aboriginal culture, Hilary argues that religion arrived in Australia as part of the migration experience.

“As people arrive they try to recreate their religious experiences in Australia,” Hilary explained. “The relationship of Greeks to the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia is a good example of this, as is that of the Irish Australians to the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century.”

The book also examines the way in which Europeans have encountered Aboriginal religions and attempts to dispel some erroneous ideas such as the notion that they can all be summed up by some magical key word like “dreaming”.

The final chapter looks at secularisation in the New Age and the paradoxical changes in religion in Australia in the last couple of decades. “There has been a decline in attendance at many mainline Christian denominations such as Anglicanism or Uniting Church but high growth in the number of smaller churches and a proliferation of new beliefs including wicca (witchcraft), charismatic and pentecostal Christianity and a wide range of non-church based spiritualities,” Hilary said.

“I think it will be some time before a truly indigenised religion appears on the Australian scene.”

Perfecting the Family: Antislavery Marriages in Nineteenth-Century America by Chris Dixon

This story of radical abolitionists laboring to reform American society in the three decades before the American Civil War provides an insight into the lives of a group of people who were “ahead of their time”. They not only set out to abolish slavery, but were also committed to equality in all areas of society. Applying the insights they drew from the oppression of slaves to other relationships, they set out to perfect their own families by encouraging gender equality and family relations.

“It is the analysis of eight anti-slavery families living in the New England area who were committed to equality in all human relationships,” Chris said. “The women became as involved as the men in presenting the abolitionist cause. Some of them became feminists, taking an active part in speaking across the country, while some of the men stayed home and looked after the family.”

The abolitionists’ challenges to prevailing codes of gender relations put them at odds with the dominant patriarchial society of the time. They set out to redefine masculinity by renouncing power and oppression in favour of intimacy and cooperation. “The men were perceived as weak and their ideals were seen as an attempt to undermine the entire social order,” Chris said.

Published by University of Massachusetts Press, Chris’ book was the result of research he undertook while writing his doctoral thesis.
1998 Sir Ninian Stephen Lecture
“No more cabs on the rank?”

The Governor of NSW, The Hon Sir Gordon Samuels, AC, delivered the Sir Ninian Stephen Lecture in March this year.

Born and educated in England, His Excellency graduated with honours in law in 1947 and was admitted to the English Bar in 1948 and to the Bar of NSW in 1952. He became Queen’s Counsel in 1964 and was President of the NSW Bar Association from 1971-2, when he became a judge of the Supreme Court of NSW, being appointed to the Court of Appeal in 1974. He retired from the bench in 1992, but served as an Acting judge of Appeal for a further year.

President of the Australian Security Appeals Tribunal from 1980 to 1990, he has held office in a number of learned societies such as the Australian Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Australian Society of Legal Philosophy, and was a member and later Chairman of the Law Foundation of NSW. He was Chairman of the NSW Law Reform Commission and of the NSW Migrant Employment and Qualifications Board. He served as Commissioner to the Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Secret Intelligence Service from 1994-5. Appointed a Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 1987, he has been Governor of NSW since March 1996.

Entitled No More Cabs on the Rank? Some Reflections about the Future of Legal Practice, His Excellency’s lecture looked at the “cab-rank” principle, a fundamental rule of conduct at the Bar which the Governor described as being “of such sanctity as to have been described as the barristers’ equivalent of the doctors’ Hippocratic oath.” The cab-rank principle prevents a barrister from refusing a brief to act as an advocate or adviser, except in the event of a previous professional commitment, where a proper fee is not offered, professional embarrassment caused by a prior conflict of interest or insufficient experience or competence to handle the matter.

While the purpose of the principle is to ensure that no one appearing before a court is denied representation, the Governor argued that its “prejudicial propensity outweighs its value.”

“I do not consider that the cab-rank principle, as it is framed in the Bar Rules, should be preserved,” he said. “...its ethos is well embedded in the traditional practice of the Bar, whose members generally honour the obligation to make their services widely available, and to refuse a brief or instructions only for sound reasons.”

The principle had caused the Bar to adopt an “independence and detachment from the client” that conveyed an “air of Olympian condescension” to many litigants, he said. “The barrister’s professional privilege of independent judgement, combined with poor communication skills, may seem insufferably paternalistic. Hence I favour some muting of the traditional disregard for the merit of the client’s case.” While not advocating the total abolition of the cab-rank principle, the Governor felt it should be modified to allow barristers the ability to refuse some instructions.

His Excellency’s address is to be published in full in the Newcastle Law Review later this year.

The fifth Sir Ninian Stephen Lecture was delivered at the Conservatorium Hall on March 19. The annual lecture series was established in 1993 to mark the arrival of the first group of Bachelor of Laws students at the University. It is delivered by an eminent lawyer at the commencement of each academic year.

Agreement on business software

An agreement between the University and international business software giant SAP will help give Newcastle graduates and Hunter businesses a competitive business advantage. The agreement provides the School of Management with $2.5 million worth of SAP R/3 software as well as training.

SAP R/3 is an integrated business software system, which is being rapidly adopted by many major corporations as well as federal and state government departments. Its major advantage is that all business processes, including sales, inventory management and accounting can be performed by a single system, using the same up-to-date information which only needs to be entered into the system once.

The agreement with SAP will see the software used in both business and information systems programs. Head of the School of Management, Professor Janet Aisbett, said the agreement would benefit both students and businesses. “There is currently great demand for employees with SAP R/3 skills,” she said. “By incorporating the system into our degree programs we are increasing our students’ employment prospects and helping to meet the needs of local industry.”

SAP, a German based company founded in 1972, has had its products adopted by more than 40 government departments and a large share of the retail, mining and manufacturing market in Australia in the past five years. SAP runs its own training programs through the Sapient College in Sydney. Director of the college, Mr. Marianne Starkey, attended the official signing ceremony with the Vice-Chancellor on May 8.
Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I refer to the piece: "Mariners Scholarships to Continue" (News 2, April, 1998) and congratulate News Ltd for continuing these scholarships, whether for truly benevolent or for contractual reasons. However, I find a curious tone in the piece and in Dr Curran’s comments concerning a contrast between the Mariners and the Newcastle Knights: the latter, despite their Chairman’s ambitions of developing a “broader” relationship with the University”, unlike the Mariners have a “purely business” relationship with us. It is a tone that has resonances with other matters I have noted: for example, the profiling a Mariners player who is a student (in a Convocation publication, I think), with the invitation to the Mariners psychologist to address a Graduation ceremony of this University. Such a tone as I read it, taken with the other matters, gives support to a perception of the University being supportive of one particular side in what was a most sorry affair for sport and for this region.

It is not obvious that the Mariners had a purer motive than did the Knights in becoming involved with the University; somehow I remember profit for News Ltd was in there somewhere. I do know that there are a number of Knights players studying at the University, presumably assisted by the Knights administration, contributing thereby both money and their experience to the life of the University. I believe that the Knights have also provided similar assistance to different sections of the University (for example, field experience for Health and Physical Education students), as you also rightly credit to the Mariners.

Your article can be too easily read as fostering an existing impression of the University being partisan. For any University in respect of a matter such as the so called super-league war (only the “first round” being over, you say), this is unfortunate. For a regional University this would seem to be particularly silly, especially when it seeks funds from the local region in which public opinion would appear to have been overwhelmingly expressed in favour the Knights. Just in case you’re wondering, “Go the Mighty Knights!”

Bill Warren
Faculty of Education

Stratford Shakespeare Festival

The University’s drama department and the Gloucester Tourist Authority collaborated to stage the inaugural Stratford Shakespeare Festival at Gloucester on May 8 and 9. The festival, which it is hoped will become an annual event, featured a performance by the drama department of the Shakespearean comedy, The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Director Barry O’Connor said the students performed at matinees and in the evenings in a tent on open fields.

“There were also medieval jousts, jugglers, Celtic dancers, a maypole and various booths and stalls offering food, drinks and handicrafts,” he said.

Mark Gauntlett from the drama department ran a Shakespeare Workshop Day for high school students at the festival on May 8. Mark also co-produced for the festival a one person play by Freewheels Theatre company actor and artistic director, Brian Joyce, entitled A Drink on the Bard. The Two Gentlemen of Verona was also performed in the Drama Studio at the University on May 4, 5 and 6.

- (top) Emily Burden as Silvia toys with the affection of Martin Andersen, who plays Valentine in the Shakespearean comedy.
- Beth Aubrey (left, with lead) and Natasha Schaad played clowns in the Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Have you ever thought of patenting your idea?

TUNRA maintains an extensive portfolio of patents on behalf of the University and its staff. On Monday 29th June 1998 TUNRA’s patenting adviser, John Forster of Griffith Hack & Co, will spend the day holding interviews with groups/individuals, offering advice and guidance, free of charge, on how they should proceed with their idea - whether to apply for a provisional patent, copyright or suggestions on timing etc. If you have any enquires or would like to make an appointment, please telephone Lesley Simpson on extension 8777.
etcetera

New finance system for University

Finance One, the financial management information system chosen to replace the existing system which is not Year 2000 compliant, is on track for implementation on July 1. The system will then be bedded down in the Finance section before being deployed to faculties and divisions by the end of the year.

The system will operate on an Oracle database platform and provide a fully integrated financial management and accounting package. It is designed for major corporations and large government organisations and is currently operating at nine other universities in Australia.

With a choice of terminal style or graphical user interface versions, Finance One allows non-technical users to operate it with minimal training. It has proven to be user friendly at other universities. Training will be provided and a support group will provide ongoing assistance. Further information will be provided as implementation proceeds.

Concerts at the Conservatorium

May/June 1998

• Tickets for Thursday Lunchtime Concerts: Adults $5.00; Concession $4.00; Child $3.00 - available at the Conservatorium Ticket Box office just prior to the concert.
• Lunchtime Concert; Piano Recital - Jeanette Kwok - Thursday 28th May, 1.10 pm Works by Debussy, Sculthorpe, and Brahms.
• Afternoon Concert; "Winter Winds". The University of Newcastle Concert Band - Sunday 31st May Conductor - Michael Bell. 2.30 pm The University of Newcastle Crotchets and Quavers. (Junior Wind, Brass, Percussion) Conductor - Julia Nagy. Eleebana Concert Band. Conductor - Matthew Killey. Tickets: Adults $10.00 Concession $6.00.
• Lunchtime Concert; Music in the Garden. A concert presented by the Vocal Department in the Strumpby. A choral work for voices and two pianos by Anthony Brember plus solos and duets - Thursday 4th June 1.10 pm.
• Evening Concert; The University Symphony Orchestra. "Family Favourites". Friday 5th June 8.00 pm Music Director - Kevin Cameron. Trombone Concerto by David Solict, Adam Mason - Trombone Symphony No.7 - Beethoven. Henry V Suite - Walton. Adults $10.00 Concession/Student $8.00 Family $24.00. Tickets at Ticketek - Civic Theatre. Ph: (02) 4929 1977.
• Lunchtime Concert; Thursday 11th June, 1.10 pm The University of Newcastle Chamber Orchestra, Music Director - Deborah Lander.
• Young Composers Concert; Friday 12th June, 6.00 pm A Concert featuring the Composers of the Faculty of Music students. Tickets FREE.
• Evening Concert; Saturday 13th 7.30 pm June Hunter Strings Director Wendy Ireland. A selection of string music performed by the Senior String Orchestra. Featuring Baroque Concerti. "Capriol Suite" - Warlock. Adults $8.00. Concession $5.00 Child $5.00 available just prior to concert at the Conservatorium Ticket Box office.
• Afternoon Concert; Sunday 14th June 3.00 pm - 5.30 pm Bush Church Aid Society Best of the Bush - Family Concert. Colin Buchanan singing songs Grammar School. Accompanied on the Stuart & Son's grand piano. Tickets: Adults $12.00 Child $8.00 Under 2 years free. Family $30.00. Church Army Bookstore, 14 Perkins St, Newcastle Ph: (02) 4929 3160.
• Evening Concert; Wednesday 17th June 8.00 pm Musica Viva Concert. "Xen Ensemble". Australian Virtuosi. Two pianos and percussion. Composers - Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartok. Tickets: Adults $36.00 Concession $30.00 Seats near organ $26.00. Ticketek - Civic Theatre. Ph: (02) 4929 1977.
• Lunchtime Concert: Thursday 18th June, 1.10 pm Original Jazz: "Wood". Marina - Tim Costabile, Piano - Gavin O'Hearn, Brass - Andrew Wallace, Drums - Nick Grore.
• Lunchtime Concert; Thursday 25th June, 1.10 pm Works by Debussy, Sculthorpe, and Brahms. Lunchtime Concert Thursday 25th June, 1.10 pm Original Jazz: "Wood". Marina - Tim Costabile, Piano - Gavin O'Hearn, Brass - Andrew Wallace, Drums - Nick Grore.
• Evening Concert; Saturday 20th June 8.00 pm The University of Newcastle Wind Orchestra. "Masterworks for Winds"; Conductor - Ian Cook. Badings, Nelson, Gotkovsky, Weinberger, Holtsinger, Trombone Soloist - Greg van der Strauk. Organ Soloist - Philipp Matthias. Adults $15. Concession $10. At Cathedral - 46 Newcomen St, Newcastle. Tickets available just prior to concert at the Conservatorium Ticket Box office.
• Evening Concert; Sunday 22nd June 7.30 pm Conservatorium Students in Concert Keyboard - Voice - Strings - Brass - Wind - Percussion Adults $5.00 Concession $4.00 Child $3.00 available just prior to concert at the Conservatorium Ticket Box office.
• Lunchtime Concert; Thursday 25th June, 1.10 pm & Thursday 2 July, 1.10 pm; Student Showcase Concert A concert presented by students of the Faculty of Music. For further information contact Philip Sketchley - Hall and Concert Manager, Ph: (02) 4929 4133.

Wanted:
If anyone has any unwanted 'Pacesetter' boxes size A490 (usually received with Lloyd Scott Printing), I would love to take them off your hands. Ext 5360, or email me on butlc@admin.newcastle.edu.au.

Rental accommodation

Accommodation for overseas visitors - Why pay for a small hotel room when you can have top class, spacious, fully furnished apartments for half the cost? Situated in the heart of the city (Church Street and Nesso Parade) you'll find everything provided and expected of top class accommodation such as: ISO/STD direct dial telephone; full kitchen facilities; inductectric, linen, etc; internal laundry and direct bus route to University. For further information contact Vikma on 4965 6700.

Pool
I travel from Shoal Bay to the University Monday - Friday. Is anyone interested in sharing the driving perhaps two of three days each week? Phone Trish on ext 7229.

To register for a course, please call Tanya Maddison on ext. 8634. Your place will be reserved for you and you will be sent a 'training registration' form. All sections of this form must be filled out and a Purchase Requisition or Internal Transfer Requisition for the cost of the course must be attached (Urgent Purchase Orders cannot be accepted). Your place will be confirmed to you by letter. If you need to cancel your place, please do so at least four days beforehand. If you have any questions please call Tanya on ext. 8634.

For a detailed schedule and further information regarding courses see our internet site: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/ltd/training/frame2.html
Introducing IESD

Welcome to the first information page from the Information and Education Services Division (IESD).

Towards the end of 1997, several divisions and units of the University merged to form IESD. These were the Library, the Information Technology Division, the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT), Classroom and Theatre Services and the Medical Communication Unit. IESD now has nine core programs and units, two Deputy Directors (Bill Linklater and John Drinan), and a Director (Linda O'Brien). Our services range from computer support, library services, and computer infrastructure provision and maintenance, to staff and student development and training, multimedia production and consultancy and statistical services.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues - email: iesd-publications@newcastle.edu.au with your thoughts.

Director's Message

In forming the Information and Education Services Division the University was seeking to strategically position itself "ahead of the game" in higher education regionally, nationally and internationally. The University recognised the synergies between information, education and technology services, the scope for transformation of the education process through the application of technology and the opportunities for more effective and efficient delivery of information services. It is interesting to note that the recently released West Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy (Learning for Life, DEETYA, April 1998) makes much of the application of IT to teaching and learning.

The University has the opportunity to achieve a strategic advantage by providing this Divisional framework to pursue new opportunities, by bringing together staff with the relevant skills and knowledge - curriculum and instructional designers, staff developers, information and media professionals and information technologists, and to increase efficiency and effectiveness through reduction of duplication of effort and resources. The Division is still in its infancy with the finishing touches still being made within its structures. Nevertheless the University is already witnessing the strategic benefits of its formation. We look forward to working in partnership with you to achieve even greater strategic benefit for the University.

Linda O'Brien
Director

Student computing facilities under review by IESD

Student demand for computing facilities appears to be increasing rapidly. The cost of providing and maintaining student computing laboratories is of concern. Short term solutions are not necessarily the most effective and fail to take into account issues of equity within the student body. IESD is currently undertaking a review of student computing facilities to assess the situation. Both centrally funded and departmental or faculty funded laboratories are being surveyed with the review looking at all facilities for the purpose of long term planning. A draft policy document on the provision of student labs is expected to be presented to the Vice-Chancellor within the next few months.

Renewed focus on core skills in undergraduate education

The Learning & Development Program's Teaching & Learning Symposium on Core Skills and Graduate Outcomes last month attracted participants from nine other Australian universities as well as our own staff. This indicated the level of interest in the quality of graduate preparation in Australia.

The Symposium attempted to raise awareness and assist staff in the implementation of the University's strategic objective of ensuring all courses incorporate core skills, abilities and attitudes valued in the workplace and wider community. Ex BHP CEO, John Prescott, identified the need for skills such as "intellectual curiosity and independent thought".

Australian universities don't focus on the "whole student experience" in the way that American institutions do in the foundation years of the baccalaureate degree according to Paula Mochida, a Research Visitor from the University of Hawaii. Simon Bartle from the University of Sydney highlighted the importance of a shared understanding of what we mean by graduate attributes and core skills. He referred to the UK Higher Education Funding Council's project on student skills which identified the need for effective management of wide ranging change in teaching and learning. The latest report on the UK experience can be found at the project website (http://www.archit.ncl.ac.uk/research/skills/public.htm).

A showcase of local initiatives provided an opportunity for presentations on developments in building, nursing and electrical engineering. The Teaching and Learning Committee will ensure the momentum is maintained. The Learning and Development Program will continue to document local and international activities on the Core Skills and Graduate Outcomes website (http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/hil/learning/generic_skills/index.html) and provide support for the implementation of core skills and abilities in the curriculum.

Jim Cleary
Learning & Development

Help Desk support phone numbers have changed

The Help Desk has changed the procedure for phone support. To contact the Help Desk by phone please dial 4921 5382. This number will be answered from the CT Help desk location between 8am-10pm weekdays and 9am-5pm weekends. This phone also has voicemail facilities. We have a dedicated modem support line between 6-9pm weekdays. The number is 4921 6555. The current numbers - 4921 5799 (CT Help Desk) and 4921 6424 (Hunt Help Desk) have ceased to exist.

Kim Jenkins
Help Desk Manager

New microwave communication links in operation

The University now has Internet access on par with that of Sydney metropolitan universities plus high speed network access to the Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah. Computer traffic data is now being carried over the newly installed microwave data links between the Callaghan campus and the Internet, and between the Callaghan campus and the Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah.

The new microwave links provide about a sixty-fold increase in the data bandwidth to the Internet (from a committed information rate of 512 thousand bits per second to nearly 32 million bits per second).

New dial-in modem service for students

The Student Union and the IESD have entered into a joint agreement to provide students with remote dial-in access to University computer systems and the Internet for 1998.

Students can collect a "Union WWW Browser Kit" CD-ROM from the Contact Office in the Shortland University Union or from Cybercyle under the Hunter Union "Bar on the Hill" which allows registered students to connect to a new high speed dial-in service on (02) 4985 4985 (50 lines) with a two hour session time limit. In addition, there are 30 lines available on (02) 4985 4888 for use by approved course work and distance education students.

The existing 72 modem lines on (02) 4921 6666 are dedicated to staff access only, while the quick turn-around "Express Lane" service on (02) 4921 5174 with a twenty minute session time limit can be accessed by all registered modem users.

Tony Nicholson
tony.nicholson@newcastle.edu.au

New information access manager

The Client Services Program of IESD are delighted to announce the appointment of Charmian Mitchell as Information Access Manager. Charmian's role is to be responsible for the identification and integration of print and electronic resources to meet the information requirements of the University community. Feedback and participation by academic staff on this critical issue will be welcomed.

Statistical and Evaluation Services

The following services are offered:

- Program Evaluation Strategies (s8633)
- Student Evaluation of Subjects and Teaching (s86522)
- Specialised survey design, implementation and analysis (s8633)
- Statistical software advice and support (s5317)
- Advice and support for staff and postgraduate students using surveys, in-their research (s8633)
- Conduct of Focus Groups (s8633)
- Data Entry (s5381)
Byron Bay architect, Christine Vadasz began her recent lecture to architecture students by showing slides illustrating the effect of waves on sand and the way in which a rock changes the path of the water.

"You can see what happens when a rock, you could also call it a building, enters the environment," she said. "The water tries to go under it and push it off and if it can't, it goes around it. When you are designing, you should always think about the natural physics of soil and water."

Christine also considers the patterns of the land, water, soil, vegetation and animals - the natural paths that are reflected in Aboriginal art - when she designs her ecologically sensitive buildings. As a result she has designed houses and resorts in some of Australia's most pristine environments with a minimum impact on the land. Like the two resorts she designed with the University architect Phil Pollard at Bedarra Island, located on Queensland's barrier reef between Townsville and Cairns.

"We tried to use the paths that existed already - that had been made by animals and then used by Aborigines," Christine explained. "We had to use machines for some of the paths but most of them were done by hand."

Concerned to preserve as much of the natural tropical vegetation as possible, Christine and Phil surveyed the site for each of the resort's cabins and buildings, individually fitting them in among the trees. The results are remarkable with the buildings blending perfectly into the rainforest.

Christine has lived and worked at Byron Bay on the NSW north coast for over 20 years and uses the environment there as a basis for designing all over the world. "It provides me with my grounding and I view other environments in relation to what I know about it."

While most of Christine's stunning designs have been built in the tropics, the photograph (above) is of a house she designed in the hills outside Canberra. The site posed a challenge for her, as it faced east and the owner wanted a solarium, which needed to face north. The solar-powered house was built in a spiral, which not only solved the problem of orientation but fitted the contours of the land.

Christine delivered her lecture as part of the Open Lecture Series in the Red Square building on May 5.