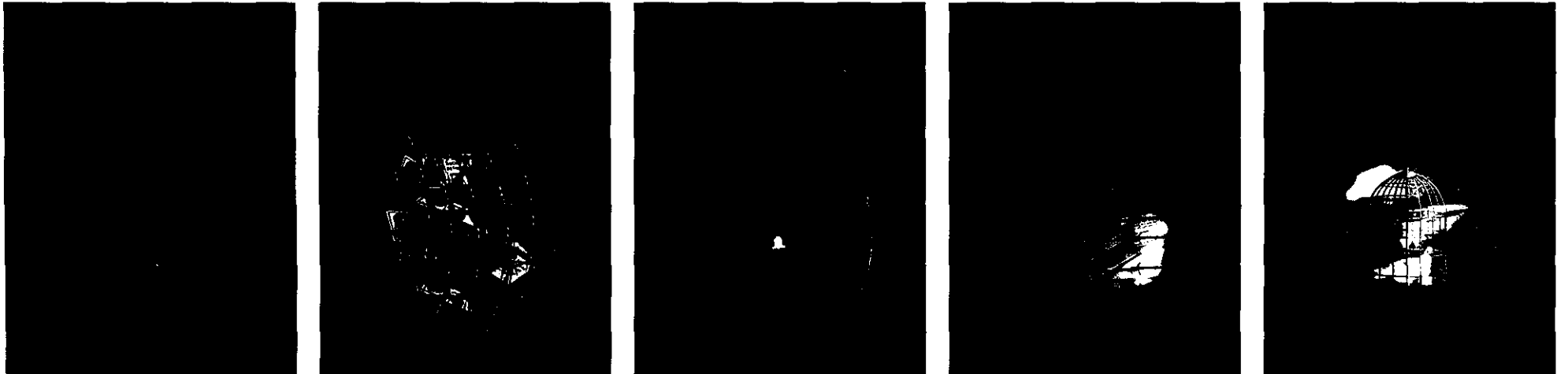


## Padlocks tell the story



**The dedication and purposefulness of Ibtihal Samarayi are to be admired. And when these admirable character traits are combined with an empathy for the suffering of others, they become magnificent.**

Ibtihal, the first student to study for a PhD in Fine Art at the University's Ourimbah campus, is a refugee from Iraq. Her personal story of escape is one that both terrifies and amazes. But, far from just sitting back and adjusting to her new life, she, in typical Ibtihal fashion, is using her experiences to express a point of view in her art and to help others in the process.

Ibtihal is the recipient of a number of prestigious art prizes, the most recent being first prize (valued at \$1,000) in the

"Royal on the Move" Art Exhibition. Her work entitled "Locked Inside", an artistic comment about the plight of refugees and detention centres, was judged the winner by the Director of the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, Nick Mitzevich.

Her body of work to be submitted for her doctoral thesis expands on the issues of refugees and detention camps. The approach is innovative and for some people it might be confronting, but it shoots straight to the point and leaves the viewer in no doubt about her message.

In a series of 10 huge "padlocks" which stand as tall as a person, Ibtihal has used images of detention and freedom, ID cards, real letters from detainees, children and family photographs, media coverage of detainees and protesters, images of adults and children waiting for a better life and a dove in a cage. An expert with a jigsaw and cordless drill, she has manufactured them herself and plans to assemble them in a circle with a huge key hanging from the ceiling that no-one can reach, a symbolic comment on the plight of the refugees.

And with her characteristic energy, Ibtihal has also been involved with a program of Art Therapy for children who have been in detention camps.

"Every week I go to Liverpool and help seven children express their feelings through art. They all belong to families that have been released from Woomera on temporary visas. You can see in their art that they are very worried," Ibtihal says.

"However, they are improving and are quite talented. Where they were originally drawing images of fences, barbed wire and guards, now they are drawing fish and people and cars like normal children. They feel more optimistic."

It is a really wonderful experience for me as I feel I can be useful in their rehabilitation."

Ibtihal is also teaching Art History in the Fine Art degree at Ourimbah and

also in the Open Foundation (Visual Art) course.

An earlier article about Ibtihal explains her personal story and escape from Iraq. To read this, please visit [www.ccc.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.ccc.newcastle.edu.au) – click News then Archived Profiles.

**Cae Pattison  
Manager, Media and Public Relations  
Ourimbah campus**

*Please see this edition's centre spread on '40 years of the arts'.*

## Hot dogs

**Those fabulous NUbots have done it again. The team topped the Australian contingent in the four-legged league – soccer, coming a world second in the 2005 RoboCup held in Osaka in July.**

RoboCup is an international research and education initiative, designed to foster machine intelligence and robotics research by providing a standard problem where a wide range of technologies can be examined and integrated. This year's competition involved 24 teams from around the world including Europe, Asia, North and South America.

The NUbots took on the world's best, defeating the University of NSW (UNSW) in the semi final, only to be beaten in a nail-biting final by the ultimate winners of the competition, an exceptionally strong German side with team members drawn from four universities.

Professor Rick Middleton from the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment said, "The final was a very

tense affair. The NUbots led for much of the game, before the German team came back in the second half to tie 2-2 taking it to a penalty shoot out."

"We also came second in the RoboCup challenges and therefore had the best overall performance in the competition. It was an outstanding effort by the NUbots and a great achievement to make it to the final as the highest placed Australian team."

The NUbots were accompanied by rescNUbots which competed in the 2005 RoboCup competition in the Rescue Robots competition. Based around a tracked vehicle, together with computer controls, wireless communications and a range of sensors, this robot can be used to search hard to reach places during disaster scenarios.

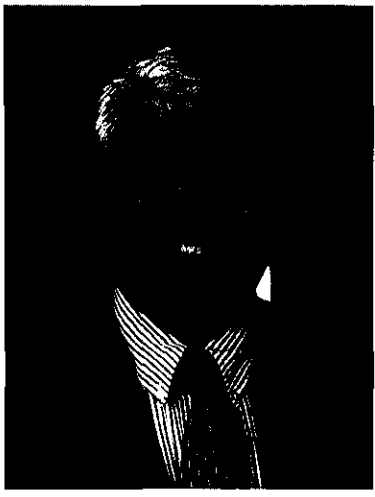
The rescue robot combines recent advances in wireless technology, laser scanning, vision sensors, thermal imaging and carbon dioxide sensors, to create an integrated system with sophisticated remote control and sensing capability.

Professor Rick Middleton from the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment said, "The advances in robot coordination, recognition and communication that we are conducting in the domain of robot soccer will ultimately drive the future of machine-led technology. The long term aim of our robotics projects is to develop robots that can help and support humans and ultimately improve the quality and safety of our environment."



The NUbots team at the Newcastle Robotics Laboratory combines researchers from Computer Science, Electrical Engineering and Statistics. The Laboratory has enjoyed support

from the University of Newcastle and the ARC Centre for Complex Dynamic Systems and Control for several years, and recently secured sponsorship from BHP Billiton Innovation.



# Moving Forward

Now that the University Council has approved the Change Management Plan, we are in a much better position to look beyond the University's current difficulties and commence detailed discussion about our future. In order to get the ball rolling, I have distributed to all staff a brief paper about how the University might look ten years from now, on our 50th birthday.

This discussion paper is a formative document. To be useful, it needs to be informed and shaped by much discussion

among the University community over the next six months and then translated into a useful Institutional Strategic Plan for the 2007-09 triennium.

The paper is based on preliminary discussions that have been held with members of the Senior Executive Group, Heads of School and a number of committees including the Community Relations and Research and Research Training Portfolio Committees. Staff seem to agree that our future depends on: a mix of careful planning, imagination and willingness to make choices; explicit linkage of resources to academic plans; focused effort with an eye to excellence, integrity, innovation, equity and diversity and respect for knowledge; and organisational re-invigoration and cultural change.

The next step in developing the University's new strategic plan is a workshop to be held with members of the University Council and the Senior Executive Group next month. The

purpose of this workshop is to gain the approval of our governing body for the broad direction to be followed by the University. Once approval is received, we will be in a strong position to engage all staff in detailed discussion about our future.

In the meantime, I'd greatly appreciate hearing from you about your initial reactions to the "Newcastle at 50 years" document.

There is an important shorter-term planning process also underway. This relates to activities proposed for next year and will bring Operational Plans prepared by faculties and divisions into the development of the 2006 Budget. The budget will be brought to the 12 October meeting of Academic Senate for comment and advice before going to the Council for approval later that month.

I hope that these activities will be the start of a regular planning cycle for the University which more closely ties our immediate plans and resources to

longer term goals and which effectively engages all academic and general staff in determining our future.

The transition from where we are now to where we need to be in twelve months time needs to be managed through implementation of the Change Management Plan approved by Council. Central to successful implementation is the reorganisation of our administrative support units and systems.

The work done by PA Consulting Group over the last six months has been invaluable in supporting necessary change across the University. Consultants always receive criticism – it comes with the job – but I believe that we would not have come to such a common view of our future without their assistance and methodology. PA staff have worked closely with University staff as a team, thereby building an understanding of the organisation while still providing an independent evaluation. The constructive

amendments to PA Consulting's original report made by staff during the consultation phase have strengthened the proposal without altering the fundamental shared services model.

PA Consulting will continue to work with the University over the next six months to support the change teams being assembled and to assist the implementation of information technology systems that are essential to the success and sustainability of the change program.

The Change Program Office, led by Ms Lynne Benton, is playing a key role in implementing the Change Plan. Office staff will be holding numerous workshops in the coming months to develop detailed implementation strategies for each and every part of the University. I encourage you all to participate.

Nicholas Saunders  
Vice-Chancellor and President

## Opinion

# Cool it on climate change

"There is an alarming trend amongst scientists, politicians and the general community that climate change is real, is proven and is inevitable", says Dr Stewart Franks, leading hydro-climatologist from the University of Newcastle.

"The degree of concern amongst these groups is completely disproportionate to the actual facts."

"When leading politicians start arguing that we need to invest in nuclear technology to avert an environmental crisis, it can only be described as the most twisted logic. The idea that nuclear power stations are an answer to climate change is ridiculous."

"There remains no safe way of dealing with highly radioactive nuclear waste. As we've seen in Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Windscale, the operation of nuclear power stations is not guaranteed to be safe. Are we ready to expose ourselves to such high nuclear risks for a problem like climate change that remains speculative?"

Despite the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warnings about the likelihood of climate change, Dr Franks points out that there has never

been any direct evidence of increased CO2 leading to climate change.

"The models that are used, work by assuming that we know everything there is to know about climate and how it works. In reality, this just isn't the case. The models have great difficulties in simulating the historic climate variability – when the simulations are compared against real observations of climate, the models perform very badly indeed."

"The warming and cooling trends that were seen over the twentieth century do not appear to be in line with the emissions history of CO2. For instance, the largest warming occurred in the first half of the last century when CO2 levels were more or less stable – that warming cannot be attributed to CO2."

"It is entirely understandable that during an extreme drought people might decide that climate change is real. Whilst such droughts appear to be the worst on record, the records are not long enough to capture the true extent of natural variability in Australia. It is no evidence for a changed climate and certainly no evidence for CO2 as the driving force."

"There is a notion in society that climate

is stable and does not change. In fact, the Australian climate is highly variable from year to year, from decade to decade and then again on longer timescales."

"It is particularly important for rural communities to get the right information," said Dr Franks.

"The alarm about climate change does not help these people to deal with their current dilemmas. It is particularly important not to induce fear in these communities that are already at the limit of their physical and mental wellbeing during such adverse circumstances."

"I am not arguing that climate change caused by CO2 may not be real and may not be important at some point in the future – I am simply arguing that it is not proven and it is not significant compared to natural sources of climate variability as yet. There is far more work to be done in assessing whether future climate change is a real threat or not."

Dr Franks is involved in University of Newcastle research teams that have received grants totalling over \$600,000 for two projects to research ways to better assess the long-term history of droughts in Australia.

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# Funding for future engineers

"There is a major skills shortage looming for professional engineers in Australia that needs to be addressed at the school level as a matter of urgency," says Professor Adrian Page, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Professor Page and a team of researchers at the University of Newcastle have received grants totalling over \$280,000 to identify what best turns school students into engineering students. This includes a generous grant of \$75k from industry partners Engineers Australia and Ampcontrol Ltd.

The multi-disciplinary team of researchers from engineering, science and education, in partnership with Engineers Australia and Ampcontrol, will develop a national communication strategy for promoting engineering studies to secondary students.

Professor Page says the national communication strategy will aim to counter the continuing nationwide decline in high school student enrolment in higher level mathematics and science.

"This is already leading to a reduction in the number of students undertaking university engineering programs in Australia and the situation is expected to worsen. This project is directed toward a better understanding of the reasons for the engineering skill shortage trend and the development of strategies to reverse it," says Professor Page.

The Science and Engineering Challenge is one initiative of the University that has been found to have

an impact on school students taking up science and engineering subjects. Figures from the NSW Board of Studies already show that there is a direct relationship between the introduction of the Challenge in high schools and increased numbers of students entering science and engineering subjects when they continue into Years 11 and 12. Last year the Federal Government allocated \$680,000 over three years to expand the Challenge Australia wide.

The research project will evaluate the Challenge and other initiatives that increase student's interests and understanding of engineering, and ultimately increase participation in engineering studies.

Newcastle based international company Ampcontrol is enthusiastic about promoting engineering as a career path and committed to research in the field. Last year the company, in partnership with the University, established ResTech – a research and development company that combines the skills, competencies, knowledge and diversity of Ampcontrol, a provider of innovative power and electronic products and services, with the intellectual engine of the University. The goal is to create a market-recognised centre of excellence in engineering and research.

Recently, Associate Professor Robert Betz was appointed to the Chair in Power Engineering in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. The Chair is sponsored by Ampcontrol.



Preparing for the Book Fair are (from left): Pat Flowers (Convenor of the Book Fair), Irena Webb, Anne van Niekerk, Lesley Gent and Ross Edmonds

## A biennial chance

**It only happens once every two years – your chance to pick up some bargain books or perhaps add to your collection of rare books. The Friends of the University of Newcastle are presenting their 2005 Book Fair from 27 August until 3 September.**

Held biennially, the Book Fairs have raised well in excess of \$500,000 over the last 22 years. The funds are directed into major projects on the University grounds as well as four scholarships – the Friends of the University Sports Scholarship, the Friends of the University John Lambert Memorial Open Foundation Scholarship, the Friends of the University Honours Scholarship and the Ken Gordon Commerce Scholarship.

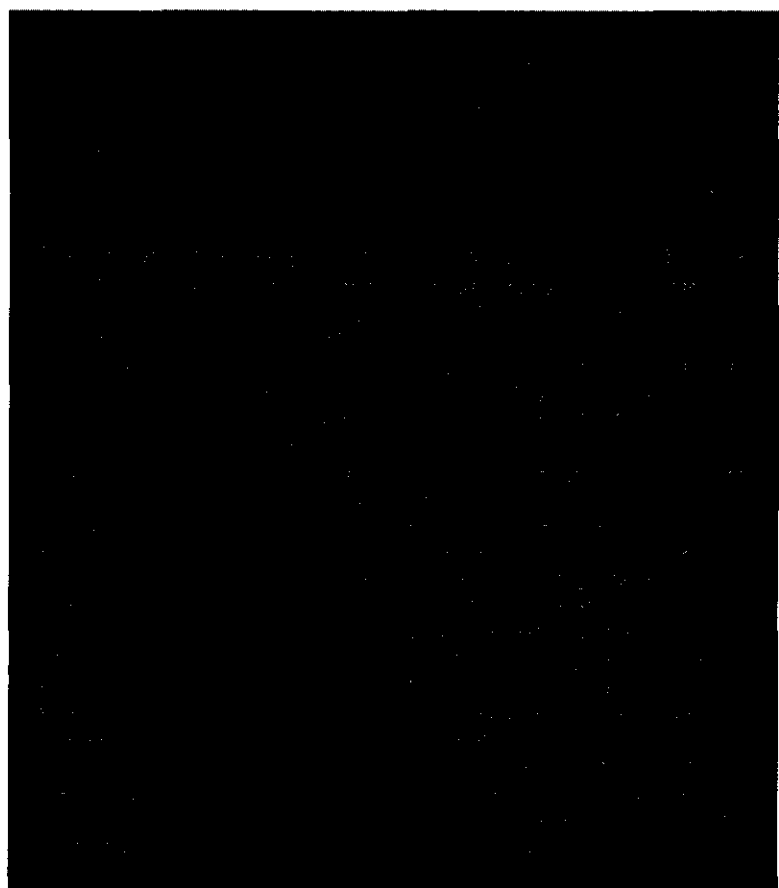
Projects made possible by funding from the Friends include the Auchmuty Library Roof Garden, the Wetlands

Pavilion, the tapestry in the Great Hall, carpet and computers in International House and the Don Morris Walk.

Friends President, Vic Levi estimates that about 60,000 people visit each book fair. "We have a team of volunteers, under the leadership of former librarian Pat Flowers, who work each week for two years cataloguing each and every book that has been donated," he said. "Some of the books are very valuable and we have a slow auction of rare books on the last Saturday, which attracts people from near and far."

Among the rare items to be auctioned is a series of scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings about the lives and triumphs of the Beatles with clippings from 1963 to 1973.

A record number of books, magazines, cds, sheet music and records covering a wide range of interests will go on sale when the 2005 Book Fair in the Great Hall opens at 10am on 27 August.



The Friends of the University of Newcastle

## 2005 Book Fair

27 August – 3 September

Sat – Sun: 10am – 5pm  
Mon – Fri: 10am – 4pm  
(Open till 7pm on Thursday)

The Great Hall  
Callaghan campus  
Enquiries: 4946 8859



Years of

# the art



## Sound commitment

To defy tradition and build a piano that challenges over 100 years of established practice requires knowledge, courage and conviction. It also requires someone else to believe in you. The University of Newcastle's Conservatorium of Music and TUNRA had that belief in Wayne Stuart when he began his research project into the way pianos were constructed.

The resulting Stuart and Sons pianos have a revolutionary sound thanks to Mr Stuart's innovation of supporting the strings in agraffes. In conventional pianos, the strings are bent around bridge pins which results in the vibration moving into the horizontal as well as the vertical plane, accelerating the speed at which the sound dies away. The agraffes reduce the horizontal movement which means the strings vibrate longer.

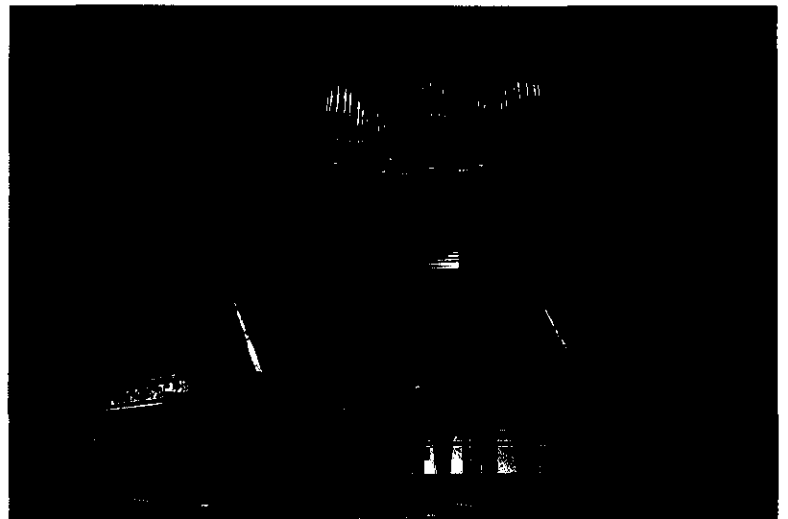
"All this means is that it has a greater dynamic range and can be played both louder and softer than the standard piano without losing clarity," explained Mr Stuart.

To date, the Stuart piano has been recognised by the New South Wales Government, which selected it for

inclusion in the Australian Technology Showcase in the lead-up to the 2000 Olympic Games; pianos have been commissioned by the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Festival and the Powerhouse Museum; and exported internationally to the Welsh College of Music and Drama. In fact there are now five Stuart and Sons pianos overseas.

In 2000, a prestigious Aria Award for Best Classical Recording of the Year was granted for a recording of the Beethoven Sonatas, featuring pianist Gerard Willems playing a Stuart piano. Willems is widely regarded as Australia's leading interpreter of Beethoven.

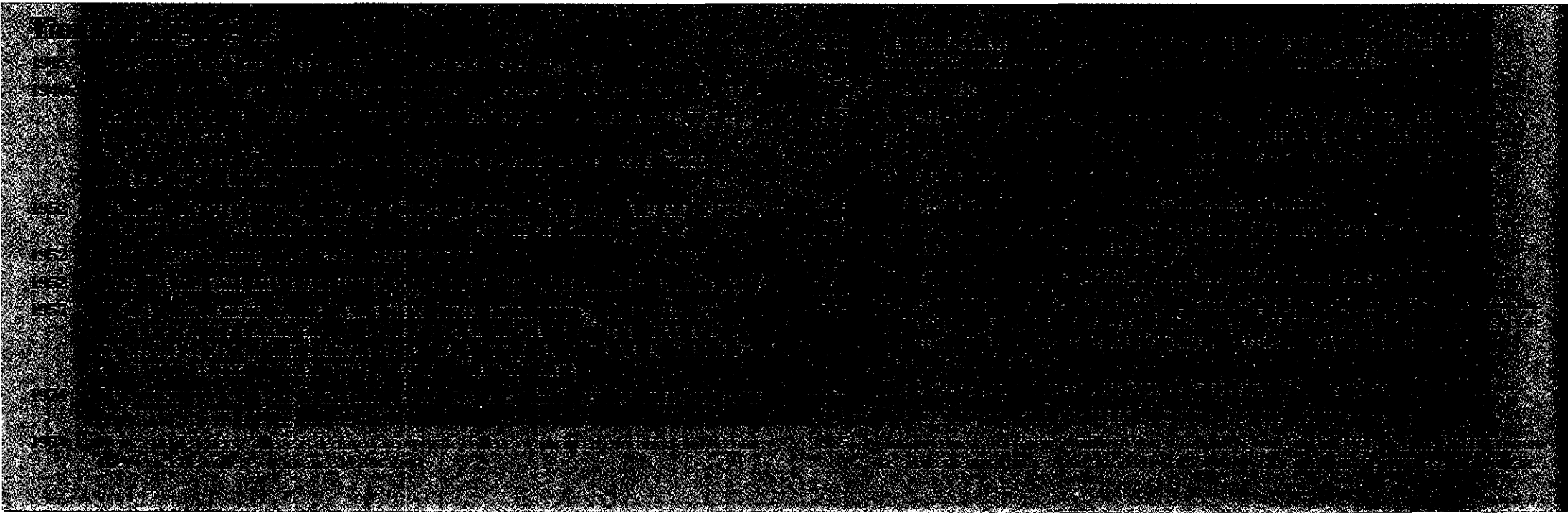
This year, Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*, a landmark music performance (again by Willems on a Stuart and Sons



piano) and documentary made by former cinematographer and television producer Brendan Ward for ABC Classics, won the 2005 Award for Music DVD Excellence in New York last month. Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* was chosen from 10 finalists in the Music DVD section, one of 35 categories in the DVD Association Awards which attracted entries from all around the world.

The DVD also features an interview with Professor Robert Constable, Dean of Music, who supported Mr Stuart's initial research. The Conservatorium and TUNRA supported the research between 1995 and 2002, at which time a private partnership was offered to Mr Stuart so that he could set up an independent company.

Thanks to the staff of the Conservatorium – School of Music and Drama, the School of Fine Art and the Director of Watt Space for their assistance.





Top left: Mr Frank Hutchens – piano teacher, composer and one of the founders of the Newcastle Conservatorium

Left: Two Stuart and Sons pianos with the Smenge organ in the background

Right: 2002 production of *Engaged* by the Drama Department

Top middle: Official opening of Watt Space with (from left) Bryan Bulley, George Drewery, Peter Singleton, Jacquie Henderson, William Bowmore and Phil Oke



## A dramatic impact

From the very outset in the mid 70s, Drama at the University of Newcastle made its mark. There was an energy, an originality, a willingness to experiment that hadn't been seen on a Newcastle stage before. Productions varied but departures from mainstream theatre were common.

And it wasn't just on-campus. Students were actively involved in theatre troupes they had established themselves as a channel for their creativity. There was the Warehouse Group; and of course the Castanet Club, which attracted an almost cult following.

The University's discipline of Drama certainly made and continues to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. And indeed many of our graduates are now household names nationally.

Graduates of the discipline now working in theatre, film and media include film actor Susie Porter, television personalities John Doyle (aka Roy Slaven), Mikey Robbins, Steve Abbott (aka the Sandman) and Tony Squires, actors Glenn Butcher, Jonathan Biggins, Timothy Richards, and Glenn Hazeldine, and actor/director David Berthold (an English graduate).

In addition recent graduates in the past two years have formed three new Newcastle theatre companies – Keyhole, Synergy and Stooged.

From the very beginning, productions formed an important part of the discipline's teaching program. No selection could do justice to the rich and varied range, encompassing works in a variety of styles from Australia, Europe, and America, but highlights of the 80s included Dorothy Hewitt's *The Chapel Perilous*, Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, Williamson's *Don's Party*, David Allen's *Florrie* (written for the Drama Department) and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.

More recent outstanding productions include Catherine Zimdahl's *Clark in Sarajevo*, Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Love of the Nightingale*, Nick Enright's *A Property of the Clan* and Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*.

Many of Professor Victor Emeljanow's productions have received City of Newcastle Drama Awards (CONDAs) over the years including *Masterclass* for the Hunter Valley Theatre Company, *The Caretaker*, *As You Like It*, *Anna Karenina* and *Gross Indecency: the Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* with the University. In recent years original scripts by students have increasingly been performed, including in 2004-5 *Sainted Demons* and *Wonder*.

Last year a collaborative effort between Drama, the School of Fine Art and the Newcastle Region Art Gallery saw the production of *Museum* by American playwright, Tina Howe, staged in the Gallery.

Opening this month in the Civic Playhouse is *Subterranean Uni Blues*, commissioned from Drama lecturer Dr Carl Caulfield especially for performance by the University's Drama students.

*Subterranean Uni Blues* is a comedy about student life, as seen from the students' perspective. Well known Novacastrian actor Rod Ansell also features in the play. The season opens on 24 August – details are in the What's Happening column on page 8.

## Watt Space?

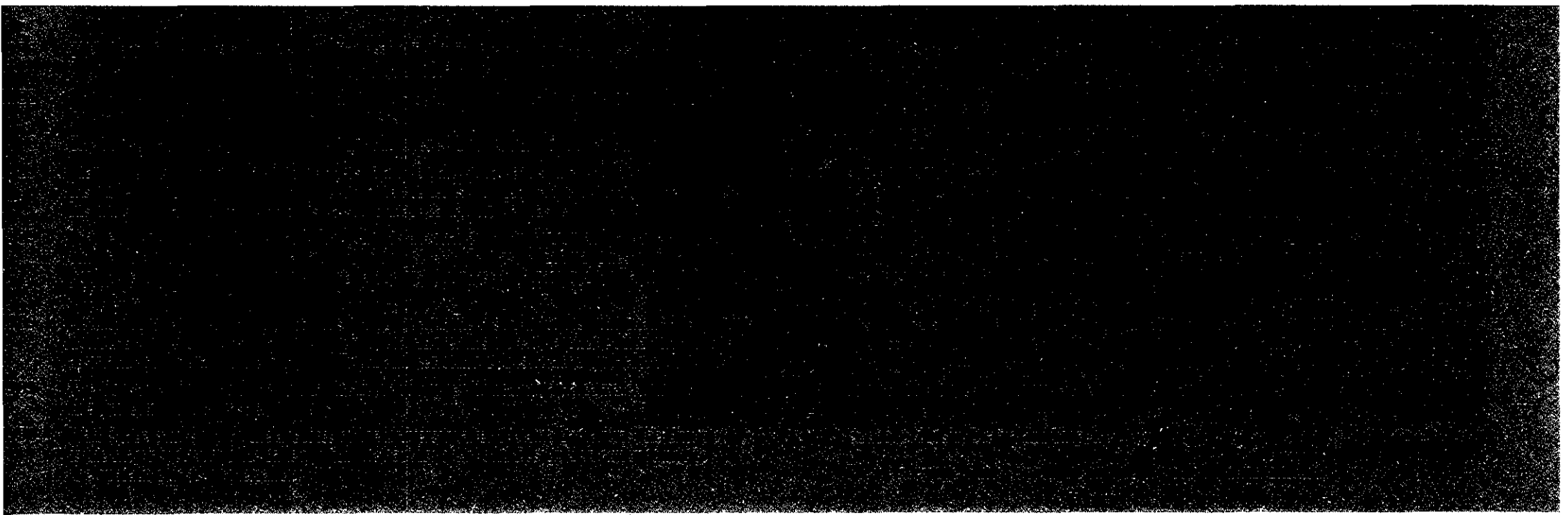
Watt Space, the student gallery of the University of Newcastle, is a vibrant and active place. It continues the tradition, established in 1989, of this contemporary site as a vital blend of student initiative in the exhibiting, curating and management of student art. The gallery's continued success is underpinned by financial and infrastructure support from its major sponsor – The University of Newcastle Union Limited with additional funding also from the School of Fine Art.

Students of the School of Fine Art and other related disciplines are the prime inhabitants of the gallery: as members of the exhibition selection panel, occupying the executive positions of the Gallery

Management Committee, as exhibitors, performers, volunteers, curators and visitors. Watt Space provides invaluable opportunities and experience to students of the University as emerging artists –

their first real exhibition experience introduces to them, with resounding clarity, the dynamics of siting their completed artworks in a public space for the first time. Watt Space can boast many current arts practitioners and industry professionals who had their first steps as artists in Watt Space.

Currently over four hundred students drawn from PhD to undergraduate students exhibit annually at the gallery in over 50 exhibitions that include solo, group, curated and prize shows. The importance and relevance of Watt Space as a site of professional practice for emerging artists from the University has contributed to its regional and national reputation as a premier student gallery.



# Tackling unemployment on both sides of the Tasman

On the weekend of June 18 – 19, nine members of the New Zealand Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTF) visited the University to extend their research partnership with the Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CofFEE) and to participate in a workshop jointly hosted by CofFEE and the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, John Tate. For the first time, the workshop brought together Mayors from Australia and New Zealand to explore how local governments can lead a cultural shift that guarantees jobs for all those able to work.

In February 2000, a group of New Zealand Mayors established the MTF to provide a national focus for Mayors concerned about the future of work and livelihood in their communities. Five years on, 92 per cent of Mayors are members and the Taskforce has formed partnerships with the national government, government departments, business leaders, trade unions and community organisations. The goal of the MTF is to work towards the “zero waste of New Zealanders” and one of its key concerns has been to create opportunities for young people. Despite strong growth in the New Zealand economy, only a small proportion of jobs created have gone to the young unemployed.

The relationship between CofFEE and the MTF began when the Taskforce started looking for academic research on creating full employment. The MTF has made CofFEE’s model of a Job Guarantee (JG) central to its vision. Under the JG, the national government would provide a “buffer stock” of minimum wage public sector jobs for those unable to find paid work. The jobs would be organised on a local level, and would support community development and environmental sustainability. CofFEE’s Job Guarantee is now operating in Argentina and the MTF has secured a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand government to introduce a JG for young people (aged 15 to 19 years) by 2007. Across 2003 and 2004 there were budget commitments of \$114 million for initiatives to support this goal.

In welcoming the Mayors to the University, the Vice Chancellor said the collaboration between the MTF and CofFEE was “a wonderful example of civic leaders drawing on applied academic research to foster a more inclusive society”. As a result of the weekend’s discussions CofFEE will now provide the Taskforce with advice on the macroeconomic policy settings required to support the MTF’s cultural goals.

The June 19 workshop provided Mayors from the Hunter region, Sydney and the South Coast of New South Wales with an opportunity to exchange ideas with their New Zealand colleagues. The discussions explored how local governments in Australia could show leadership in tackling the entrenched problem of unemployment and ending the damage it causes to local people and communities.

In their presentations to the workshop, the Chair of the MTF and Mayor of Christchurch, Garry Moore, and the Community Adviser to the MTF, Vivian Hutchinson, stressed that the MTF started from setting a cultural goal and that the key lesson from their journey was the importance of working out whether you care about the way in which “lives and potential are being wasted by the scourge of unemployment and to make a start in doing something about it.” In the first meeting of the MTF, Mayors of all political parties and persuasions simply talked about the barriers to employment, particularly facing young people, in their own communities. They realised that there was a lot of money being spent on ‘organising the problem’ that could have been better spent on jobs and that many of the barriers existed across communities



The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, John Tate; the Chair of the New Zealand Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and Mayor of Christchurch, Garry Moore; the Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Newcastle, Professor Nicholas Saunders; and the Director of the Centre of Full Employment and Equity, Professor Bill Mitchell

and could only be addressed through the development of partnerships. The partnerships formed have been pivotal to the significant progress made.

The Australian Mayors indicated their support for the formation of an Australian Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, and the Lord Mayor of Newcastle has undertaken to organise a meeting to form this body in the coming weeks. John Tate said the “level of unemployment in the Hunter is a social failure and local Mayors were in a unique position to understand why it had arisen in their own communities. The challenge now was to adopt the MTF approach to governance; an approach that champions taking action to generate

jobs and address skill needs.”

CofFEE Director, Professor Bill Mitchell, said CofFEE will provide Mayors with the “research support and policy ideas needed to realise a critical social goal”. Valuable research input will flow from two ARC Linkage Grants awarded to CofFEE researchers. The first grant – held by Bill Mitchell and Martin Watts in partnership with Jobs Australia – is examining how a Job Guarantee program could work on the ground. The second grant – awarded to Bill Mitchell in partnership with Hunter Mental Health in the latest funding round – will look at creating effective employment solutions for young people with psychosis.

## Four Linkage grants to the University

The University of Newcastle has received four Federally funded Linkage grants for projects in Engineering, Hydrology and Applied Economics.

**Dr Stewart Franks** from the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment is involved in a research team that will work in partnership with the Sydney Catchment Authority in the Sydney Warragamba catchment to develop an historic record of drought and flood occurrence.

The information will be used to estimate true flood and drought risks and management of water resources appropriately.

**Professor Bill Mitchell** has received a grant to study international models which provide effective work and support services to young people with severe mental illness.

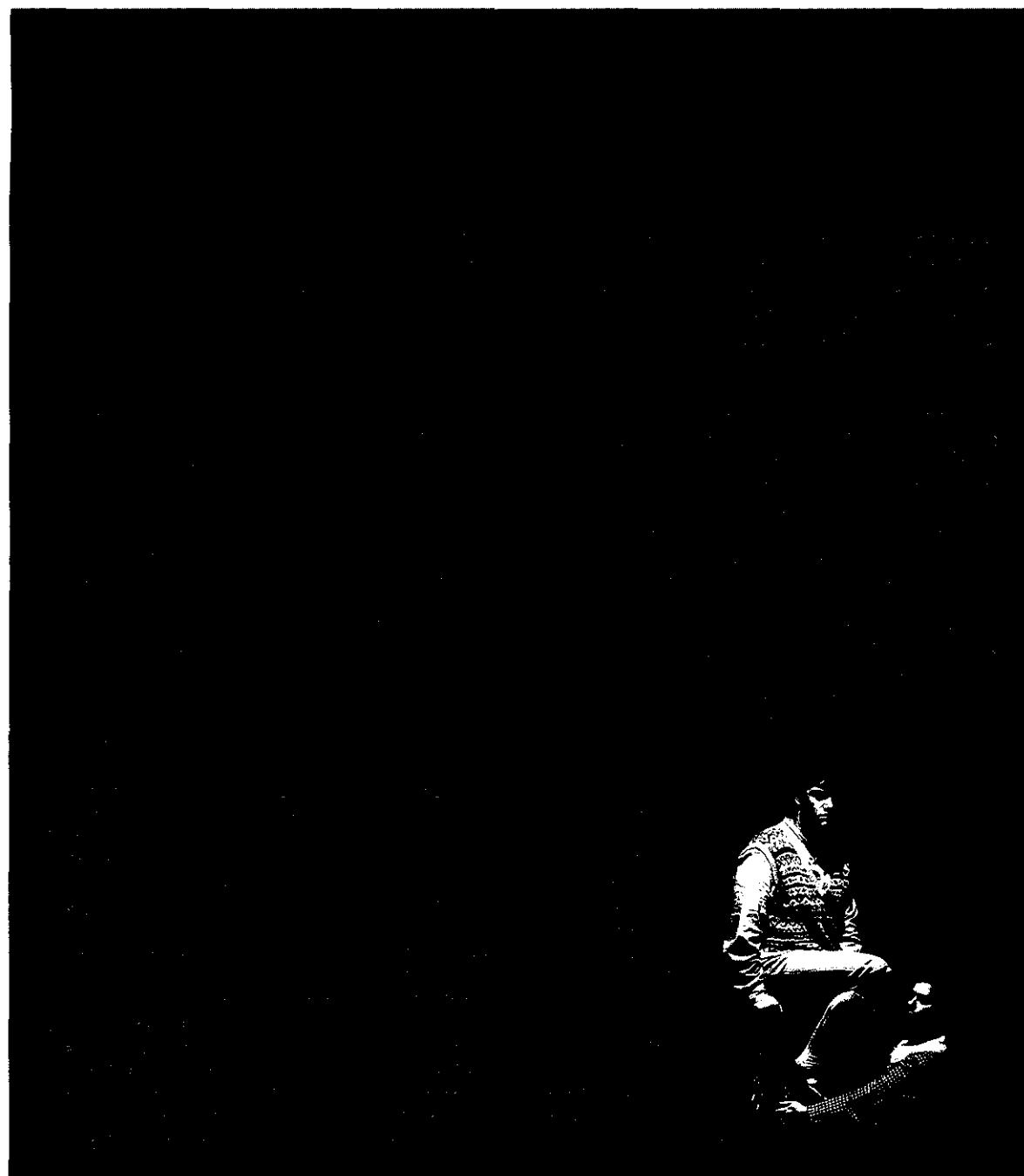
Professor Mitchell says that without early intervention and access to supported employment, health and rehabilitation services, these people face long-term welfare dependency. He received the grant in partnership with Hunter Mental Health.

**Dr Mark Thyer** is part of a team of researchers who have received a Linkage grant to assess drought risks in partnership with Hunter Water Corporation.

Dr Thyer says they will be developing a framework to simulate multi time scale variability in hydrological data, to provide water resource planners with more accurate assessments of long-term drought risks.

**Professor John O’Connor** from the Faculty of Science and Information Technology is part of a team which has received a Linkage grant in partnership with Ampcontrol and Engineers Australia to look at the reasons for the decline in the number of school students who take up science and mathematics.

Professor O’Connor says there will be a great skill shortage in these areas if the trend is not reversed. The University’s Science and Engineering Challenge aimed at Year 10 students has been shown to have a positive effect in encouraging students into these fields but, he says, they are looking at understanding reasons for students’ lack of interest in the fields of mathematics and science.





# Funding to develop 'premature birth computer program'

HMRI researchers have received a grant of \$380,000 from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to develop a computer program that will help doctors to more accurately predict whether a pregnant woman will deliver prematurely.

Principal investigator Professor Roger Smith, Director of the University of Newcastle's Mothers and Babies Research Centre, will collaborate with Professor David Smith, Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Melbourne, to develop a computer program to capture the multiple variables affecting the timing of birth, allowing a more accurate prediction of the timing of birth.

"An important aspect of being born healthy is being born at the right time. There are about 17,000 premature births in Australia each year, resulting in 1300 deaths. For those babies who survive, there are enormous ongoing health costs and increased risk of intellectual handicap and cerebral palsy," Professor Roger Smith said.

"We know that the measurement of corticotrophin-releasing hormone (CRH) in the blood of pregnant women can be used to determine the timing of birth.

However, current measurement of CRH by itself is not accurate enough. Pilot data suggest a better prediction can be made by combining measurement of CRH with other factors using a computer program", Professor Smith said.

"This will be an important advance in the prevention of premature birth. By developing an effective method of predicting premature birth based on the pattern of key variables during pregnancy, obstetricians will be able to deliver more effective antenatal care and carry out trials of early intervention to allow care to be targeted to those most in need," Professor Smith said.

The Mothers and Babies Research Centre in Newcastle has an international reputation for its research into preterm birth and particularly for the factors that determine the timing of birth. The group discovered the biological clock in the placenta that determines the length of a woman's pregnancy.



# \$3.2M boost for Hunter cancer research

HMRI cancer researchers from the University of Newcastle and the Mater Hospital Newcastle have received grants totalling \$3.23M, over five years, from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG) received \$1.39M, while Professor Stephen Ackland received \$1.84M.

Principal Investigators Dr Peter O'Brien and Professor Jim Denham, and their team at the Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG) conduct radiotherapy clinical trials to treat cancer. The grant will fund the establishment of infrastructure to enable TROG to carry out Australia-wide studies coordinated from Newcastle.

Dr O'Brien said, "Cancer is currently the leading cause of death among Australians and radiation oncology is of major importance in the curative and palliative management of cancer.

Based on the best available evidence, about 50% of patients with cancer should have radiotherapy as part of their treatment."

"This grant will enable the use of 3D electronic review software which will lead to improvements in radiotherapy."

"Carefully designed and run clinical trials will result in improvements in radiotherapy scheduling and delivery, and a better understanding of how to integrate it with other treatment methods" said Dr O'Brien.

TROG is a world leader in the research and development of radiation treatment as demonstrated by the recent success of the TROG 96.01 trial on prostate cancer. In the last two months TROG has received \$2M in grants.

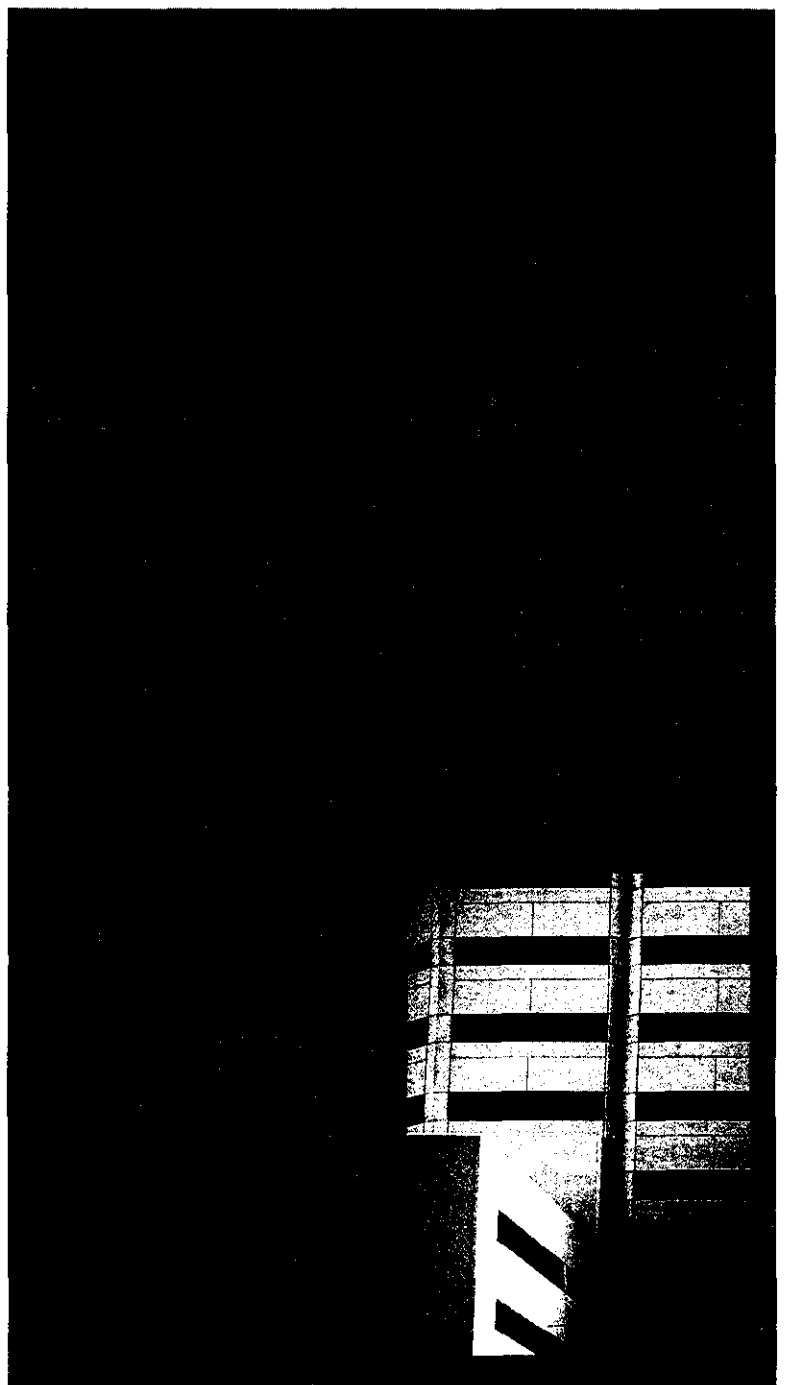
Professor Steve Ackland  
Each year, 85,000 Australians develop cancer and 35,000 die of it.

The Clinical Oncological Society of Australia and nine Australian cancer

trials groups run studies that test new and better ways of preventing, curing, treating and palliating people affected by cancer. This grant will help these groups start trials faster, run them more efficiently, coordinate quality assurance and standardize operating procedures. This grant will enable collaboration that increases the speed, efficiency and quality of cancer research to lessen the suffering of people affected by cancer.

Professor John Rostas, Executive Director of HMRI, said, "This success highlights the national and international strength of HMRI's cancer researchers, particularly in clinical trials".


Mr Colin Osborne, General Manager of Mater Hospital Newcastle, said, "This funding announcement is recognition of the reputation for excellence held by cancer researchers at the Mater Hospital Newcastle".



Pictured are (l-r) Tristan Hunt, Rory Ford, Sally King, Weina Chen, Joe Hamway and Ian Parkinson, with coach Ms Ryan at the front

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA


## Conservatorium Courses 2005 – Early Childhood Music



**Pre-school Music (Newcastle & Maitland)**  
18 months to 5 years old  
The classes offer a variety of enjoyable activities including songs, rhymes, movement and playing of percussion instruments.

**Infants School Age Music (Newcastle & Maitland)**  
from 5 years old  
Through a wide range of musical activities children have fun developing their musical skills, including musical literacy. The program is sequential.

For further information and to reserve a place call 4921 8900.



# A very close third

The Newcastle Graduate School of Business team for the 2005 NSW/ACT Boston Consulting Group Intersvarsity Strategy Competition (held 22 July) performed brilliantly, according to Teaching, Learning and Quality Coordinator, Suzanne Ryan.

"They came a very, very close third after the Australian Graduate School

of Management and the Macquarie Graduate School of Management," Ms Ryan said. "The students, from Business Administration, Applied Finance and Marketing, should be congratulated for the effort they put into their preparation and their performance."

# What's Happening

## @ The University of Newcastle

### Celebrations

**August 19 – 6.30 – 8.30pm**

#### Sydney Alumni Medal Presentation

The Sydney Alumni Chapter is proud to honour the professional achievements of colleague and High Court judge, The Hon Justice Michael McHugh AC. Justice McHugh's extensive contribution to the legal profession and wider community will be recognised by presentation of the prestigious Sydney Alumni Medal at an exclusive cocktail function to be attended by legal professionals, peers and Sydney Chapter members. This special event will also commemorate Justice McHugh's impressive career as he will be retiring from the High Court of Australia later this year. All graduates, students, staff and friends of the University are invited to attend this very important event and encouraged to use this as an opportunity to reunite with colleagues and reconnect with the University.

#### University and Schools Club

60 Phillip Street, Sydney

Tickets: \$50 (inc GST)

for cocktail food and beverages.

For more details contact

Rebecca.Monk@newcastle.edu.au or 4921 2009 or visit the Alumni Diary at <http://alumni.newcastle.edu.au>

**September 24 – 6.30pm**

#### The University of Newcastle

#### 40th Anniversary Dinner

#### Brennan Room, Shortland Union, Callaghan Campus

The signature event of the 40th celebrations aims to reunite past and present staff, graduates and students, friends and supportive community members. This memorable evening will feature a host of special guests reminiscing on our University's milestones and characters. This event promises to deliver an evening that will be remembered for the next 40 years!

Details and enquiries to

Rebecca.Monk@newcastle.edu.au or 4921 2009

### Conferences

**December 8 and 9**

#### Creating a Culture of Full Employment

The Call for Papers is now open for the Creating a Culture of Full Employment Conference which will incorporate the 7th Path to Full Employment Conference and the 12th National Conference on Unemployment.

The aim of the Conference is to develop approaches which will help our communities develop the necessary cultural shifts that will compel policy-makers to move our economy back to full employment. A keynote speaker will be Daniel Kostzer, from the Ministry of Labour in the Argentinian Government, who will outline their Head of Households Job Guarantee approach to solving their nation's crisis and the role it has played in restoring economic stability.

There are many themes available for papers. Full details are available at [http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/conferences/2005/Call\\_for\\_Papers.cfm](http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/conferences/2005/Call_for_Papers.cfm) and the Conference homepage is: <http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/conferences/2005/index.cfm>

### Lectures

**September 2 – 6.00pm**

#### 2005 John Irvine Hunter

#### Memorial Lecture

#### The Developmental Origins

#### of Chronic Adult Disease

Presented by Professor David Barker

B Sc, PhD, MD, FRCP, FRCOG, FRS

#### The Ballroom, Crowne Plaza, Newcastle

Professor Barker is a world-leading scholar in preventative medicine. His research has shown that adult diseases including coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and hypertension originate through under nutrition in the womb.

This lecture is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr John Irvine Hunter. An anatomist, he was at the forefront of research and education, becoming Chair of Anatomy at the university of Sydney when he was only 25. He was mourned in international medical circles when he died in 1925 at the age of 27 and medical education still draws from his work today.

Please RSVP to [gina.caddies@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:gina.caddies@newcastle.edu.au)

or phone 4921 6378.

**September 15 – 1.00pm**

#### 2005 Human Rights/Social Justice Lecture

#### Poor me: In a world of individuals have we lost the

#### hope of 'the great society' and a healthy planet?

Presented by Nic Frances MBE.

Griffith Duncan Theatre, Callaghan campus

Nic Frances is the former Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, an internationally recognised social entrepreneur, and an innovator who has sought new ways of assisting the unemployed and marginalised and of creating an Australia free from poverty. He is an energetic advocate for long-term social change and an engaging and challenging speaker. Afternoon tea will be provided after the lecture.

For catering purposes, RSVP: the Equity and Diversity Unit on 4921 6547.

### Art

#### Watt Space

Cnr King and Auckland Streets, Newcastle

Wed – Sun, 12 noon – 6pm

**August 10 – 28**

FATE – curated by Barabara Callcott

No Man's Land – Crystal Davis

Your soul, it needs to sleep – Susan Cairns

Orchidae Arachni-femina – Faith Bull

**August 31 – September 18**

#### Annual Student Acquisitive Art Prize

Sponsored by the University of Newcastle

Union Limited

Curated by Lucas Grogan,

Watt Space Gallery Assistant

**September 21 – October 9**

Water – Pamela Chambeyron, Diane Ekiund-Abolins

On Land – Chris Byrnes

Culture of Cushions – Annemarie Karen

Surrender – Samara Ladd-Hudson

The Yellow Socks Brigade –

Lucas Grogan Luke Thurgate

Life – Water – Lily BeiBei Zhang

### Music

Please note: All concerts listed here are held at the University of Newcastle Conservatorium, Cnr Laman and Auckland Streets, Newcastle unless otherwise stated. For bookings please call 4921 8831.

**August 18 – 1.00pm**

#### Lunchtime Concert – Student Showcase

A concert presented by the students of the Conservatorium.

Adult – \$7.00 Conc. – \$6.00 Child – \$5.00

**August 20 – 1.00pm**

#### The University of Newcastle

#### Wind Orchestra

Conductor – Ian Cook

Firebird Suite – Stravinsky, Pineapple Poll – A. Sullivan,

Ballet for Band – Cole Porter

Adult – \$12.00 Conc. – \$8.00 Child – \$5.00

Family (4) – \$25.00

**August 25 – 1.00pm**

#### Lunchtime Concert

Bernadette Lannen – Soprano,

Chris Duncan – Scottish Fiddler

A concert of Folk and Classical song.

Celtic songs of Scotland to Mozart.

Adult – \$7.00 Conc. – \$6.00 Child – \$5.00

**August 29 – September 2**

#### Project Week

A week of special rehearsals, classes and concerts.

These activities will include a student musical and a Gala concert. Details on a separate brochure available at The Conservatorium from July.

Adult – \$7.00 Conc. – \$6.00 Child – \$5.00

**September 4, 11, 18 and 25 – 3.00pm**

#### ABC Classic FM Broadcast Concert

Free Concert Series.

Program contents on a separate brochure available late July.

### Rare Books

#### Lunchtime Readings

Readings will be held in the Friends' Reading Room in University Archives, Auchmuty Library, Callaghan campus from 12 noon until 1pm.

**August 30**

Readings from German literature in the original

German, celebrating Goethe's birthday –

28 August 1749.

### Drama

**August 24 – 27,**

**August 30 – September 3**

#### Subterranean Blues

Written and directed by Carl Caulfield

7.30pm

Civic Playhouse, Newcastle

**September 19 – 24**

#### Wolf Lullaby

By Hilary Bell

Directed by Maree Freeman

Academic Advisor Michael Ewans

7.30pm

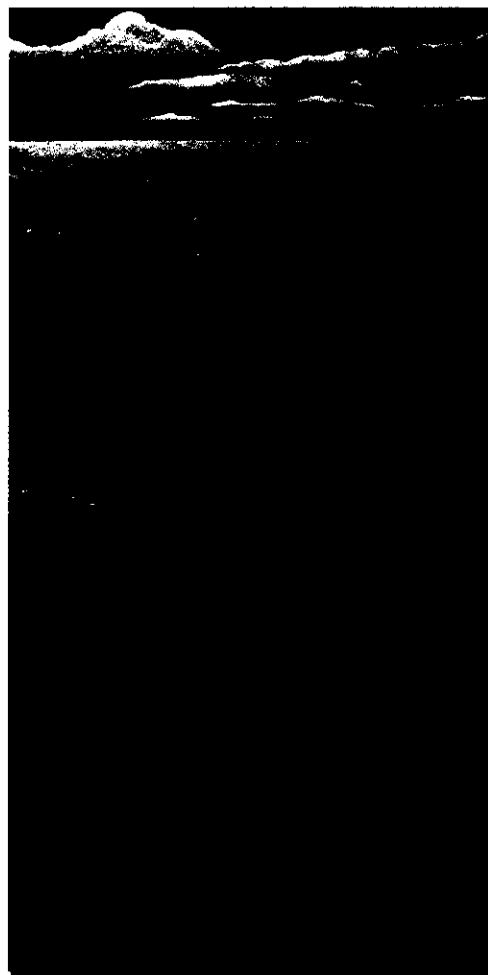
Drama Studio, Callaghan campus

### Music Lovers' Club

**August 25**

**September 13**

**September 29**



**Dehydrate I and II**  
oil on canvas by Crystal Davis

# No Man's Land

## Watt Space