

# MONASH News

Research, news and opinion from Monash University

Volume 7 | Number 9 | November 2004



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Each edition in 2004 highlights the work of one of the 10 faculties



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# Monash leads way with PACE

Monash University has become the first university in Australia to join forces with Partners for the Advancement of Collaborative Engineering Education (PACE).

The announcement was made by Victoria's Minister for Manufacturing and Export, Mr Tim Holding, and Monash vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins, in conjunction with PACE representative Mr Denny Mooney, chairman and managing director of Holden Australia.

The \$16 million alliance involves the university's Engineering and Art and Design faculties. The Art and Design faculty is only the second of its kind – and the first outside the US – to join PACE.

Under the agreement, PACE will provide industry-specific software and hardware and facilitate the training of undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff in product development activities.

Monash will gain access to leading software and hardware for 3-D solid modelling, 3-D plant layout, computer-assisted engineering/simulation, computer-aided manufacturing, product data management, digital collaboration and digital styling.

The PACE Engineering Centre will be established within the Department of Mechanical



## Industry links:

Professor Tam Sridhar (left) and Professor John Redmond have welcomed the university's alliance with PACE.

**Photo:**  
Melissa Di Ciero

Engineering at the university's Clayton campus. It will play a major role in the mechanical, mechatronics, aerospace and industrial engineering, and engineering management programs.

Meanwhile, the Art and Design PACE facilities at Caulfield campus will provide major benefits to Monash's industrial design students.

Professor Larkins welcomed the arrangement. "Monash is a major supplier of graduates to the design and manufacturing industries. PACE

facilities will support the training of students in industry-specific design applications, resulting in better employment outcomes for our undergraduate and postgraduate students," he said.

Monash Engineering faculty dean Professor Tam Sridhar said the university was excited by the prospect of further collaboration with the industry partners and other institutions.

"Our students will have the advantage of experience with high-quality, industrially relevant

tools, and we are introducing new projects to encourage challenging cross-disciplinary and group design work," he said.

Art and Design faculty dean Professor John Redmond said the alliance confirmed Monash's international reputation as one of Australia's leading art and design education institutions and as a place for excellence and innovation.

"The opportunity to learn from and work with some of the world's leading organisations will place our students at the forefront of leading-edge design," he said.

PACE, a corporate alliance since 1999 between General Motors (represented in Australia by Holden Limited), EDS, Sun Microsystems and UGS, has contributed software, hardware, training and technical support to schools such as Purdue, Michigan State, Northwestern and Virginia Tech, and institutions in Canada, China, Germany, Mexico and Sweden.

– Karen Stichtenoth

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For more information, visit [www.pacepartners.org](http://www.pacepartners.org).

## Monash student named 2005 Rhodes Scholar

A final-year year medicine student has become the fourth successive Monash student to be awarded the prestigious Victorian Rhodes Scholarship.

Ms Farnaz Sabet, who was named the 2005 Victorian Rhodes Scholar last week, is hoping to defer her scholarship while she completes an internship in Darwin next year.

The 24-year-old plans to take up her scholarship at Oxford University in 2006, where she will undertake a masters program in development studies.

Ms Sabet, who was awarded the medicine Faculty Prize every year in her first three years at Monash and received VCE Premier's Awards in English and Chemistry in 1997, said she was shocked to find she had won the scholarship.

"I wasn't even going to apply for this – so I really wasn't expecting I would win," she said.

Ms Sabet completed Year 12 at Beaconsfield Christian College then took a year off before starting her studies at Monash.

During her year off she travelled through Zambia and Korea, where she assisted Baha'i faith communities.

"Zambia transformed me, and I approached my medical studies following their example of non-discriminating friendliness," she said.

Back in Melbourne, she formed the Clown Nine performing arts/clowning group that entertained children in hospital and refugee centres. She has also been a faculty member of the Baha'i-inspired Education for Peace program for youth.

In 2002, Ms Sabet spent five weeks in the remote Aboriginal community of Kintore helping address physical and social challenges in the community and last year she worked at the Bugando hospital in Tanzania over the summer.

"My extensive involvement with less fortunate communities has made me realise that bringing about effective change will need to involve more than my clinical skills," she said.

"I hope that having an opportunity to do a Masters in Development Studies at Oxford will provide the vision



'Heading' for Oxford: Farnaz Sabet. Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

and teach me the skills required to help initiate such transformation in communities, and I hope to focus my medical degree on the development of health needs.

Previous Monash Rhodes Scholars include Mr Lucas Bluff (2004), Ms Geraldine Buckingham (2003) and Mr Nathan Grills (2002).

The Rhodes scholarship was established after the death of British colonialist Cecil Rhodes in 1902.

– Diane Squires

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Distinguished Research Award recipient: Associate Professor Euan Heng.

Photo: Greg Ford

## Lifetime achievements in fine arts recognised

### Fine arts research

A Monash University academic has been recognised for a lifetime of excellence in fine arts research.

Associate Professor Euan Heng received the Australian Council of University Art and Design School (ACUADS) Distinguished Research Award during a special presentation at the council's annual conference in September.

The award acknowledges the recipient's sustained and consistent contribution to research in the visual arts, crafts and design sector.

Associate Professor Heng was recognised for his contribution to fine arts studio research, including the supervision, examination and management of higher degrees by research.

"I was both pleased and flattered

to receive this award, but I also acknowledge my good fortune in the excellent students I've had the privilege to supervise, plus all the great co-supervisors and graduate officers I have worked with," he said.

Art and Design faculty dean Professor John Redmond was delighted the research achievements of Associate Professor Heng had been acknowledged among his peers.

"The award recognises a distinguished career in fine arts research," he said. "It also acknowledges Euan's leadership and exemplary role in developing Monash's higher degree by research program in the fine arts into one of the most significant in the country."

– Karen Stichtenoth

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# From the vice-chancellor's desk

One of the privileges of my position is the opportunity to meet some extraordinary people. I was truly humbled last week to have the opportunity to meet a delegation from Iraq, which included the President of the Iraqi Academy of Science, Professor Hussain Al-Shahristani.

Professor Shahristani was the head of the Iraqi nuclear program that was working on the peaceful use of nuclear energy before Saddam Hussein seized power. In 1979 he was ordered by Saddam to divert his efforts to the development of nuclear weapons. He declined. He was arrested, and after a period of torture he was held in solitary confinement for 10 years. During that time he was kept in a small cell, allowed no books or writing materials and occasionally given a newspaper, which reported only Saddam's propaganda. After 10 years of solitary confinement, he was moved to normal prison with other prisoners for a further two years. During the Gulf War in 1991, he escaped over the mountains to Iran and then to the West where he has been a reasoned and articulate advocate for human rights before his return to Iraq following the downfall of Saddam Hussein. Incredibly, despite his ordeal he is a quiet and humble man, without obvious bitterness and with quiet reserves of strength and resolve.

Coincidentally, the weekend following this visit I travelled to South Africa for board meetings of Monash South Africa. I took the opportunity to visit other South African universities to bring them up to date with the progress of our South African campus and to inform them of our wish to work collaboratively within the higher education sector in South Africa (a message which was very positively received). Between visits to the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University, I had the opportunity to visit Robben Island, the site of imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and hundreds of other black political prisoners during the apartheid era. I saw his tiny cell, the courtyard where the prisoners spent countless days meaninglessly crushing rocks and the limestone quarry where they laboured in the searing heat of summer and the cold of winter. It is almost incomprehensible that Mandela could spend 25 years under such conditions and emerge without bitterness and with the knowledge and skills to lead South Africa through a peaceful and fundamental



A monthly column by the vice-chancellor of Monash University, **Professor Richard Larkins**

transition from one of the least democratic and most repressive regimes to what is becoming a peaceful and increasingly robust and successful democracy.

Contrasting with the enormous personal ordeals that Mandela and Shahristani were prepared to endure to make the world a better place, we have just endured an election campaign where both major political parties based their policies around short-term populist agendas fuelled by extravagant spending to appeal to voters' immediate self-interest. The lamentably low extent of foreign aid, the inhumane treatment of refugees and the development of fair multilateral trade agreements allowing poor nations an opportunity to trade themselves out of poverty did not figure in the debate. Nor did the need for programs to support new approaches to international systems of governance and justice and programs to address long-term environmental problems.

It makes me more convinced than ever that good universities have a critical role to play in developing leaders for the future who have the long-term vision and conviction necessary to make the world a better place. Individuals such as Mandela and Shahristani are exceptional in every way, but their values should be widely shared and celebrated, and universities must propagate them. It is also clear that our political cycle with its three-year focus on re-election will not produce policies needed to provide a stable and sustainable future for our planet. The thinking and advocacy to drive these agendas must be fostered at universities such as Monash.

— **Richard Larkins**

## Business school for the future

Monash University has officially unveiled Australia's newest and largest business school, designed to cater for increasing international and local demands for postgraduate business training.

The Monash Graduate School of Business is based in Australia's largest business faculty, Monash's Faculty of Business and Economics.

It has been formed through a restructure and re-packaging of Monash's suite of existing research and graduate degrees, including the MBA, as well as specialist masters degrees including accounting and finance, human resources, marketing, business law and taxation, and economics.

— **Robyn Anns**

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**Meeting demand:** Monash vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins, Business and Economics faculty dean Professor Gill Palmer and Monash GSB director Professor Owen Hughes at the school's official launch.

**Photo: Melissa Di Ciero**

## Assessing the health of the ovaries

### Medicine

A new study is helping set the parameters for a health test that would check for ovarian cancer in the same way that pap smears and mammograms assess the cervix and breasts.

The study, a collaboration between Monash University, Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research, the Jean Hailes Foundation and the National Australia Bank Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, will assess up to 500 women aged 55 to 100.

Chief researcher and Monash University Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology chairman Professor David Healy said the study would help

create a simple test that could assist in the early detection of ovarian cancer.

"The average Australian female now lives to about 86, and ovarian cancer kills more women over the age of 60 than all gynaecological cancers put together," he said.

"Currently, however, there are no health programs for assessing the health of the ovaries as there are for the breast and the cervix."

Women who qualify to take part in the study will undergo a blood test and gynaecological ultrasound test of their ovaries. The results will be used to determine the normal or healthy range for ovaries that will set the benchmark for a future health test.

The study will, for the first time,

use the improved ovarian cancer test created by Associate Professor David Robertson and colleagues at Prince Henry's Institute, which found that by combining a diagnostic test for the hormone Inhibin with an existing blood test, CA125, there is a 95 per cent success rate in detecting ovarian cancer.

The study is funded by the National Australia Bank Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, Diagnostic Systems Laboratories Inc and Inhibin Pty Ltd.

Women interested in participating in the study should contact +61 3 9544 0599.

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### Briefly

#### Group of Eight centre opens in Berlin

Monash University senior deputy vice-chancellor Professor Stephen Parker was among 40 delegates to attend the opening reception of the Group of Eight Australia Centre Europe in Berlin recently.

Herr Dr Hans-Gerhard Husung, Germany's Under Secretary of State for Science, formally opened the centre on 30 September. Speeches of welcome from Group of Eight chair Professor Ian Chubb and Australia's Ambassador to Germany, Her Excellency Ms Pamela Fayle, followed his address.

Located within the Australian Embassy, the new centre takes over from the Australia Centre, Berlin, of which Monash was a part.

The centre will provide a base for the Group of Eight universities — a select group of Australia's top-ranked universities including Monash — to expand research, academic and cultural activities in Europe and help strengthen relationships between Australia and the region.

#### Professor farewelled

Some 70 local and international guests gathered at the Monash University Prato Centre in Italy recently to farewell Professor Bill Kent, foundation director of the centre.

Monash senior deputy vice-chancellor Professor Stephen Parker, who hosted the function, paid tribute to Professor Kent's vision and work.

"Bill has made the Prato centre a key part of the university's international profile," he said. "He has taken the centre from an empty building to one that will be full to capacity for about half of 2005, with bookings still coming in."

Professor Parker announced the establishment of an annual Bill Kent Research Fellowship in honour of Professor Kent. The fellowship will be available to Monash researchers wishing to undertake collaborative research using the Prato centre as a base.

The new director of the centre, Dr Annamaria Pagliaro, convenor of Italian studies in the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, will take up her appointment on 1 January 2005.

#### Former dean wins award

Emeritus Professor Michael Brisk, who retired as dean of the Faculty of Engineering at Monash in late 2002, has been awarded the Chemeca Medal for 2004.

One of the most prestigious awards in the chemical engineering profession, it is presented to a prominent Australian or New Zealand chemical engineer who has made an outstanding contribution to the industry.

The award recognises the leading international role Professor Brisk played in the application of advanced process control in the chemical engineering industry.

Professor Brisk was dean of engineering at Monash from 1995 to 2002. Significant achievements under his direction included the opening of the School of Engineering at Monash University Malaysia and the design and construction of building 72, including the Sir Alexander Stewart Conference Centre, at the Clayton campus.

#### Iraqi delegation visits

A high-level delegation of academics from the University of Baghdad visited Monash University's Clayton campus recently to sign two memoranda of understanding between the universities and Monash's Faculty of Engineering.

The delegation included University of Baghdad president Dr Mosa Al-Mousawe, its Engineering faculty dean Dr Ali Al-Kiliddar and chemical engineer Professor Hussain Al-Shahristani, who is also president of the Iraqi Academy of Science.

The memoranda, signed by Monash vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins, will serve as starting points for discussions to develop a comprehensive plan on the role Monash can play in reviving the higher education system in Iraq.

During the two-day visit, Professor Al-Shahristani, one of the world's highest profile dissident scientists, presented a seminar on the moral responsibility of scientists and engineers in the age of weapons of mass destruction.

#### Conference bid succeeds

Monash has won the bid to co-host the 2007 International Metropolis Conference, the world's largest conference on international migration.

The Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements and the Australian Multicultural Foundation led the project, in conjunction with the Melbourne Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.

It will be the first time in its 11-year history that the conference has been held outside North America and Europe.

Project coordinator and institute director Professor John Nieuwenhuysen said the yet-to-be named conference would focus on diversity in Australian society, with an emphasis on migration and movement of people in the Asia-Pacific region. About 500 delegates are expected to attend.

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# Monash research wins US\$1m grant

## Medical research

A study into the role of white blood cells in the auto-immune disease systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) has resulted in a Monash University research team receiving a US\$1 million grant from the prestigious National Institutes of Health.

Dr Michael Hickey, Associate Professor Eric Morand and Dr Michelle Leech from the Centre for Inflammatory Diseases at Monash received the grant, based on their ongoing research into the role of white blood cells in causing inflammation in SLE sufferers.

The grant will fund a four-year study into the effect of specific proteins on the movement of white blood cells in mice with SLE.

Dr Hickey said the grant was particularly rewarding, as it was rare for the NIH to allocate grants to research groups based entirely outside the US.

In 2000, Dr Hickey and the team began studying the blood vessels of mice with SLE and found that a major contributing factor to inflammation was the occurrence of white blood cells sticking to the lining of microscopic blood vessels, called postcapillary venules.

"We were the first lab to look at vessels of

lupus-prone mice in that way, and we are now aiming to study that process in more detail," Dr Hickey said.

The project will look at the impact on SLE of two proteins, MIF and iNOS, by comparing the development of the disease in two groups of mice – one that carries the proteins and one that does not.

SLE, which causes inflammatory injury to tissues and blood vessels, is one of the most prevalent auto-immune diseases, affecting roughly one in 1000 people. Symptoms of the disease include arthritis, skin damage, and brain and kidney inflammation. The condition ranges in severity and in the most severe cases can result in early death.

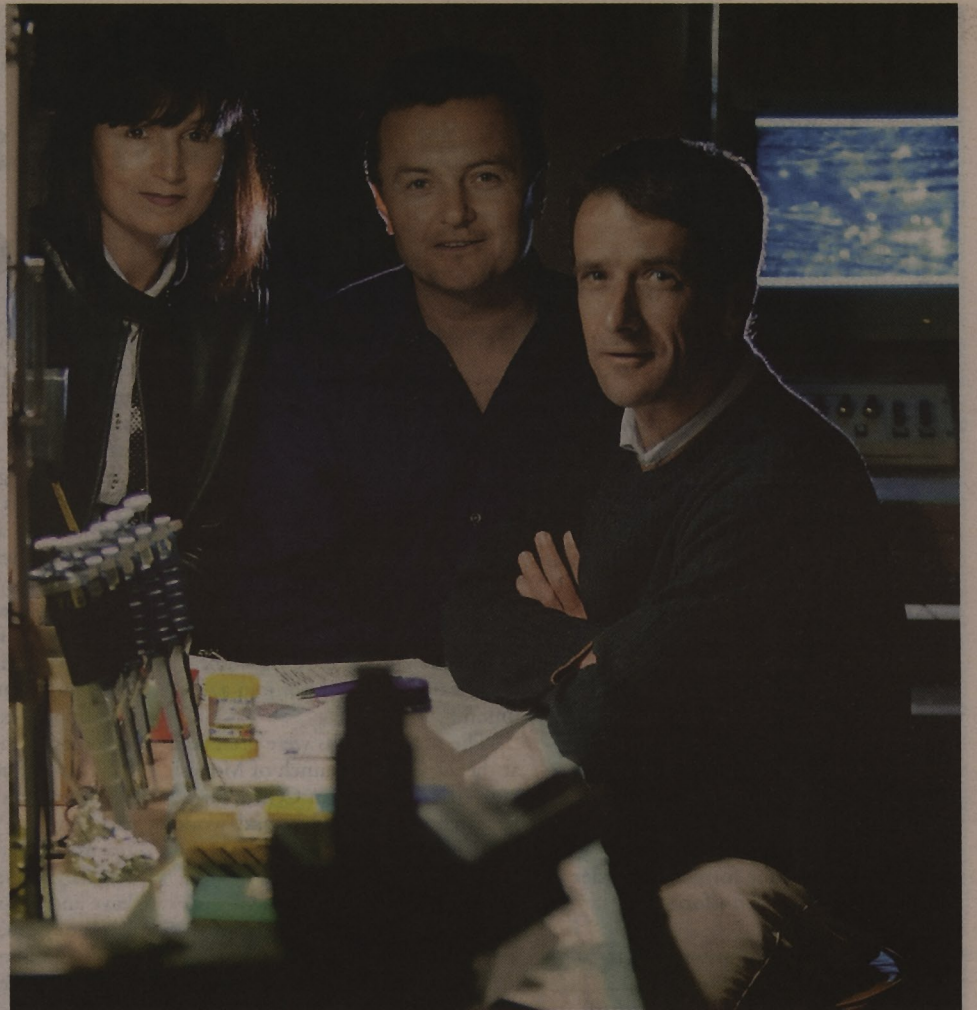
Dr Hickey said no new therapies had been developed for the disease in 30 years. Steroids and immune suppressants are currently the most effective treatments but despite these, life expectancy is reduced and significant side effects are common.

"There is still enormous potential for development of new therapies in this area," he said. "We hope our work will lead to more effective treatments for SLE."

– Diane Squires

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**Winning research:** Researchers, from left, Dr Michelle Leech, Associate Professor Eric Morand and Dr Michael Hickey have received US\$1 million to continue their research into lupus.

Photo: Greg Ford

# Leopards hard to spot

## Wildlife conservation

Monash University researchers are working to halt the decline in South Africa's wild leopard population, a problem caused by increased land clearing and illegal hunting.

Conservation biology student Mrs Victoria Mitchell is the Australian representative of the Mun-Ya-Wana Leopard Project, established by Monash University honorary research fellow Dr Luke Hunter in 2002.

Now based in New York, Dr Hunter continues to travel to South Africa with Mrs Mitchell to collar and monitor the leopards and collect data on them.

While their elusive nature makes it difficult to pinpoint the size of the country's leopard population, it is recognised that they are the most heavily hunted big cat in the world.

The Mun-Ya-Wana project aims to limit killing of leopards outside conservation areas by monitoring, tracking and collecting data on breeding habits and working with the local communities to preserve the animals.

Mrs Mitchell said the spread of private farming, and the land clearing it required, had also created large holes in South Africa's leopard population.

"Surviving leopards are found in small isolated populations, and some, like the animals in our study in the Phinda Private Game Reserve, may not survive due to a range of human threats," she said.

Since 2002, the project team has collared and tracked 18 leopards in the reserve, which extends for 150 square kilometres along a narrow stretch of land in the north-east of the country.



**Taking stock:** Leopards like female adult, Saba, are being tracked.

Photo: Christian Sperka

"We have more than 1500 recorded sightings of leopards in the reserve, which, compared to other studies, is a huge amount of data," Mrs Mitchell said.

Despite the volume of information collected, only 10 of

the tagged leopards remain alive, and only two of the seven cubs born during this time have survived.

"The reasons for their decline are complex," Mrs Mitchell said. "The development of neighbouring land limits the protection available for an

animal that is difficult to contain.

"Illegal trophy hunting adds to the problem because it often results in the removal of males, and that causes social conflict among remaining animals and often leads to leopards killing each other."

The sustainability of the Phinda population is further threatened by its relatively slow reproduction rate and by bordering game farms where hunters shoot animals that stray from the protected reserve.

"Although the reserve is bordered with an electrified game fence, it does not guarantee containment of the leopards, as they simply slide underneath or use overhanging branches to jump over," Mrs Mitchell said.

– Ingrid Sanders

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### Action:

To donate to the Mun-Ya-Wana leopard project or take part in the volunteer program, visit [www.biolsci.monash.edu.au/honours/leopards/](http://www.biolsci.monash.edu.au/honours/leopards/).



**Tracking leopards:**  
Mrs Victoria Mitchell.  
Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

# Data shows no change in work injury rates

## Safety research

Nearly 21,000 people were treated in Victorian hospitals each year between 1999 and 2002 for work injuries, according to a new report by the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit at the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

Senior research fellow Ms Erin Cassell said work injuries imposed a significant burden on the hospital system, society and the injured individual.

"We are particularly concerned that there was no change during the four-year study period in hospitalisation rates for work injuries overall and for men, and that the female rate actually increased by seven per cent," Ms Cassell said.

The report showed the male work injury hospital admission rate was five times that for females, and admission rates were highest in the youngest and oldest groups of workers – 15 to 24-year-olds and those aged 65 years and older.

While the figures were partly explained by the fact that more men work in hazardous industries, other contributing factors to the over-representation of males in workplace injury required investigation, Ms Cassell said.

Wrist and hand injuries accounted for 42 per cent of all work-related hospital admissions over the four-year study period – more than 7000 admissions in all. Hand injuries were most commonly fractures, open wounds and muscle and tendon injuries.

"Work-related hand injuries are neglected in terms of prevention," Ms Cassell said. "A comprehensive hand injury prevention program should be developed."

– Allison Harding

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The full report can be viewed at [www.general.monash.edu.au/muar/VISAR/hazard/](http://www.general.monash.edu.au/muar/VISAR/hazard/)



## Asking the right questions

### Health care

A new personal care assessment method developed by Monash University could improve the quality of life for high-needs patients.

The Personal Care-Participation Assessment and Resource Tool (PC-PART) has been designed by associate professor of geriatric medicine Dr Peteris Darzins. It aims to ensure the personal care needs of high-needs patients are met.

Over the past 10 years, Dr Darzins has been perfecting a set of 43 standardised questions designed to help clinicians produce accurate and efficient patient assessments.

To administer PC-PART, health professionals ask the same groups of questions, in the same format and order each time, to ensure a uniform and thorough assessment.

"These questions represent what clinicians should be asking their patients anyway, but this makes sure it is done in a standardised, thorough and targeted way that ensures nothing is forgotten," Dr Darzins said. "The information gathered is then used to identify specific patient issues, which gives health practitioners a clear idea of what to do to improve or fix the problems."

"The assessment is not based on treating the illness, because in many cases, like a stroke for example, it can't be cured, but it looks at what can be done to improve the patient's quality of life."

There are seven areas of personal care identification listed in the 12-page assessment including questions on clothing, hygiene, nutrition, mobility, safety, place of residence and support.

Dr Darzins said developing PC-PART was prompted by inconsistencies in the system. He said the tool was particularly effective when treating elderly or high-needs patients who might forget or become confused when answering general questions.

It is currently being run within an aged care pilot study through the Southern Grampians Glenelg Rehabilitation Program. It is due for re-assessment early next year.

— Ingrid Sanders

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## New research centre shines a light on workers

### Employment

More than 60 per cent of Australian non-union workers are 'free-riders' who do not join unions because they believe they receive the benefits without paying fees, a Monash University survey has found.

According to the Australian Worker Representation and Participation Survey, 61.1 per cent of workers cited free-riding as the chief reason they did not join a union.

The survey results were presented at the 27 October launch of Monash University's Australian Centre for Research in Employment and Work (ACREW).

ACREW researcher and head of Monash's Department of Management Professor Julian Teicher said the figures sent a message to the union movement.

"The results are of some concern for Australian unions, given the current policy objectives of the

ACTU to expand in traditionally non-unionised areas," he said. "On the other hand, it does present clear and tangible opportunities to build membership and growth in these areas."

The survey also showed that workers are generally content with their level of influence over employment conditions, except when it comes to their salary.

This 'influence gap' is highest when it comes to pay rises, with 71 per cent of workers reporting that they desire greater levels of influence than they actually have and 67 per cent wanting greater levels of influence over decisions on perks and bonuses.

"The perceived lack of influence over how much they are paid is a very important issue, given the cultural shift to workplace

agreements and individual bargaining," Professor Teicher said.

Most workers – 85.7 per cent – reported they had 'a lot' or 'some' influence over how to do their job and the organisation of their work, and 73.3 per cent said they had a 'lot' or 'some' influence over the pace at which they worked.

A smaller proportion – 64.5 per cent – reported having

an influence over how to work with new equipment and software, and 61.8 per cent reported having an influence over their working hours, breaks, overtime and time off.

— Robyn Anns

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**At the launch:**  
From left, Australian Industrial Relations Commissioner Mr John Lewin, Business and Economics faculty dean Professor Gill Palmer, ACREW director Associate Professor Helen De Cieri, and Department of Management head Professor Julian Teicher.  
**Photo: Andrew Barcham**

## Native title lawyers needed

### Human rights

Monash University is helping to investigate ways to address the need for more native title lawyers in Australia.

Researchers from Monash and two other universities are seeking strategies to recruit more native title lawyers, whose ranks are thin because of harsh working conditions, inadequate training and poor pay.

Monash Law faculty senior lecturer Ms Melissa Castan and research fellow Mr Richard Potok are investigating native title law and practice under the auspices of Monash's Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, with help from the University of New South Wales and the Australian National University.

The study is evaluating the training and professional development needs of lawyers working in Native Title Representative Bodies, which are the principal providers of legal and administrative services to native title claimants, and related organisations.

The researchers' interviews with lawyers from across Australia have confirmed there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining native title lawyers. The research also indicates these

lawyers must deal with the competing demands associated with new cultural and legal systems as well as operating in remote and isolated locations.

Ms Castan said the project provided a fascinating perspective on a relatively new area of law.

"More than a decade after the High Court's landmark Mabo decision, which marked a crucial step in redressing the inequities in Australia in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, native title law continues to be a stimulating and very complex area of practice. Many young lawyers are keen to explore the personal and professional opportunities available in this area," she said.

"Native Title Representative Bodies, which hire native title lawyers, are faced with financial constraints and limited training in the area."

"This research will be used to develop constructive strategies for facilitating native title work with the hope of increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

— Robyn Anns

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### Schools

#### Change of Preference

The *Monash University Change of Preference Guide* has been sent to all Victorian secondary schools. Year 12 students who have *VoiCE* magazine mailed directly to their homes will receive a copy of the guide after their VCE examinations.

Students will also get the chance to speak to faculty representatives after they have received their ENTERs, during Monash's Change of Preference information sessions at:

##### Gippsland region

Tuesday 14 December  
3 pm to 6 pm

Edison Mission room, building 5N  
Monash University  
Gippsland campus

##### Metropolitan region

Wednesday 15 December  
10 am to 2 pm

South One lecture theatre, building 64  
Monash University  
Clayton campus

For further information about Change of Preference at Monash, go to [www.monash.edu.au/cop](http://www.monash.edu.au/cop) or call the Prospective Students Office on +61 3 9905 1320.

#### Enhancement Studies

The Enhancement Studies Program gives high-achieving secondary students the opportunity to study Monash University first-year units as part of their Year 12 studies.

Applications for the 2005 program close on Friday, 3 December 2004 for all Enhancement subjects except Music, which closed on Friday, 5 November 2004. Applications will be processed in order of receipt. Students wishing to lodge late applications should contact the Prospective Students Office to confirm that places are still available in the relevant unit. Late applications will be subject to a non-refundable late fee.

For further information, contact Ms Rebecca Hillman in the Prospective Students Office on +61 3 9905 5421 or email [enhancement@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:enhancement@adm.monash.edu.au).

#### Accommodation closing dates

Applications close soon for students who may be thinking about living on-campus at Monash University next year.

Applications for the Halls of Residence at Clayton campus for semester one close on 30 November.

For further information about accommodation and associated services and facilities at any of Monash's campuses, contact Monash Residential Services on +61 3 9905 6200 or visit [www.monash.edu.au/mrs/](http://www.monash.edu.au/mrs/).

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Photo: Michele Mossop, AFR

# Globalised marketing drives design



Associate Professor **Robert Nelson** is a senior lecturer and associate dean (research and graduate studies) in the Faculty of Art and Design. This is an edited version of a discussion paper he will deliver to the international design conference, FUTUREGROUND, to be held in Melbourne this month (see page 6).

**D**esign, like any work of the imagination, can be considered part rational and part fickle. We would naturally like to emphasise the rational part. We hope to contribute to design by identifying patterns or conjecturing explanations for its various guises.

Alas, hopes for the spread of reason throughout design have reached new and unprecedented levels of implausibility; for a great unchallengeable force has redirected design away from its reasonable past preoccupations of utility and aesthetic or symbolic edification toward an apparently inescapable destiny. This is the force of globalisation.

My paper identifies globalised marketing and fashion as a key driver of design. Even items which do not seem to have a conspicuously stylish look will be marketed with a judicious range of fantasies that makes them fashionable in the end. Only vast capital can afford these strategies. Advertising, which is largely the industrialisation of fantasy, is extremely expensive. The commercialisation of fantasy is now concentrated in the corporate world; and design is its principal tool.

This situation presents a challenge to design aesthetics. Formal factors in design – once the centrepiece of modernist design and the mainstay of design education ever since – are becoming increasingly marginal in the global context relative to the subjective message-making economy which lards designs with myth and makes design appropriate for medial distribution, and hence economically viable. In many fields of design, there is little point launching a product unless it can mesh with a fantasy.

Design has moved from a shape-oriented discipline to a sign-oriented practice. It has slipped, by dint of globalisation, to an inscrutable collusion with marketing that concentrates on manipulation through images.

An example is the baseball cap. Once a sub-cultural symbol belonging to sportspeople, it now enjoys world diffusion, worn by males of all complexion, at least on the weekend.

What distinguishes two caps is not so much their construction or fabric but the logo embroidered on front and back. Two caps of equal material value are priced incommensurably according to their tag. One with a Nike logo may sell at twice the price and 500 times the volume of a no-brand cap or one with an unknown logo. The Nike cap has more prestige because of the advertising strategy.

This immaterial element has abducted the economy of design with apparently irreversible destiny.

At the beginning of this somewhat irrational trend, it may have been possible to dismiss the promotion

*“On a scale that includes any important social or theoretical issue, it matters not at all that the rear of my car is square or round.”*

of hype at the expense of reason as something commercially crazy which is unrelated to design. But now, after witnessing an apparently exponential growth of marketing of immaterial fantasy-identifications in advertising and design, it seems hard to ignore as one of the key determinants of design in the global context.

And as manufacturing is constantly on the decline relative to the communication of cultural conceits, the economy of messages displaces the previous innocence of design as a classical studio activity.

To be fair, design history has long had frivolous dimensions. Many things about design do not matter much.

On a scale that includes any important social or theoretical issue, it matters not at all that the rear of my car is square or round, if the hub-caps have a radial or concentric pattern, if the laptop has panels in different

grades of metal or plastic colours; no one will live a day longer or suffer indignity or be morally uplifted by a shinier shaft on a lamp or a mesh casing surrounding a rubbish bin.

This scepticism is not powerfully offset by appeal to the aesthetic. It is natural to have recourse to this cliché, for nobody wants an uglier world.

But the claim to making things look good has to be distinguished from making things look merely fashionable; and it is by no means clear that some aesthetic absolute can be disentangled from the trendy or the capricious.

Besides, a scholar sometimes searches in vain for contemporary evidence of deeply dialectical roots in design, with a great power of moving the passions, invoking feelings of injustice or fear or sympathy, as are recognised in the visual arts or theatre.

And the moment design conspicuously proceeds from such grave motives, it is virally appropriated by scores of other designers as a style, a set of aesthetic tropes, of little intrinsic meaning.

**A**n instance might be the Jewish Museum by the architect Daniel Liebeskind, whose language of skew shapes, perforated membranes and unfathomable voids was inspired as an expression of the unspeakable crimes of the Shoah; but no sooner were these astigmatic spatial propositions realised than they proliferated internationally in festive contexts, business contexts, educational contexts, any context in which a building is determined to be a bit jazzy.

In their blithe remove from the expressive context of the Holocaust, the formal metaphors of disruptive space and non-rational structure are

quite discredited if understood at all. The language of design is traded as a stylar paradigm, stripped of a moral symbolic order or even of serious sentimental connotations.

I miss the attempt in design research to engage with the moral context of design, through its imagery, aesthetic emphasis and metaphorical connotations.

I am interested in this evacuation of political content coupled with an equal and opposite evacuation of poetic meaning and remoteness from the studio. I long for a politicised phenomenology which might tackle the look and manipulative frameworks of design, to enter the sensory and symbolic content of design and yield observation which is not necessarily marketing-compliant.

We all want theory which will serve the advancement of design, facilitate the next idea, perhaps to be the handmaiden of the creative process; and here is the rub, for it must thus itself be creative. A critique may or may not be generalisable; but it at least establishes criteria from a given perspective, not universal but potentially shared.

Research in the field must be subjective, proceeding from the viewpoint and experience and background of the expositor. This in itself is a non-globalised structure, with its emphasis on individual perception.

If it is possible to contemplate a phenomenology of design which passionately embraces social and ideological perspectives,

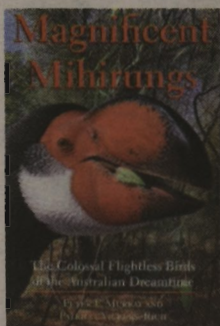
I cannot pretend that it will do any good in a world apparently predestined by globalisation; but if our discourse speaks to designers of the things that matter to the imagination it will thus become integral to the fabric of design progress and history, in the same spectacular way that art theory has done for the history of art.

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## INPRINT



## Magnificent Mihirungs

The Colossal Flightless Birds of the Australian Dreamtime

By Peter F. Murray and Patricia Vickers-Rich  
Published by Indiana University Press

RRP: \$125

This book is the first complete study of the extinct Dromornithidae family, the gigantic 'geese' of early Australia. Made up of several genera of flightless birds, including the Mihirungs, the dromornithids were beasts that ranged from the very large to the gigantic.

The smaller birds were one and a half metres tall and weighed about 60 kilograms; the largest were three metres tall and weighed nearly half a metric ton.

The book provides a wealth of knowledge about the dromornithids, accumulated over the past two decades, that has led to an understanding of the relationships of these birds. The authors discuss in detail the history of the work on the dromornithids, the geological and geographical distributions of their remains, and their familial systematics, anatomy, functional morphology, and paleobiology.

Professor Patricia Vickers-Rich holds a chair in paleontology at Monash University, where she lectures in the School of Geosciences and is director of the Monash Science Centre. Mr Murray is curator of paleontology and the Finlayson Vertebrate Collection and assistant director at the Museum of Central Australia,

## Disclosing Spaces:

On painting

By Andrew Benjamin

Published by Clinamen Press

RRP: \$55.95

Monash professor Andrew Benjamin argues that the proliferation of art practices in recent decades has left behind the critical frameworks needed to understand and appraise art. Here, he diagnoses and addresses this failure in terms of the role of criticism itself, proposing a realignment of the relationship between painting and criticism at a fundamental level.

He argues that an individual artwork cannot be seen in any straightforward sense as a 'particular' of an established 'universal' that we might call art. Painting, he maintains, is not reducible to a determined form; rather it evolves and encounters new territory through the constant tension of the 'work' that constitutes the art, and the work of criticism. Throughout, the argument is funneled through detailed treatment of an eclectic range of works and illustrated with the works under consideration.

Professor Benjamin is research professor of critical theory in the Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at Monash University.



## Sustainability and Change in Rural Australia

Edited by Chris Cocklin and Jacqui Dibden

Published by University of New South Wales Press

RRP: \$39.95

This comprehensive collection of essays, written by some of Australia's leading commentators on rural systems, explores the multiple factors that underpin the sustainability of rural communities in Australia.

It addresses themes such as social and economic change, government policy and gender relations. At the heart of this discussion lies a desire to understand how small rural communities have survived in the past; how they are shaped by environmental, economic and social factors at present; and how these factors will impact on their survival in the future.

Professor Chris Cocklin is professor of geography and environmental science at Monash University and director of its Environment Institute. Dr Jacqui Dibden is a research fellow with the Monash Regional Australia Project within the School of Geography and Environmental Science.

## POSTscript

Climate Change  
A Natural Hazard

By William Kininmonth

Published by Multi-Science Publishing Co, UK.

RRP: \$98 (approx)

This book argues that the models of climate developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are wholly inadequate and of no value as a predictive tool, making its claims about possible levels of future global warming worthless.

William Kininmonth, a former director of the Australian National Climate Centre, argues that the models are inadequate even as a descriptive tool for the system we call 'climate', let alone as the basis for any policy-making. He also asserts that global warming is a man-made concept. He argues that a proper understanding of the complexity of the climatic system necessarily leads to the conclusion that the global warming we are presently experiencing is a function of that system itself and not the result of man's tinkering with the environment.

Mr Kininmonth completed a Master of Administration in the Faculty of Business and Economics in 1982.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming book, contact [media@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:media@adm.monash.edu.au).

Books featured in 'Inprint' are available or can be ordered at Monash's four on-campus bookshops.

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Design's  
future ground  
at Caulfield

Art and design

Monash University's Art and Design faculty at Caulfield campus is hosting the influential Design Research Society (DRS) International Conference this month. It is the first time the biennial conference has been held outside Europe.

Some 350 delegates representing 32 countries and 100 universities will converge on the campus for the five-day event, being held from 17 to 21 November.

With the theme of 'FUTUREGROUND', the conference will debate directions emerging from design research around the world, covering an extensive range of topics including human-centred design, sustainability, architecture, industrial design, engineering, philosophy, visual communication, design practice and education.

Victoria's Minister for Education and Training, Ms Lynne Kosky, will open the conference, while the DRS president and director of doctoral studies at the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Professor Richard Buchanan, will deliver the presidential address.

Keynote speakers include Professor Mark Burry, director of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's Spatial Information Architecture Laboratory, Dr John Armstrong from Melbourne University's Philosophy department and Mr Clive Dilnot from the Parsons School of Design in New York.

Conference co-chair and Art and Design faculty dean Professor John Redmond said the selection of Monash to conduct the conference recognised the university's growing contribution to excellence in design research on an international basis.

"The conference will feature leading-edge design research across a wide range of contemporary issues from the international research community," he said. "This presents delegates with an ideal opportunity to discuss, exchange and reflect on the latest developments and challenges in design research and to map out design's future ground."

The manager of the Art and Design faculty's



**Excellence in design research:** From left: Associate Professor Arthur de Bono, head of the Art and Design faculty's Department of Design, Professor John Redmond and Mr Denis Masseni.

Photo: Greg Ford

multimedia masters program and conference manager, Mr Denis Masseni, said the conference would present a forum for design practitioners, educators, researchers and students from around the world to network and exchange ideas.

"While keynote speakers will provide an interrogation of current research thinking, the conference will also allow for debate to challenge the comfort zones of current research," he said. "This will contribute to the development of a greater depth of thinking in design."

— Karen Stichtenoth

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## Australia's best designs on show

The entries of more than 60 finalists in the 2004 Australian Design Awards will be on show at the Faculty Gallery at Monash University's Caulfield campus this month.

The gallery, within the Faculty of Art and Design, will host the exhibition from 11 to 25 November, coinciding with the FUTUREGROUND International Design Society Research 2004 Conference.

The acting gallery manager, Ms Bianca Durrant, said the award-winning entries were an inspiration to those with an interest in design and highlighted the importance of an innovative design process.

The awards, which were judged in Sydney in April, are designed to promote the significance of professional design in Australia in the development of globally competitive products.

— Ros White



## Show notes

**What:** 2004 Australian Design Awards finalists

**When:** 11 to 25 November, Monday to Friday 9 am – 5 pm, Saturday 1 pm – 5 pm.

**Where:** Faculty Gallery, Monash University, Caulfield campus

**Who:** For more information, contact Ms Bianca Durrant on +61 3 9903 2882.

## Exhibition explores the urban psyche

A confronting experience in the catacombs of Vienna has led Ms Kelly Boucher, a printmaking technician at the Monash Gippsland Centre for Art and Design, to develop an installation that explores the urban psyche.

*The Red Palace*, an installation of hundreds of textile works created in collaboration with Monash visual arts graduate Ms Sarah Adams, is showing at Platform2 Gallery, Campbell Arcade, in the Flinders Street subway. It will run until 12 November.

Ms Boucher said that since viewing the stacks of human remains in the catacombs underneath St Stephens Cathedral in Vienna in 2001, she had been intrigued by the notion of 'the urban body' and whether an 'urban catacomb' could exist in the city psyche.

"I see this as a place where we entomb parts of ourselves, our experiences and the mundane detritus of our daily lives," she said.



Textile bricks help give form to *The Red Palace* installation.

Platform2 Gallery contains 16 advertising cabinets, which the artists have either bricked up with printed textiles or left open to reveal soft organs within. They use screen-printed fabric, calico, vinyl and wool.

"It is hard not to be influenced by our surroundings and circumstances, and *The Red Palace* creates a place for the body or, indeed, the remembered body, to become a treasure to be displayed – embalmed for future thought," Ms Boucher said.

Ms Boucher also coordinates

visitor programs at the Latrobe Regional Gallery in Morwell, while Ms Adams works independently from her studio in Moe.

— Ros White

## Show notes

**What:** *The Red Palace*

**Where:** Platform2 Gallery, Campbell Arcade, Flinders Street subway, Melbourne

**When:** until 12 November, Monday to Thursday 6 am – 7 pm, Friday 6 am – 9 pm, Saturday 9 am – 5 pm (closed Sunday)





**Training program:** MSA Film and TV Unit students get practical experience in the unit's studio.

# Rewriting the script

As a new educational institution, Monash South Africa (MSA) works at a grass roots level by providing education for young South Africans as their country grows and develops. MSA's Film and Television Unit is part of that development, providing skilled workers for the country's fledgling film and TV industry. **Jeanette Lamont** reports that the training may also help disadvantaged youth broaden horizons that are too often narrowed by poverty.

**M**onash South Africa recognises that a skills shortage in film and television threatens the sustainability of the country's developing industry. Since its establishment in 2003, the MSA Film and Television Unit has introduced courses that are helping to turn that situation around.

This year, the unit has introduced two new courses aimed at helping young students who may have more potential than resources.

The entry-level Audio Visual Production course, which began in February this year, has already taught its first group of 20 students and the second intake is under way.

The 20-week course introduces students to the four main areas in the industry: creative, technical, production and editing. The course, funded by the Department of Labour, also offers life skills and computer literacy components and provides simulated and actual workplace experience.

The intermediate Protégé Project, which began in March 2004, was developed in partnership with the Johannesburg Metro Council.

This 12-week program provides mentored and coached practical training as well as theoretical knowledge within the context of actual industry requirements. The training expands on current knowledge, for those who have already proved their passion for, and commitment to, the industry.

Both these courses have been designed to assist predominantly historically disadvantaged individuals who have had no formal training, or who have had to drop out of a training program, due to lack of funds.

The two new courses fit within the framework of the South African government's Film Incentive – a new initiative designed to encourage and facilitate film and TV industry training.

"Our government has identified the need to support the industry, given the challenges of poverty and unemployment – particularly among the youth," South Africa's Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Mandisi Mphahlela, said at the launch in Johannesburg in June.

The skills-development component of the incentive package aims to address the skills shortages at intermediate and advanced levels by providing short, intensive courses. The unit has been closely involved in the development and roll-out of the courses.

Dr Melanie Chait, consultant to the MSA Film and TV Unit, and the unit's project manager, Ms Nikki Tilley, have consulted closely with the Department of Trade and Industry during this year.

The unit is recognised as a serious provider of short, intensive courses for industry professionals.

"In terms of serving the needs of the local industry, the unit is addressing capacity building at entry, intermediate and advanced levels," Ms Tilley said.

"Looking at international best practice, there is a need for people in the local industry to be up-skilled and kept abreast with world trends in order to be globally competitive.

"Our biggest challenge is for companies to embrace the need to invest, not only in their own staff, but in freelancers too – in order to ensure that ultimately we have an industry that can sustain itself."

**D**r Chait agreed, saying industry skills must be present before production deals can be brokered. "In the industry we talk about new studios and new channels, and calls are repeatedly made on the Department of Trade and Industry to offer tax breaks to help finance feature films.

"All of this is important, but we need to build

capacity – not only in terms of studios but in terms of skills – to make this a reality," she said. "If new channels are to be established, we need the people to run, manage, program, and schedule.

"We are all aware of how companies and corporations struggle to find experienced people. If we do succeed in getting the tax breaks, we do not have the necessary skills to make the films. Within the industry the importance of succession training also needs to be acknowledged."

As well as training entry-level participants from rural and urban areas, the unit also provides extra skills for people already involved in the industry. Participants have come from Gauteng, Botswana, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and Malawi.

Several short courses have been offered

for industry professionals this year, including 'Technical directing', 'The art of digital editing', 'Scriptwriting for features', 'Business skill development' and 'Production accounting'.

The unit has recently delivered a tailor-made course in promotion scheduling to participants from several South African pay TV channels.

"We also are fielding inquiries and tailoring courses for broadcasters from other African countries including Namibia, Nigeria and Uganda," Ms Tilley said. "We are collaborating with the Southern African Broadcasters Association (SABA) and delivered a presentation at their AGM in October. As a result, the director of the Asia Pacific Institute of Broadcasting has expressed interest in Monash Malaysia setting up a similar unit."

Dr Chait said the unit had created a unique and global platform for development of skills and training. "As a result of the intensity of the courses, an extraordinary amount of learning takes place in a short space of time. The unit is working towards taking talented individuals and building socially relevant highly skilled professionals," she said.

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**New directions:** Ms Nikki Tilley, left, and Dr Melanie Chait with the minibus taxi used to transport Film and TV Unit students to and from the MSA campus.



# Newsreaders shed stuffed shirts

## Linguistics

Television and radio news bulletins – once delivered in clipped accents by presenters in formal suits – have changed dramatically over the past few decades.

Monash University PhD student Ms Jenny Price has found in preliminary research that the language style used in electronic news has moved a long way from the rigid style of early broadcasts.

Ms Price, from the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, is undertaking a study to track the changes in the Australian broadcasting vernacular since the 1940s.

She is examining archival and current news excerpts from AM and FM radio stations and commercial and non-commercial television

broadcasts as part of her research.

Ms Price said certain radio newsreaders of today had developed a conversational reading style that was quite different from broadcasts of the 1950s and 1960s, when presenters imitated the style of BBC announcers.

"When broadcasts began in Australia, we copied the pronunciation of the BBC, which was regarded as the most prestigious style of language and the industry standard," Ms Price explained.

"Newsreading today is much more conversational, and it seems women may be the flag-bearers of this change, particularly at the FM radio stations."

Ms Price said that while FM radio stations appeared to have made the biggest move away from BBC English, television stations had remained more conservative in their delivery style.



"Radio news directors on FM stations want their broadcasts to slot seamlessly into their programming style, so you find newsreaders using slang and a more informal speech style, whereas television newsreaders are not

conversational at all. They are much more formal in the way they read," she said.

To collect further data for the study, Ms Price will interview about 40 newsreaders from various radio and television stations to obtain a

sample of their non-broadcast speech for comparison.

— Ingrid Sanders

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# Gun laws reduce deaths

Gun law reform has led to dramatic reductions in firearm deaths throughout Australia, a landmark Monash University study has revealed.

The research showed that firearm-related deaths in Victoria fell by nearly 75 percent between 1979 and 2002.

The overwhelming success of gun amnesty and buyback schemes has led the research team to ask if 'vision zero' – the total elimination of firearm-related homicides and suicides from society – is possible.

The Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) study investigated trends in the rates of firearm-related deaths in Victoria in the context of legislative reform following mass shootings in Victoria in the late 1980s and in Tasmania in 1996.

The centre's chair of injury prevention,

Professor Joan O'zanne-Smith, said Victoria had led the way nationally and internationally in gun law reforms such as amnesty and buyback schemes.

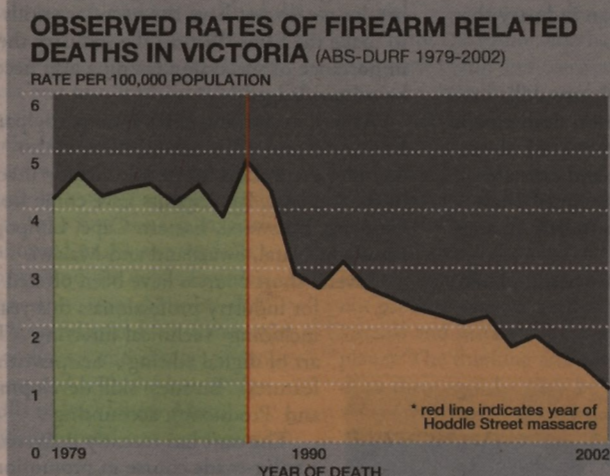
The study shows steady rates of firearm-related deaths before reforms (from 1979 to 1986), but a significant downward trend of 17 per cent was recorded between 1988 and 1995 following Victorian reforms. Further declines were seen after later reforms from 1997.

The study, 'Firearm-related deaths: the impact of regulatory reform', is published in the latest edition of *Injury Prevention* journal.

— Allison Harding

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**Testing the waters:** From left, team leader Dr Paul Bailey, postdoctoral research fellow Dr Kay Morris, research assistant Mr Michael Roache and postdoctoral research fellow Dr Elisa Raulings.

# Pulling the plug for the environment

## Environmental research

Monash University scientists will drain the equivalent of 1250 Olympic swimming pools from heritage-listed wetlands in the Gippsland Lakes in eastern Victoria to breathe new life into the fragile ecosystem.

The team of 10 researchers from the School of Biological Sciences is embarking on what is believed to be one of the largest water manipulation projects undertaken in a natural environment, to provide strategies for future management of the coastal wetlands system.

Research fellow Dr Elisa Raulings said the project over the next few weeks at Dowd Morass – a 1500

hectare freshwater marsh that has remained artificially flooded for the past 30 years – would affect about 60 plant species in the area with flow-on effects to the resident bird population.

The team will focus much of its attention on the wetland's most prominent tree species – the swamp paperbark – and measure rates of regeneration over the next 12 months.

Dr Raulings said findings from the Dowd Morass project could be used as a template to improve the health of other degraded wetland systems throughout Australia.

— Ingrid Sanders

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# Safe school routes lead to injury drop: study

## Accident research

A VicRoads program encouraging primary school children to travel safely to school has reduced casualty rates among those walking and cycling by nearly 18 per cent, a Monash University Accident Research Centre report has revealed.

The Safe Routes to Schools program was found not only to have benefits for school children but also to reduce casualty crashes for all road users during school travel times by five per cent.

The program involved students, parents and teachers, in partnership with the local council, investigating road safety issues along the common routes used by children travelling to and from school as pedestrians and cyclists.

About 300 primary schools were involved in the program, which ran from 1990 until 2000.

After identifying the most common routes to and from a school, local road user behaviour was observed and an action plan developed and implemented. The plan included making improvements to the road environment and introducing student road safety education.

MUARC research fellow Mr Stuart Newstead said an evaluation of the program revealed it had reduced road trauma among a number of road user groups, including adult pedestrians and cyclists.

"And it was most successful in reducing the frequency of crashes involving primary school-aged pedestrians and cyclists," he said.

— Allison Harding

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