

The Alumni  
Newsletter of the  
**Victorian College  
of Pharmacy**  
Monash University

# Alchemy

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Professor Chapman believes that, against these criteria, the College ranks highly.

"We are currently a very well-respected pharmacy school, but still have to improve," he said. "We need to offer greater innovations and diversity in teaching programs. Our research needs to connect more with the pharmacy profession and we should play a greater role in continuing professional education so that we can become a more effective agent of change."

A key element in the future development of the College has been the establishment of the Victorian College of Pharmacy Foundation. The College cannot take the steps necessary to excel in all areas if it relies only on government funding and research income. Most of the other 'best' schools in the world have considerable endowment funds available to them that allow prompt investment in staff, students, facilities and other initiatives needed to achieve excellence throughout.

Alistair Lloyd, Chair of the Foundation, believes that the College has the potential to become one of the top schools in the world.

"The Foundation has undertaken to work for the College for the foreseeable future to raise the funds necessary to further develop its reputation for excellence," he said.

"We hope we can work in partnership with our alumni and industry in assisting the College to reach its full potential."

## Aiming high: our role in the future of pharmacy

To be at the forefront of advances in the practice of pharmacy, to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing pharmaceutical industry and to ensure consistency with international advances in the profession, the Victorian College of Pharmacy is striving to become one of the best schools of pharmacy in the world.

Australian pharmacy practice is the envy of most other countries, due to several factors. There is a regulatory structure in place that allows pharmacists to develop professionally as well as commercially without being unduly influenced by non-pharmacists. Strong pharmacy organisations assist pharmacists to develop high professional and commercial standards. The Australian health system promotes quality use of medicines, of which good pharmacy services are a vital component. And we have very

high quality graduates entering the profession, all well prepared to embrace the professional initiatives required for modern pharmacy services.

But the demands of health systems, the medicines industry and the general community are changing rapidly. Pharmacy graduates now need to be better educated than ever before to cope with the challenges involved in delivering positive health outcomes to the Australian community. They also need to be able to adapt quickly to change.

"To maintain pharmacy practice at world leading standard and to keep a viable pharmaceutical industry contributing to Australia's economy, we need pharmacy schools that are clearly at the cutting edge of academic teaching, research and leadership," said Professor Colin Chapman, Dean of the College. "To meet that

challenge, the College has developed an operational plan that will set us on the path to become one of the world's best."

Schools of pharmacy worldwide are judged according to a range of criteria, including:

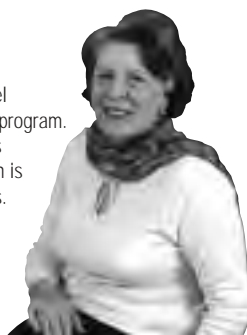
- the quality and expertise of academic staff
- the quality of teaching, the range of courses and the innovation associated with teaching processes
- the quality of students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and recognition of the diverse enrol students with need background
- the quality and extent of research
- the quality of teaching and research facilities
- the quality of leadership and administration and the extent to which it can embrace change and seize opportunities.

## Brief items

### Congratulations to alumni winner

Judy Gallagher (1964) has won a dinner for two at the Hotel Laureate for sending in a copy of her graduation ceremony program.

Thanks to everyone who sent in their programs. This has assisted us to update our records. Although the competition is now closed, the College is still seeking pre-1970s programs. For further information contact Sarah Vincent, email [sarah.vincent@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:sarah.vincent@vcp.monash.edu.au)



### New Centre for Medication Safety

A Centre for Medication Safety with a practice-based research and education focus is being established in the Department of Pharmacy Practice.

With almost 200 million prescriptions dispensed annually in the Australian community and 140,000 hospital admissions per year directly attributable to medicine-related problems, there is a recognised need for consolidated practice-based research that will devise, implement and evaluate systems for the safe and effective use of medicines across all sectors of healthcare (see page 8 for more details).



## Point of Interest

Karl Wilhelm Scheele (1742-1786) was a pharmacist/chemist famous for discovering chlorine and many different organic acids. He also discovered copper arsenate, hydrogen sulfide gas, hydrofluoric acid and hydrocyanic.

# Change is constant

Dr Geoffrey Vaughan on the growth and development of the College

**Dr Geoffrey Vaughan, Dean of the College from 1979 to 1986, joined the staff in 1961. Here he recalls the significant changes that took place at the College in the past, especially in the 1960s. These changes are similar to the challenges that College staff are facing today – a major change to curriculum, a focus on research and facilities keeping pace with programs.**

"The College moved to its present site in Parkville in 1960 and I joined the staff as a lecturer in chemistry in 1961. While the buildings were very new and modern, they were continually refurbished to meet the changing needs of the program.

The move to Parkville was soon followed by a significant change in curriculum. Pharmacists had previously completed a four-year part-time course with concurrent apprenticeship in a pharmacy. In line with worldwide trends, the apprenticeship system was replaced by a full-time three-year pharmacy course, which included 3000 hours of practical training. This also meant that the entrance qualification for prospective pharmacy students was raised to matriculation level. Industry strongly supported the new curriculum as they were keen for pharmacists to undertake broader scientific training to meet rapid changes occurring in drug development – things like widespread use of penicillin, broad spectrum antibiotics and new cardiovascular drugs.



Dr Geoffrey Vaughan (centre) with Tam Lynden-Bell, President of the Pharmaceutical Society (1981-84) and Colin H. Bull, Chairman of Johnson & Johnson Aust Pty Ltd, at the College in 1983.

Working at the College under Nigel Manning's leadership (Dean 1962-78) was an exciting time. He was very dynamic and committed to bringing about cultural change at the College, particularly relating to the development of a research culture. He established strong connections to overseas institutions and the pharmacy industry, generated research funds and made critical staff appointments. In my time as Dean I sought to build on these achievements by expanding research activities and ensuring that we continued to appoint key people who were achievers in this area.

Now it's interesting to see that the Bachelor of Pharmacy program has changed again, also in response to industry needs and worldwide trends. One thing that hasn't changed much over the years is the relationship between a professor and a student. In the spirit of academia, a good academic wants to impart knowledge and a good student wants to learn – they should be working as a team."

Chemist laboratory at the College in the 1960s.



## Dr Geoffrey Vaughan

1961-79	Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Head of School, Deputy Dean, Victorian College of Pharmacy
1979-86	Dean and Director, Victorian College of Pharmacy
1987-90	Director, Chisholm Institute of Technology
1990-92	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Monash University
1992-96	National Manager and Chief Executive Officer, Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), Commonwealth Department of Health
1996-2001	Board Member, Australian Red Cross Blood Service
Current	Board Member, Victorian College of Pharmacy Foundation Chairman, Cooperative Research Centres Committee Member, Industry Research and Development Board Chairman, Board Member and Council Member for a number of government and corporate organisations

# New faculty administration team

Having grown significantly over the last 10 years, the College recently embarked on a process of organisational restructure to ensure the departments and students are provided with the high level of support and services they require.

Central to this process are major changes within faculty administration. Four restructured positions will provide more specialised support to our core business of teaching and research, enhance student services and provision of information, and actively raise the College's profile.



From left: Louise Merkesteyn, Kate Lawrence (Admin Officer), Janet White (Faculty Manager), Carolyn Fox, Colin Chapman. Front: Mal Hutson, Anne Nichol.



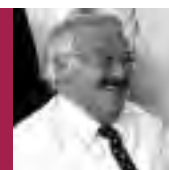
**Anne Nichol**  
Research  
Programs Officer



**Carolyn Fox**  
Academic and  
Student Services  
Manager



**Louise Merkesteyn**  
Marketing and  
Publicity Officer



**Mal Hutson**  
Faculty  
Infrastructure  
Manager

## The new role

Anne's role is to:

- manage research administration in order to maximise opportunities for increased research income from various sources
- implement university policy on higher degrees by research and manage administrative processes that support supervisors and research students
- provide executive support to the Associate Deans of Research and Graduate Studies
- provide secretariat for graduate studies, research and animal ethics committees.

## Skills and experience

Anne has worked in postgraduate and research units of Monash University over several campuses and has worked for the university for 14 years. Her educational qualifications include a Masters in Educational Policy and Administration.

## Why this position?

"I enjoy working alongside people from departments within the wider university community," said Anne. "I was also keen to be part of the team that takes up the challenge of the College's new vision – to become one of the top pharmacy schools in the world."

## The new role

Carolyn's role is to:

- provide a high level of coordination of academic policy and procedures
- manage the development of new academic and student programs
- improve the range and quality of student administrative services in both the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework areas
- facilitate the student selection and admissions process.

## Skills and experience

Carolyn has worked for the College in the postgraduate area for two years, in administration and educational design. Her qualifications include a Graduate Diploma in Industrial Education and Training, a postgraduate Diploma in Exercise and Sports Science and a Bachelor of Applied Science. She was formerly head of the physical education department at a Melbourne secondary school.

## Why this position?

"This new role is giving me the opportunity to implement and drive change, and to develop new initiatives in academic areas and student administration services," said Carolyn. "It's great being part of such an enthusiastic team. We are keen to see our faculty as one that embraces change and innovation while providing quality customer service."

## The new role

Louise's role is to:

- attract top students to the College's undergraduate courses
- attract top research candidates
- publicise the successes of the faculty's academic and research staff
- promote the faculty to prospective students, industry and the community
- promote the faculty's new rural student program.

## Skills and experience

Louise holds a Bachelor of Economics with a double major in marketing. She has worked in marketing roles for the University of Sydney for four years and was manager of the Student Ambassador Program. Her skills include market research and analysis, marketing strategy, event management and production of publications and marketing materials.

## Why this position?

"This new position gives me the opportunity to be part of a team committed to driving the College forward in its goals," said Louise. "I'm looking forward to building an atmosphere for staff and students that develops better links with Monash and encourages people to fully enjoy their time at the College."

## The new role

Mal's role is to:

- provide advice and executive support to the Dean and Faculty Manager on a range of key physical resource issues
- develop policies, procedures and guidelines on the utilisation of space and the use of laboratory equipment
- ensure the guidelines for laboratory usage are met and Occupational Health and Safety procedures are implemented
- liaise with the faculty finance team to further improve purchasing practices for the faculty in order to facilitate budgeting and planning
- oversee facility and services activities
- provide human resources advice on deployment and classification of general staff.

## Skills and experience

Mal obtained a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in physiology and pharmacology, before joining the College in 1966 as a demonstrator in the newly founded Department of Pharmacology. In 1969 he became laboratory manager and continued teaching until 2001. Mal has also worked in a range of administrative roles within the College and holds various positions on faculty and university committees. In 1976 he completed an MBA.

## Why this position?

"My main challenge is to make sure that our infrastructure effectively supports the aims and objectives of the faculty," said Mal. "I'm also looking forward to encouraging a collegiate atmosphere and ensuring that our procedures are not only transparent but as seamless as possible."





## Reopening Cossar Hall

**A ceremony to mark the official reopening of the newly refurbished Cossar Hall took place on 4 February 2003. More than 200 representatives from industry, along with alumni and representatives of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch), attended the ceremony.**



Brian Cossar

Brian Cossar, guest speaker, outlined the history of the College's move to its current site. He noted that, in the 1950s, the Pharmaceutical Society decided the existing Swanston Street pharmacy college building was no longer suitable and the Parkville site was purchased for the sum of £25,500. A well-organised Parkville campus building appeal was soon organised, raising a total of £250,000. Henry Francis Chemists made a generous donation to this appeal. Brian's grandfather David was senior partner and father Norman a driving force in the company, and their efforts led to a donation of £25,000 in 1958, equivalent to about \$500,000 in today's terms.

Improvements made to Cossar Hall in 2002 include dividers that allow the top and bottom sections of the mezzanine areas to be closed off, creating one medium-sized lecture theatre and two small tutorial rooms. Air conditioning, new lights, tinted windows and a PA system have been installed and the whole hall has been painted.

The ceremony preceded the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Neil Naismith Memorial Lecture presented by Emeritus Professor Lloyd Sansom on the topic 'The Future of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme'. The memorial lectures will be held annually as part of the Society's professional lecture series.

● For further information on the lecture series contact Jodi McKenzie, tel: 613 9903 9696.



# Rural placements: a positive experience

**The College's compulsory rural placements for pharmacy students are providing an opportunity to experience different career options and learn more about life in rural communities.**

All pharmacy students at the College undertake a rural practice placement in third or fourth year. The three-week placement is one of five Advanced Practical Experiences (APEs) in the Bachelor of Pharmacy program. For most of the students, this is the first time that they have been exposed to life in a rural community.

According to Professor Roger Nation, Head of the Department of Pharmacy Practice, the feedback from students regarding their experiences in rural pharmacy is overwhelmingly positive.

"Many of the students indicate that prior to the placement they had not even thought of rural practice as an option," he said. "After the placement, many are keen to consider it."

While on placement, students spend the majority of the time in the pharmacy with their rural pharmacy preceptor. In addition, they complete a range of activities that provide greater insight into the issues that affect rural pharmacies and their communities. Visits to emergency services, rural health centres, pharmacy depots, other health professionals and even veterinary surgeons play a part in the rural



placement program. All activities – both inside and outside the rural pharmacy – are designed to allow the students to experience the benefits, diversity and challenges of rural practice.

Debriefing sessions are held when students return from rural placements to allow them to share experiences. The students obviously have their eyes opened to the issues involved in the delivery of high quality pharmaceutical services to rural communities and of the benefits of rural pharmacy practice. This exposure to rural practice will undoubtedly impact over time on the proportion of College graduates who will be attracted to undertake practice in rural areas.

The College believes it is important that every student has

the opportunity to undertake a rural placement. It provides a rounded pharmaceutical education, alerts graduates to issues around delivery of health services to rural communities and, hopefully, impacts positively on the number of graduates who consider practice in rural areas.

"We are indebted to the rural pharmacy preceptors who are currently providing this important educational experience to students," said Professor Nation. "We are also very keen to hear from other rural practitioners who would like to join the program as a preceptor."

• For further information contact Katrina Fitzsimon, tel: 613 9903 9043 or email [katrina.fitzsimon@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:katrina.fitzsimon@vcp.monash.edu.au)

## Pharmacy in the media

• In just over a year of working in a country pharmacy, Jit Chong has seen customers with snake bites, eye injuries from welding equipment and a litany of allergies. It is just the sort of varied experience that Jit, who graduated in 2001, was looking for when he joined the Wangaratta pharmacy.

Read more about Jit in the May Monash magazine – or view the magazine online at [www.monash.edu.au/pubs/monmag/](http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/monmag/) (If you are a graduate of the College and don't

currently receive the Monash magazine, make sure you update your details on the tear-off slip at the back of this newsletter.)

• A television commercial to encourage secondary school students in rural areas to consider a career in pharmacy was shot in the College's Sigma Room in October last year.

The advertisement, featuring JJJ's Adam Spencer, was shown in regional Australia and was organised by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, with Federal Government funding.



# Opening of Academic Year and Presentation of Prizes Ceremony 2003

**On 19 March this year, the College held its annual Opening of Academic Year and Presentation of Prizes Ceremony, where new students were welcomed and prize winners from 2002 honoured. John Hurley, Senior Lecturer in Medicinal Chemistry, delivered an inspiring occasional address, an excerpt of which is featured below.**

"It has been a great pleasure for me to have served, over the last third of a century, firstly the Pharmaceutical Society and more recently Monash University.

This ceremony marks the beginning of one facet of the College's activities – to train young people to be pharmacists, formulation scientists and medicinal chemists. Apart from the training role, the functions of tertiary education institutions include preserving, extending and disseminating knowledge. Libraries play a major role in preserving knowledge and our

library, formerly the Pharmaceutical Society's library, was in part funded by a private bequest from one of the profession's families. Research is a way by which knowledge is extended and I am very proud to have participated in the basic training and encouragement of a number of young researchers here and elsewhere. It has been the dissemination of knowledge, largely teaching undergraduate students, that I have absolutely revelled in.

The second purpose of this occasion is giving prizes to our top students. I firmly believe that young people should be rewarded for their efforts in whatever field they participate. Often the world of academia is not readily acknowledged or appreciated in our wider community and I say a hearty 'well done' to all our prize winners, especially our gold medallist Darren Creek.

I would also like to mention



John Hurley

the other prize winners who do not formally receive a memento of their efforts today. They are the students who work hard at their studies and are rewarded with a pass at the end of the year and ultimately entry to a professional life that can be both personally rewarding and of enormous benefit to our community.

The third purpose of this occasion is to welcome the representatives of the sponsors of our prizes, the parents and friends of our prize winners and the young people who are our new students. We are very grateful to our sponsors for their continued support, and I offer a 'well done' to parents and friends of prize winners – from another parent

and friend. To our new students, you too are to be congratulated for having done well at school and earned a place in this faculty. In my 32 years here I have come to know about 5000 delightful young people just like you, whose company I have greatly enjoyed.

At the end of this year I shall be entering into a new experience of life myself when I retire. I am very much looking forward to this time and the challenges that will present themselves. I hope that from time to time I might meet you in your new professional roles. And again, the very best of welcomes to you all."



## National Student Leadership Forum

The sixth National Student Leadership Forum held in Canberra last year hosted over 300 students from across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Four current and past College students attended – Daniel Ash, Thom Donovan, Divesh Sanghvi and myself.

The weekend included attending Parliament question time and a welcome by the Prime Minister John Howard and Opposition Leader Simon Crean.

Although not a politically based weekend, students were then allocated a smaller discussion group and met with a Member of Parliament for two hours. Over the next three days we heard from speakers including General Peter Cosgrove, Janine Shepherd, Noel Pearson, Brian Harradine and David Bassau, and held smaller discussion groups with these people.

Away from the formal setting, each group of eight students met for at least two hours a day to discuss issues facing young people. Friendships were made, email discussions still continue, and it has forced me (and I'm sure others) to look at the world in a different light.

Mick Delaney  
(Fourth year pharmacy student)



## Staff profile

**Professor Peter Scammells**  
Head, Department of Medicinal Chemistry, and Professor of Medicinal Chemistry



*"When I came to the College, one of my main goals was to develop the Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry in conjunction with the School of Chemistry, Faculty of Science."*

**Professor Peter Scammells joined the College in 2001 after previously working as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences at Deakin University. He completed a BSc(Hons) in 1987 and a PhD in 1991, both at Griffith University, and was an Associate in Research at the University of South Florida's College of Medicine in 1992.**

Throughout his career Professor Scammells has established successful research programs targeting adenosine and opiate receptors. He first synthesised the potent and selective adenosine antagonist, ENX (now called Adentri™), which is currently being evaluated as an agent for the therapy of congestive heart failure. It has been used to design potent and selective adenosine agonists that have now been synthesised and patented as agents for the therapy of cardiac arrhythmias. Professor Scammells also developed an irreversible ligand for studying adenosine receptors (FSCPX) (now sold by Sigma-Aldrich) and devised improved methodology for the synthesis of pharmaceutical opiate antagonists, now patented worldwide and being commercialised by an industry partner.

Since 1994, Professor Scammells has attracted research income totalling \$1.4 million. He has published numerous papers in national and international journals, registered a significant number of patents and has been invited to speak at many national and international symposiums. His awards include:

- Biota Medal (Royal Australian Chemical Institute, 1999)
- Divisional Lectureship (Royal Australian Chemical Institute, 1999)
- Deakin-Industry Research Fellowship (Deakin University, 1997)
- Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 1993).

Currently, Professor Scammells has several initiatives underway in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry.

"When I came to the College, one of my main goals was to develop the Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry in conjunction with the School of Chemistry, Faculty of Science," he said. "I chaired the steering committee and we are looking forward to the second year of the course in 2004, when the students will be based here at Parkville."

"We have also made some improvements to the medicinal chemistry component of the Bachelor of Pharmacy, with the second and third year offerings being consolidated into logical themes, and a refocussing of the practicals to make them directly relevant to the theory. Our research program is progressing well, and a major focus on new ligands and libraries for G-protein coupled receptors is emerging."

## Master of Clinical Pharmacy



**Fifteen students from acute care hospitals across Melbourne and Geelong are now enrolled in the College's new Master of Clinical Pharmacy program. All students are practising clinical pharmacists who want to formalise their knowledge of therapeutics, research skills and evidence-based practice.**

The Master of Clinical Pharmacy is conducted on a part-time basis over two academic years with one full day of contact per week. Each student is also required to complete a four-week specialty clinical rotation with an experienced clinical preceptor and a small practice-based research project.

Students will establish skills in evidence-based medicine (both theory and practice) quality use of medicine, practice-based research and provision of clinical pharmacy services at a high level.

The course combines didactic sessions at the university or hospital sites and clinical experiential sessions including tutorials, seminars, case histories and ward rounds.

Modules include biostatistics and epidemiology, evidence-based medicine, clinical pharmacology (including pharmacokinetics,

pharmacogenomics and biotechnology), interpretation of clinical data, pharmacotherapy, research project, journal club and specialty clinical placement.

On completion of the course, graduates will be able to:

- provide clinical pharmacy services at a high level
- use evidence-based principles to guide clinical practice
- appreciate concepts in biotechnology and their application to contemporary practice
- critically evaluate literature to develop research proposals
- undertake practice-based research projects.

● For further information contact Kirstie Galbraith, tel: 613 9903 9586 or email [kirstie.galbraith@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:kirstie.galbraith@vcp.monash.edu.au)



# New Centre for Medication Safety

**Medication safety is an issue that has recently received substantial attention. Inadequate systems for the prescribing, dispensing and administration of medicines can lead to errors or incidents that may cause adverse effects. And the prescribing of appropriate medicine in an appropriate dosage regimen can still be ineffective or unsafe if the patient does not follow directions.**

To address these issues, a Centre for Medication Safety, with a practice-based research and education focus, is being established in the Department of Pharmacy Practice.

Australian community pharmacies dispense almost 200 million prescriptions annually – about 10 prescriptions per person per year. This is substantially higher for the elderly and frail, who are at greatest risk of experiencing problems with the use of medicines. Approximately 140,000 Australian hospital admissions per year are directly attributable to medicine-related

problems, with 15-22% of emergency hospital admissions among the elderly being the direct result of misadventure with medicines. The cost to the Australian healthcare system associated with medicine-related hospital admissions has been estimated conservatively at \$380 million.

The discharging of a patient from a hospital back into the community can also be a high-risk activity. Many medicine-related hospital admissions occur shortly after a previous hospital admission because of a lack of continuity of care between the institution and the domiciliary setting.

"These statistics highlight the need for consolidated practice-based research to devise, and then to implement and evaluate, systems for the safe and effective use of medicines across all sectors of healthcare in Australia," said Professor Roger Nation, Head of the Department of Pharmacy Practice. "The pharmacy profession must play a leading role in this research and in

medication risk management initiatives."

Members of the Department of Pharmacy Practice are involved in research activities that go to the heart of medication safety and effectiveness. They include:

- implementation of electronic prescribing and decision support systems to improve the safe and effective use of medicines
- examination of factors that affect medication adherence in patients
- impact of adverse effects of drugs on quality of life
- information required for the safe and effective use of medicines in paediatric patients
- investigation of the role of pharmacist practitioners in medical general practices to improve the safe and cost-effective use of medicines
- ability of pharmacists to perform pharmaceutical calculations
- investigation of the role of community liaison pharmacists to ensure continuity of care between hospitals and the home.

In addition to practice-based research, educational activities in risk management in relation to safe and effective use of medicines are undertaken at the undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development levels. Members of the College also sit on a number of institutional, professional and other bodies that provide advice on implementation of safe systems for the use of medicines.

Funding is currently being sought to establish a full-time director position for the Centre as well as a medication risk management PhD scholarship. With the increasing national attention on medication misadventure, the Centre will be well placed to make a significant contribution to improving the way in which medicines are used.

● For further information contact Professor Roger Nation, tel: 613 9903 9579, email [roger.nation@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:roger.nation@vcp.monash.edu.au)



Stockpiled medicines from the homes of patients visited by a community liaison pharmacist.



# Focus on research projects

Acknowledging the diverse research projects undertaken by past and current College students



**Dr Shui-Mei Khoo**

**College PhD graduate Dr Shui-Mei Khoo was recently awarded a Mollie Holman Doctoral Medal for her outstanding PhD research thesis.**

Her thesis, entitled 'An investigation of the factors which impact on the absorption and metabolism of halofantrine', covered a very broad area in the pharmaceutical sciences. It encompassed development of lipid-based drug delivery systems, biological assessment of factors which impact on drug absorption via the intestinal lymphatics and physicochemical characterisation of an antimalarial compound including solubility, ionisation and partitioning behaviour.

It is a significant honour to receive one of the 10 Mollie Holman Doctoral Medals, which are awarded annually by Monash University for the best PhD thesis in each faculty.

Dr Khoo has had seven papers published in international journals and seven abstracts accepted at national and international conferences from her PhD work. She is now working as a senior formulation scientist for Mayne Pharma in Melbourne.

It is a significant honour to receive one of the 10 Mollie Holman Doctoral Medals.



**Rachmawati Saputra**

**Rachmawati Saputra, a Bachelor of Formulation Science (Hons) student, was one of only 15 recipients of this year's Monash University Vice-Chancellor's Undergraduate Research scholarships.**

The scholarships are awarded university-wide to students of exceptional calibre who have demonstrated a high level of research potential.

Rachma has an excellent undergraduate record with 10 high distinctions, three distinctions and one credit over the three years of her course, as well as commendations from industry during her industry experience placements.

Her research project during her honours year will focus on the oral delivery of proteins and peptides. Proteins and peptides undergo chemical instability in the acid environment of the stomach and enzymatic degradation in the intestine. Also, these compounds are unable to permeate the absorptive surface due to their size and conformation. Encapsulation of an unstable drug inside a particle can protect the drug molecule from a hostile environment (lumen of the gastrointestinal tract) and accentuate its absorption. Rachma's project will focus on a liquid formulation approach using multiple water/oil/water emulsions. These formulations allow the potential to incorporate macromolecules in the inner water phase and another excipient (such as an absorption enhancer) in the outer water phase. Rachma will formulate such multiple emulsions, characterise them with respect to drug loading, droplet size and stability, etc. Drug release from these systems will be measured as a function of emulsification method employed, emulsifying systems used and external water phase conditions such as pH, electrolyte concentration.

● For further information contact Rachma Saputra, tel: 613 9903 9678 or email [rachmawati.saputra@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:rachmawati.saputra@vcp.monash.edu.au)



**Elaine Tan**

**PhD student Elaine Tan from the Department of Pharmacy Practice is working on a project in collaboration with the Department of General Practice, Melbourne University, to investigate off-label and unlicensed prescribing.**

'Off-label' refers to the use of approved medicines in a manner different to that stated in the product information, for example, Ventolin® inhaler used more frequently than two puffs four-hourly. 'Unlicensed' refers to the use of medicines without product information, for example, a suspension made by crushing tablets.

This research will be fundamental to the process of policy making to improve the quality use of medicines in Australia.

Doctors may need to prescribe in this way when there is insufficient information provided by the drug company or product information is not keeping up with current clinical practice. They must then rely on information obtained from journals, colleagues and their own clinical experience. The project examines the prevalence and reasons for off-label and unlicensed prescribing, and benefits and risks associated with off-label and unlicensed prescribing. This research, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, will be fundamental to the process of policy making to improve the quality use of medicines in Australia.

● For further information contact Elaine Tan, tel: 613 9903 9030 or email [elaine.tan@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:elaine.tan@vcp.monash.edu.au)

# Muriel Witt: a remarkable woman in pharmacy

**Muriel Witt was a student at the College from 1924 to 1927 and winner of a Pharmacy Gold Medal during that time. She was the first woman appointed to the staff of the College and one of the founding members of a women pharmacists' group. Muriel is now 95 years of age.**



*"Mr Sissons and the Council thought it was time they appointed a woman, so I became one of the first two women pharmacy teachers in Australia."*

"I completed my studies at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy in 1927, then had to wait a year – in those days you had to be 21 before you could sit for the exams and be registered. My subsequent jobs were in suburban pharmacy, country pharmacy and city pharmacy, which meant that I met all sorts of interesting people.

Before I joined the College I was employed by Henry Francis, then the largest pharmaceutical firm in Victoria, as senior assistant in the Myers branch. Prescriptions were given to me by another assistant to price. In those days the dispensing department at Henry Francis was on another floor – you put the prescription into a tube and it went to the dispensary to be prepared and dispensed before coming back.

In 1943 Mr Sissons, Dean of the College, approached me to join the College staff. Many male students were in the military call up, and there were a large number of female students. Mr Sissons and the Council thought it was time they appointed a woman, so I became one of the first two women pharmacy teachers in Australia.

I was initially a demonstrator in pharmaceutical chemistry and in dispensing. Mr Sissons also asked me if I could do something about the library, which had been neglected for years, so I went to night classes to learn a bit about librarianship. I worked as a lecturer in pharmacognosy, then I travelled overseas for 12 months, attending an International Pharmaceutical Federation conference in Rome.

The women pharmacists' group was founded in 1933. In the beginning it was called the Women's Section of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria and we were always asked to look after the social side of functions. When they had a society meeting, I used to make the coffee for 100 people in a preserving pan. I would stir



freshly ground coffee into a gallon of water and let it stand all day. After heating the milk, I would tip the infusion of coffee in and mix it all up so they had hot coffee. I was always told it was very nice.

The Women Pharmaceutical Chemists' Association of Victoria was started by Pauline Bendall during the war years. Other states followed suit little by little and we also had an Australian federation of women pharmacists' organisations.

When we folded, we thought we had achieved our objectives. Pharmacists were one of the first groups to get equal pay. There were no more wars so we didn't

need to knit socks for soldiers. And the young ones weren't interested, I think because there were so many other organisations. The group has disbanded, but we still meet socially twice a year.

When I reached 65 I had to retire from the College. I was then invited by the son of the senior partner of Henry Francis to work for them and I stayed for about 15 years doing all sorts of jobs.

The practice of pharmacy has altered immeasurably over the years. I remember when I lived in a country town, there was one pharmacist and he pulled teeth. They did everything in those days."

## Past women pharmacists' groups

The Victorian Women Pharmacists' Association (VWPA) existed from 1905 to 1913 and was disbanded after achieving improved status and remuneration for women pharmacists.

The Women's Section of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria was founded in 1933, evolving into the Women Pharmaceutical Chemists' Association of Victoria, which disbanded in 1979. Its achievements included equal pay, establishment of the 'Continuing Education' lectures, representation on major industry bodies and formation of a national body.

## ... and today

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Women & Young Pharmacists' Committee was established in 1997 to promote ownership and leadership for women and young pharmacists in community pharmacy.

Activities include the production of a pharmacy owner's business kit, conferences, seminars and social events. For further information visit [www.guild.org.au/public/wypc.adp](http://www.guild.org.au/public/wypc.adp) or contact Anna Tsoukatos, tel: 613 9810 9999.

# Alumni achievements



**Irvine Newton**  
(1970)

**Penny Davis**  
[nee Thornton]  
(1970)

**Wellington Lee**  
OBE OAM RFD  
(1951)

Congratulations to Irvine Newton who won an Alcohol and Other Drug Council of Australia (ADCA) Australia Day Award in 2002. According to ADCA, Irvine has “devoted much of his professional career as a pharmacist to implementing services for illicit drug users. He has been instrumental in creating a culture of change within pharmacy, he has unstintingly worked to eliminate prejudice towards drug users”. Irvine, a retail pharmacist and pharmacy owner, has been a Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch) councillor for many years and served as President in 1998-99. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Pharmacy Management and a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Penny is the 2002 GlaxoSmithKline Medal of Merit recipient. Her medal is in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the profession of hospital pharmacy. Penny is currently the Deputy Director of the Western Sydney Area Health Service. She is well known throughout Australian hospital pharmacy practice as an authority on medication safety issues. Penny is a federal councillor for the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) and is a member of numerous groups involved in ensuring the quality use of medicines and medication safety in Australia. These include the Medication Safety Taskforce of the Australian Council for Safety and Quality Healthcare and the Department of Health and Ageing's Better Medication Management System Development Group. Penny is also an examiner for NSW Pharmacy Board Registrations.

Wellington Lee was recently awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his service to local government through the City of Melbourne and to the community, particularly through his work with Landcare Foundation Victoria and the State Library of Victoria Foundation. Active in community affairs for many years, Wellington has served as a Justice of the Peace since 1963, including time as Chairman Honorary Magistrates' Bench. He was a Councillor, City of Melbourne 1996-2000; Chairman Landcare Foundation Victoria 1994-2001; Committee Member, State Library of Victoria 1996-2001; and a member of the Health Services Review Council 1994-97. He is currently Foundation President of the Australian Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Australian Chinese Association.

## The Chemists Interstate Challenge Cricket Shield comes back to Victoria!



Victorian pharmacists defeated their NSW counterparts by six wickets in an exciting match at the Hume and Hovell Cricket Ground, Strath Creek on Sunday 13 April. After losing the toss, our bowlers, led by Steven White (Best Bowler), limited NSW to 109 runs. Opening batsmen Bernie Borg (Captain) and Divesh Sanghvi led our team to victory with a partnership of 74 runs. Bernie, who retired not out at 50, was awarded Player of the Match and Best Batsman. Other highlights included a sensational catch by our

Vice-Captain Geoff Crisp. The Shield and Player of the Match trophy are now proudly displayed in the PDL windows in the foyer of the Sissons building. Thanks to the sponsors, supporters and especially to the players whose enthusiasm and commitment has ensured that the Challenge has again become a regular event on the alumni calendar.

For a full report on the match and dinner, see next issue.

The Shield, first contested in 1908, is now back home.





**Hannah Loller [nee Burchell] graduated with a Bachelor of Pharmacy in 1993 and has worked in the UK as well as in rural and remote regions of Australia. She now holds a number of part-time positions and is an active member of her local community.**



## Alumni in profile: rural/remote pharmacist Hannah Loller

“Professor Colin Chapman once told us that pharmacy can lead to many different paths of employment and encouraged us not to restrict our employment options. I have often thought of his words over the years and thank him for planting the seed.

After graduating and completing my pre-registration year in 1993 I worked in retail pharmacy before touring America and Europe. Arriving in the UK to start work, I spent the majority of my time at the Princess Grace Hospital, a small private hospital in central London that specialised in orthopedics, oncology and gastroenterology. I also had a very short stint with Glaxo Wellcome (as they were then) in their drug information department.

Returning to Australia, I worked as a locum in country Victoria before looking at opportunities to do something a little different. In 1998 I saw a job advertised for a clinical pharmacist in the Kimberley and decided to make it a three-month working holiday. The position was at the Derby Regional Hospital in a department with another pharmacist and two assistants. Derby is located approximately 230 kilometres north of Broome and, while it is on water, it is not quite the same as Cable Beach – it is surrounded by mud flats and has a 12 metre tidal variation. Shortly after arriving, the other pharmacist left and I found myself the regional pharmacist for the Kimberley. Our department looked after the wards at the Derby Hospital as well as supplying and supervising drug use to five other hospitals and 13 remote health clinics.

My first visit to a remote health clinic was to Lombardina, a community on the Dampier Peninsula north of Broome, where I checked pharmaceuticals in the clinic and provided support and education to the registered nurse who ran the clinic. This was the first of many trips around the Kimberley to hospitals and remote health clinics from Broome to Wyndham. Three months ended up being three years in the Top End of Australia.

When I first drove into Derby I remember thinking “What the hell have I done?” However, this was the best experience of my life. To have Gibb River Road and the Kimberley region as your backyard is a dream. The opportunity to go mustering cattle in a helicopter, fish for barramundi, swim in a pool at the bottom of a waterfall and to be part of a community was fantastic. Work was

*"Working as a pharmacist does not mean just the decision between retail and hospital pharmacy departments. A pharmacy degree can open many other doors."*

Hannah on a home visit with asthma patient Cathy Spanton.



rewarding and challenging and running the department taught me many managerial skills I would never have obtained had I remained down south. Derby also holds fond memories for the friendships I developed – best of all Peter Loller, who is now my husband.

After 17 months I took up a position as the hospital pharmacist at Katherine Hospital, and a couple of months later was appointed project officer for the Territory Health Service, reviewing pharmacy services to remote health clinics and coordinating the implementation of the Continuum of Care Guidelines across their hospitals. This involved nine months of travelling around the Northern Territory to remote clinics and hospitals, researching and trying to come up with some solutions to problems that were evident. The result was the development of Guidelines for Medication Management in Remote Health Clinics, NT. Standards of Practice were also developed for pharmacies providing these services, which have just been forwarded to the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to review and consider for national endorsement.

In 2000 we moved to my husband's family farm 20 kilometres from Karoonda in South Australia. Karoonda is a small town (with only a pharmacy depot) between Murray Bridge and Loxton. As the closest pharmacy is 65 kilometres away and fully staffed, I needed to become a bit creative (or lucky) to get a position. I ended up working for Hospital Pharmacy Services, providing a clinical pharmacy service to hospitals in my area. I also worked one day a week at the Lamerook pharmacy, which was a great way to meet people in the community.

Now I juggle a number of different positions. After 15 months with Hospital Pharmacy Services, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation approached me to run a project to increase the involvement of community pharmacy in providing services to remote aboriginal health clinics.

At the same time Divisions of General Practice were starting to employ Medication Management Review Facilitators and my role has been to implement the Home Medicines

Review program in the region, which stretches from the Victorian border to Murray Bridge, which is 80 kilometres east of Adelaide. We have taken on a contract with the National Prescribing Service to deliver their program to our divisional area and I will be conducting educational visits with the GPs in our region. I also have taken on coordination of an after hours nurse triage program aimed at relieving the after hours burden on solo practice GP towns. And being a pharmacist in the Division also means that most issues around prescribing or quality use of medicine come across my desk.

In my spare work time I conduct Home Medicines Reviews for some of the local pharmacists who have not completed their accreditation. I work at Lamerook whenever possible and provide clinical visits to some hospitals in the Riverland region. Pete works the farm with his parents and I help out during the peak times of shearing, cropping and harvest. It can be quite a refreshing break to sit on a tractor going round a paddock, or quietly drive along the road moving a mob of sheep.

In my non-work time I help to run the Karoonda Farm Fair, which attracts 10,000 people over two days. Last Christmas our local butcher shop closed without finding a new owner. Pete and I joined other community members in deciding that the shop was a vital community service; the group purchased the business and employed a butcher to manage the shop. I also help out with the Karoonda Development Group and am involved with the local tennis and netball clubs. Life in a small rural community means you get to wear many hats!

Working as a pharmacist does not mean just the decision between retail and hospital pharmacy departments. A pharmacy degree can open many other doors. My work in rural and remote regions has been extremely rewarding and has given me the opportunity to take on roles that would not be available in metropolitan areas."



Hannah at her desk at the Murray Mallee Division of General Practice.

# Reunions

## 50th anniversary

A 50th anniversary reunion was held on 6 November last year for graduates who began their studies at the College in 1952. Hosted by Alistair Lloyd, the lively afternoon involved tours of the College and catching up with classmates.



## Class of 1970, 71, 72

A reunion for alumni from 1970, 1971 and 1972 took place on 23 November. Special guest speaker Dr Geoffrey Vaughan, who taught many of those present, was joined by about 70 alumni and staff from these

years. Attendees particularly enjoyed the tours and looking at materials from the College's archives.

Guest speaker  
Dr Geoffrey Vaughan



## Future reunions

More reunions are planned for this year – a 10-year reunion for graduates who completed their course in 1993 (and the staff who taught them) is being organised for late October. Contact the alumni office if you would like to join the organising committee.

Latvian pharmacy graduates are invited to attend a mid-year reunion at the College. The reunion is

being organised by Valda Comber, President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch).

For further information and to register your interest in any of these activities, contact the alumni office, tel: 613 9903 9507, fax: 613 9903 9058 or email [alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au)



# Staying in touch

Our new ‘staying in touch’ page is a great way to share news about yourself, your career or your family with friends from the College. Our alumni website will also soon feature a ‘staying in touch’ section where we will list entries from people in different year groups. You can send your news via Alchemy’s update form, or email [alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au)

Here are some examples from last year’s 1970-72 reunion.

**Helen Scott [nee Burbury] (1971)**  
Married to Bill – President of the Pharmacy Guild Victorian Branch. Helen and Bill still have a great commitment to the pharmacy profession. In partnership, they work four pharmacies in the northern corridor, and are aiming for “workplace of choice, quality care pharmacy of the year, innovative dispensing practices and advanced wound care facilities”. Helen and Bill have “three wonderful daughters, one to be married in February”.

**Marilyn Gibb [nee Gloz] (1971)**  
Married to Grant, another hospital pharmacist (originally from New Zealand – they met at the PAANZ conference in Auckland). Two grown offspring – Glen, who has a double honors degree in science and engineering and is likely to do further study; and Debra, who is in 4th year medicine at the University of Melbourne.

**Bruce Margetts (1970)**  
Locum – Assistant – Owner – Locum. Four children, now four grandchildren. “Satisfied with life as now.”

**Margot Templer (1972)**  
Married Colin Templer in 1974. Purchased Templer’s Pharmacy in Ivanhoe in 1979 – owned until 1998 when they bought Stotts Corner Pharmacy in Hawthorn, then Good Health in Mentone in 2001 which Margot says was “a lot of hard work”. They have two children, Andrew (23) doing 5th year commerce/law at Monash (spent 1st semester 2002 in Prato, Italy) and daughter Nicki who has just done 2nd year interior design at RMIT. She works part-time at Stotts and drives racing cars at Calder, Winton, Phillip Island etc as a hobby together with Colin.

**Jennifer Marriot [nee O’Dea] (1971)**  
After 15 years in community pharmacy and 15 years in hospital pharmacy, Jennifer went back to study. She was awarded a PhD in 2000 and is currently a lecturer in clinical pharmacy in the Department of Pharmacy Practice at the College. She says “I love it. No regrets!”

**Judy Bingham [nee Phillips] (1971)**  
Judy is currently the Director Regulatory Development and Commercialisation at Kendle. They provide drug development consultancy services to the biotechnology industry and regulatory services to the pharmaceutical industry. She was previously Director of Pharmacy at Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, Medical Affairs Manager at Faulding and Business Development Manager at CSL.



**Simon Yu (1972)**  
Simon has been operating the Kilmore and Wallan pharmacies for the last 20 years. He and his wife have three sons. Simon works full-time and as a consultant at the Kilmore Hospital.

**Sue Foran [nee Easterbrook] (1972)**  
Sue says “pharmacy has been good to me – so much variety, from retail to drug information in hospitals, the pharmaceutical industry and now consultancy”. She has two children, Adrian (23) and Lizzie (20), and is settled in Melbourne for the moment.



**Pictured:**  
1. Helen & Bill Scott  
2. Marilyn & Grant Gibb  
3. Margot & Colin Templer  
4. Pat & Bruce Margetts  
5. Simon Yu (far right)

**Ellen Kemp [nee Jamieson] (1972)**  
Ellen is currently managing a pharmacy while using her leisure time to run an established tree farm. She has two daughters, Sarah and Julia. Ellen skis with other pharmacists each year somewhere in the world.

**Jo Burgess [nee Young] (1972)**  
Jo is working in community pharmacy and “still loving it”. She has four grown up children – Steven (28), Jacinta (27), Suzie (24) and Annette (21) and is living happily in north-east Victoria.

Please help to keep us – and your fellow alumni – up to date with your latest news. Fill in the update form, tear it off and send it to:  
**Alumni Newsletter  
Victorian College of Pharmacy  
Monash University (Parkville Campus)  
381 Royal Parade  
Parkville Vic 3052 Australia  
or fax to: 613 9903 9058  
(confidential fax).**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Business address \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone (H/B) \_\_\_\_\_

Email (H/B) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax (H/B) \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation year \_\_\_\_\_

**News about yourself**  
*(Please send separate sheet if required)*

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Have you received any postgraduate or additional professional qualifications since graduating?

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**Would you like further information on ...**

☐ Becoming involved in the Practical Experiences Program?

☐ Postgraduate study at the College such as the MBA or Master of Wound Care?

☐ 1993 reunion

☐ Latvian reunion

☐ Making a bequest to the Victorian College of Pharmacy?



# Pharmacy Gold Medal 2002

Darren Creek is the winner of the Pharmacy Gold Medal 2002, awarded by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. He also won the Pharmaceutics III award (\$250 donated by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia).

The Pharmacy Gold Medal is presented on the basis of academic results achieved over all four years of the pharmacy course. It is the award given to the dux of the course.

“Darren won this award by performing well in subjects ranging from the basic sciences to clinical pharmacy,” said Professor Colin Chapman. “Along the way, Darren picked up exhibitions for being the top student in forensic pharmacy, clinical pharmacy and pharmaceutics. He is a highly deserving recipient of this prestigious award.”

Darren is currently undertaking a pre-registration year at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He is planning to return to the College to complete a PhD in the field of pharmaceutics or medicinal chemistry. He also intends to stay involved in the practice of pharmacy, especially rural pharmacy.



Darren Creek with Valda Comber, President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch)

# Wound management guide online

Healthcare providers across Australia can now access an online resource that gives the latest information on how to best manage patients with wounds.

Recently launched by the Federal Minister for Health, Senator Kay Patterson, the Online Wound Care Program is the first of its kind in Australia. It is freely available to general practitioners, pharmacists, podiatrists, veterinarians, nurses and allied health professionals who want to further develop their knowledge and skills in wound care.

The initiative has been driven by recent advances in wound dressings, growth factors and skin substitutes – changes that need to be efficiently relayed to the health industry to ensure that patients receive the best possible treatment.

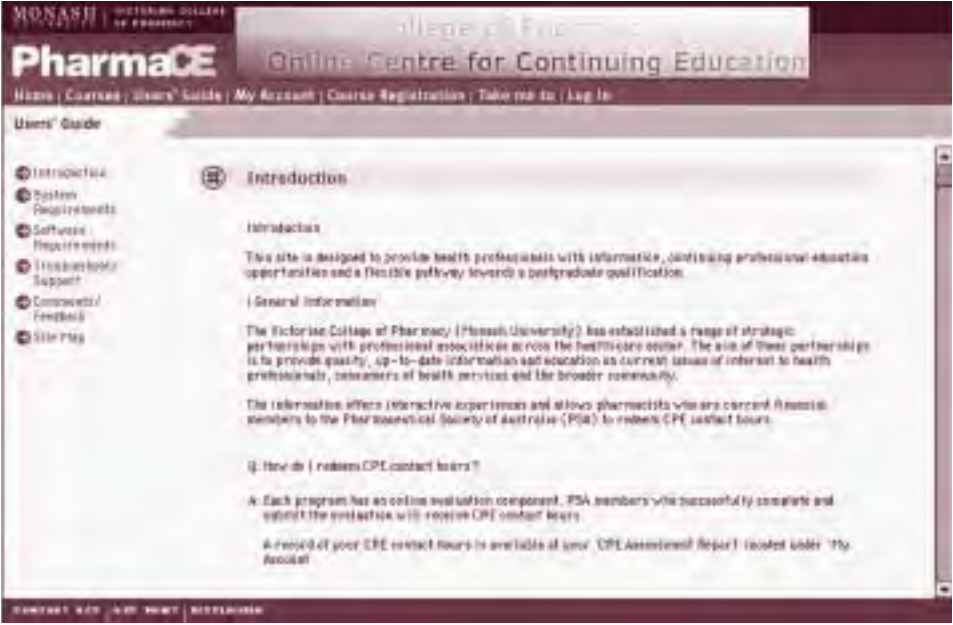
The Online Wound Care Program will benefit health providers in rural, remote and isolated communities, giving them access to the latest information. It will also benefit veterinarians who treat acute and chronic wounds in animals housed in zoos around Australia.

Information on the website currently covers wound healing and repair, phases of wound healing and factors affecting wound healing. Over the next two years information on wound assessment, wound products, management of burns, scars and acute and chronic wounds, nutrition, dermatology and reconstructive surgery will be added.



Senator Kay Patterson launching the Online Wound Care Program at the Melbourne Zoo.

www.pharmace.vic.edu.au



Content for the website has been developed by the Monash Wound Care Consortium, which involves Monash University, the Wound Foundation of Australia, the National Ageing Research Institute, the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University.

- For more information, visit the Online Wound Management Program at <http://www.pharmace.vic.edu.au>

## Alumni news

# News

Let us know your news!  
Fill in the update form and keep us informed about your personal and career achievements.



Victorian College of Pharmacy  
Monash University (Parkville Campus)  
381 Royal Parade Parkville  
Victoria 3052 Australia  
Tel: 61 3 9903 9000  
[www.vcp.monash.edu.au](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au)