



Patriotic Australians voted against the Republic, research reveals

BY DEREK BROWN

The more patriotic Australians were, the less likely they were to vote for the Republic, according to research into the voting patterns of the 1999 referendum.

Dr Bob Birrell, director of the Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University, reveals in his new book, *Federation: The Secret Story*, that most voters actually favoured an Australian head-

of-state even though 55 per cent of Australians voted against the Republic.

"One of the most surprising consequences of this outcome was that the vote was opposite to what might have been expected by the Republican leaders," Dr Birrell (pictured) said.

"In other words, the more patriotic the voter, the more likely they were to vote 'no' (to the Republic), and the more critical of Australia they were, the more likely they were to vote 'yes'."

Despite the Republican leaders' attempts to appeal to Australian patriotism by encouraging a desire for a new and unique Australian identity, the Republican movement failed. According to Dr Birrell, this was due to a fundamental flaw in the Republican argument.

"The referendum reflected a great divide in the Australian population – between the metropolitan, highly educated elite, typified by the Republican

leaders, and the provincial, less-educated majority," he said.

"The latter voted overwhelmingly 'no' in the referendum, and the former overwhelmingly 'yes'."

"I believe the Republican leaders failed to tap into the patriotic feelings of the majority of the population because of their links to a vision of Australia as a global, open and multicultural society – to which most of the nation could not relate."

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Making a splash

Delighted children – and relieved parents – flocked to the Doug Ellis Swimming Pool at Monash's Clayton campus during the school holidays to take advantage of the university's holiday program. The program is available every school holidays for staff, students and community users. Pictured are (clockwise from rear left) Naomi, Alex, Elif, Mark, Brereton and Naveen enjoying the attention of the lens (inset: Elif and Anita).

Last month, Monash in conjunction with Camp Australia also introduced a Multi Sports Camp sponsored by Nike for youngsters aged from eight to 16. The program boasted professional coaching geared to skill levels, and all participants received Nike T-shirts on arrival and individual reports and photographs on completion. For more information on Monash University Vacation Care, call 9905 3156. Pictures: Greg Ford

Newspaper chief credits Monash

BY ALLISON HARDING

The new publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Age* newspaper, Mr Greg Hywood, credits Monash University with his career success.

The 46-year-old, who was appointed to the position last month, completed a Bachelor of Economics in 1974.

"I was at Monash at the period when I think the extremes of the 1960s had subsided, but it was still a very political environment – it had a lot of character," he said.

"The reason I went there was that the courses were quite innovative and that was Monash's reputation from very early on ... for those interested in economics and public policy, Monash was very much the place to go.

"Monash provided the course that tapped into my interests and that was the important thing.

"There was a sense of 'ivy league' about Melbourne University – it had history – but Monash really did pave the way in innovation and commitment."

Mr Hywood, who worked on the student newspaper *Lot's Wife*, became

increasingly interested in journalism during his studies.

"I told the careers counsellor, who said that newspapers didn't really use universities as a resource, but he took my name down," Mr Hywood said.

Coincidentally, the then editor of *The Australian Financial Review* lived close to the Clayton campus and had just received the resignation of one of his young journalists – Christopher Skase.

"Skase had left to go and make his fortune, so the editor went to Monash to see if there were any economics graduates interested in journalism," Mr Hywood said.

Mr Hywood ended up staying at *The Australian Financial Review* until 1997, when he became publisher and editor-in-chief of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He has now returned to Melbourne to take the helm of *The Age*.

He said he was looking forward to preparing the newspaper for the enormous flexibility which a new printing plant at Tullamarine would provide this year.

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Sperm storage bags a boon

A new technique for storing sperm in foil bags could be a boon for organisations now freezing sperm in liquid nitrogen.

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Modern medicine: art or science?

By making choices based on limited information, health care professionals can do more harm than good, argues a Monash academic.

Modern medicine: art or science?

OPINION



With countless new research articles generated each year, information overload is one of the major challenges facing health care professionals. **PROFESSOR CHRIS SILAGY** asks how they can find and absorb all the information available and ensure patients receive care based on the most up-to-date evidence.

ONE of the major challenges facing health care professionals today is the threat of information overload. With more than two million new research articles generated each year in more than 2000 health journals, how can health care professionals access and absorb all the information available and ensure their patients receive care based on the most up-to-date evidence?

As patients, we assume our doctor or health care professional is making decisions for our treatment based on the latest advances in medical knowledge. Unfortunately, that is often not the case. Health care has frequently tended to be more art than science with decisions often made on anecdotal evidence and past experiences.

In some cases, by making choices based on limited information, health care professionals can unintentionally do more harm than good. Failure to take into account scientific evidence in the decision-making process can, on occasion, jeopardise the health of patients.

People may end up receiving non-effective or harmful treatments administered by health care professionals who believe them to be beneficial.

While it is easy with hindsight to dismiss some of the ineffective treatments used in the distant past, such as placing leeches on the anus for the treatment of stroke or the use of antimalarial drugs for the treatment of neurosyphilis, it is only 10 years ago that drugs were being given routinely to patients following heart attacks to prevent abnormal heart rhythms.

Unfortunately, these drugs also killed many of the patients who received them.

In other instances, patients may have been denied simple treatments, which could have alleviated or prevented their condition from worsening or recurring because the health care professional was unaware or unfamiliar with the treatment. Simple yet effective preventative measures such as taking aspirin after a heart attack in order to prevent further attacks have been scientifically documented as effective – but are often not used.

Monash is at the forefront of bridging the information gap both nationally and internationally, promoting and fostering evidence-based practice around the world.

In evidence-based practice, clinical and health care decisions should be based on the best available evidence sourced from scientific literature.

There are a number of centres working individually and collaboratively toward this end at the Monash Institute of Public Health. Some of the centres are looking at the scientifically proven benefits of some alternative medicine, while others are working with government to assess the costs and effectiveness of applying a range of health technologies in Australia.

The Australasian Cochrane Centre based in the institute is working as part of an international collaboration to ease information overload for doctors, health care professionals and their patients, by creating an electronic

database of the effects of all health care treatments and technologies.

The collaboration team works through all the available information, such as articles published in medical journals and results of the latest trials, to summarise the evidence on what works and what doesn't.

In future, we hope doctors will be able to access the database anywhere around the world and at any time. Through a simple keyword search they will instantly have access to the latest research results on any medical condition and the effectiveness of different treatment options.

Once the database is commonplace, it will be useful not only for health care professionals but also for their patients, who will be able to access concise summaries of the results in lay language, allowing them to put the advice of their doctors into perspective.

Medical consultation should not be a one-way street with doctors treating conditions based on their own experiences and expecting patients to accept their judgements blindly. Health care professionals have a responsibility to assist patients in accessing, understanding and applying the information they need to make choices.

Other sections of the Monash Institute of Public Health are focused in this work. The Centre for Clinical Effectiveness and Medical Informatics are striving to make scientific information digestible and accessible at the point of decision-making, whether it be in the doctor's office, over the internet, or as a public information leaflet in a shopping centre.

Organisations such as the institute have a crucial role in helping patients – as consumers of health care treatments – become more involved in the decision-making process and ensuring that health care professionals maintain the science alongside the art in modern medicine.

Professor Chris Silagy is professor of Public Health at Monash University and director of the Monash Institute of Public Health and the Australasian Cochrane Centre. This article is based on Professor Silagy's lecture, 'Modern Medicine: An Art or Science?', presented at the Monash Malaysia Leading Ideas Forum in November 2000.

The business of being successful

By SUE MCALISTER

Monash University's Berwick campus is taking the innovative step of combining resources from three areas – information technology, art and design, and business – to produce two cutting-edge commercial ventures.

The first, Mondostudios, has opened its doors for business at Berwick in a converted warehouse just off campus.

The brainchild of Professor John Rosenberg, dean of Monash's IT faculty, Mondostudios draws students from the Multimedia course which is run jointly by the IT faculty and the Art and Design faculty.

Mondostudios aims to give multimedia work to Monash students at commercial rates using commercial equipment and facilities.

Mondostudio's CEO, Mr Chris Waddell, says the venture owes its existence to Professor Rosenberg's "forward-thinking and entrepreneurial" ideas.

"Monash is a hotbed of ideas and great research, but a lot of this, along with the expertise of many of our students, is bleeding out of the university," Mr Waddell said.

"There's also the desirability of multi-skilling, of combining IT with art and design, and giving students experience of the real commercial world ... why not harness all this to benefit both Monash and the wider community?"

Mr Waddell, a Monash graduate and former CEO of a major Melbourne company, stresses that Mondostudios pays Monash for using its facilities.

"We're telling the business community that Mondostudios isn't about exploitation or doing things on the cheap, but about excellence. Already a

number of clients have expressed very positive comments on the quality of our work."

Mondostudios has so far given contract work to 15 students and secured around \$150,000 in orders. These range from simple static websites and educational and promotional CDs to more sophisticated database-driven and animated websites.

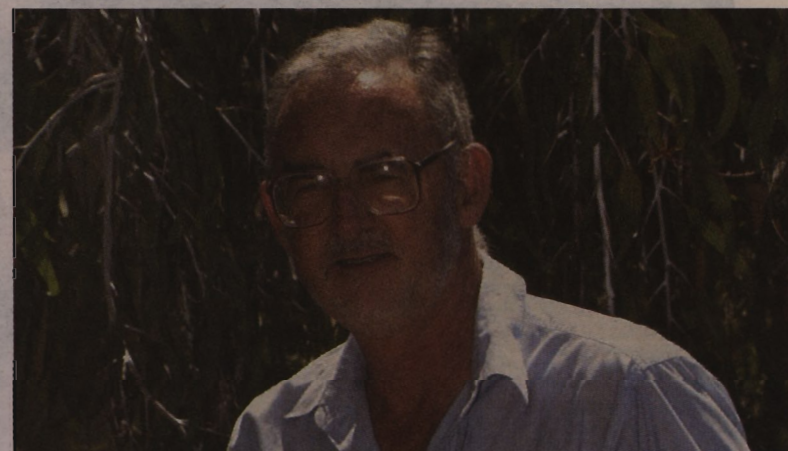
"The students are very keen – we aim to involve more than 60 this year," Mr Waddell said.

The second Monash venture is the establishment of an information technology and communications business incubator at Berwick. A major effort to raise capital with banking, business partners will begin soon, and several start-up business candidates have already applied.

The incubator will provide high-quality start-up resources, including accommodation, equipment, telecommunications networks, business mentoring, legal and secretarial services, and access to venture capital.

Mr Waddell said the incubator, like Mondostudios, would offer "a much-needed service to start-ups at the seed level without compromising quality."

For further information about Mondostudios or the business incubator, contact Chris Waddell on (03) 9707 0411, fax: (03) 9707 0433 or visit www.mondostudios.com



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Dr Birrell said that if the present government had a change of leadership and floated a Republican model, promoting it with a positive emphasis on our history, there would be no doubt that Australia would become a Republic.

In *Federation: The Secret Story*, Dr Birrell also explores the history of the federal movement, its role in achieving Federation and the subsequent social and political developments between 1901 and World War I.

The book challenges the view of Federation, still dominant among historians, as a pact between Britain and

conservative Australian colonial leaders to keep the Empire intact.

Dr Birrell argues that after Federation Australia's political leaders introduced major reforms inspired by the ideal of creating an egalitarian society in which there would be no second-class citizens.

According to Dr Birrell, the period after Federation saw the most substantial social change in our nation's history, from the creation of an independent navy and the protection of Australian industry to the formation of the notion of a basic wage for all workers and their families.

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New sperm storage bags could save thousands of dollars

By JUNE YU

A Monash PhD student has developed a cheap and easy way to store sperm in aluminium foil bags.

The bags, which cost about eight cents each, could be a boon for organisations now using liquid nitrogen to store frozen sperm.

Working at Monash University's Institute of Reproduction and Development, Mr Mulyoto Pangestu has produced baby mice after pioneering an evaporative drying technique to preserve mouse sperm.

The evaporative dried sperm, which was stored for up to six months at room temperature in aluminium foil bags, have now yielded baby mice to the second generation.

Mr Pangestu's method could lead to significant savings in acquiring and maintaining nitrogen tanks and liquid nitrogen – currently it costs \$6000 for one 34-litre tank and \$1000 a year to maintain the liquid nitrogen.

"It also opens up the way for individual couples to store their own genetic material, helping to ensure that the material could not be used without their consent," he said.

"The technique circumvents all problems of cross-contamination of samples and would eliminate all occupational health, building and safety issues associated with liquid nitrogen."

He said it would also free up floor space normally occupied by nitrogen tanks.

Mr Pangestu now plans to try to store cells using the foil bags, and to replicate the experiment using sperm from other animals such as cows.

For his achievement, Mr Pangestu has won the *Far Eastern Economic Review Magazine's* Young Inventors' Award, with a first prize of a Hewlett Packard computer system for himself and \$15,000 for the university.

Mr Pangestu completed a degree in animal husbandry in Indonesia and won scholarships to Australia to do his masters and PhD.



Mr Mulyoto Pangestu with foil bags capable of storing mouse sperm for up to six months. Pictures: Greg Ford

Community ties grow from student work placements

By JULIE RYAN

Students undertaking the Bachelor of Business and Commerce at Peninsula campus will now have the chance to incorporate a year of professional experience into their course.

Beginning in semester two, third-year students will be able to take part in the pilot Work Integrated Learning Program that will see them undertake a fully paid work placement in their major discipline area.

Project coordinator Dr Paul de Lange said the aim of the project was to broaden students' skill base while better preparing them for business careers.

"There are huge benefits to be gained from this type of opportunity, including professional experience which can lead to employment," Dr de Lange said. "It also gives students the chance to put into practice what they have learned."

Students would complete the first two years of their Bachelor of Business and Commerce course before a one-year work placement, then return to

the campus to complete the final year of their course.

The head of the Faculty of Business and Economics at Peninsula campus, Professor Bill Schroder, said the program would provide true flexibility in the BBusCom at Peninsula.

"Together with the accelerated degree program, which allows students to complete their course in two years, the Work Integrated Learning Program provides an opportunity for students to extend their course with an additional year of supervised, professionally related employment," he said.

"The pilot project also gives the campus a chance to develop stronger links with industry and business in the local area."

The faculty's Business Advisory Committee would play a key role in the program by finding employers who could offer students positions, Professor Schroder said.

Any organisations interested in participating in the pilot program should contact Dr de Lange on (03) 9904 4361 or email paul.delange@buseco.monash.edu.au

Masters student awarded musicology prize

A Master of Arts research student from the School of Music – Conservatorium at Monash University has been awarded the 2000 Musicology Prize by the Musicological Society of Australia.

The prize was presented to Mr Robin Fox for a paper delivered at the Musicological Society's Victorian Chapter Conference 2000.

The paper, 'The Atomic Café to CHCMC: A Trans-Pacific Aesthetic Transplant', looks at whether 1970s contemporary music in the US had a large influence on contemporary music in the same era in Victoria.

Mr Fox's paper will be published in Australia's top musicological journal, *Musicology Australia*.

Law faculty meets Chinese delegates on human rights issues

Staff from Monash's Castan Centre for Human Rights Law and Law faculty recently met delegates from China to discuss issues relating to human rights conventions and treaties in Australia.

The delegates from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences met with Law dean Professor Stephen Parker, Castan Centre director Professor David Kinley and lecturer Mr Mark Davison as part of a study trip to

Australia organised by the Chinese Department of Foreign Affairs.

It is hoped the meeting will lay the groundwork for further collaboration between the two centres.

Academic wins prize for art criticism

The associate dean of research and graduate studies for the Faculty of Art and Design at Monash, Dr Robert Nelson, has won the prestigious Pascall Prize for his work as a visual art critic.

Dr Nelson writes reviews and features on art exhibitions for *The Age*. He was commended in the 1996 prize, but this is the first year he has snared the prize.

The \$15,000 prize is awarded each year for contributions of criticism to Australian culture.

Graduate wins writing award

Monash engineering graduate Mr Athol Yates (BE 1986) has won the Best Analytical Writing of the Year award from the Australian Business Publishers.

His article, 'Lessons From Disasters: Don't Cut Down on Engineering Expertise', looked at three fatal engineering accidents – the Canberra Hospital implosion, the engine fire on HMAS Westralia and the Esso Longford gas explosion – to see

whether reducing engineering expertise was a contributing factor.

Mr Yates is now a senior policy analyst at the Institution of Engineers, Australia in Canberra.

International nursing conference explores best practice

The School of Nursing at Monash's Peninsula campus is coordinating an international conference dealing with practice development for nursing professionals.

The Practice Makes Perfect Conference provides an opportunity for professionals in a range of nursing disciplines to explore the concept of developing best practice initiatives and techniques in their fields.

Keynote presenters will include Professor Brendan McCormack, professor of nursing research at the University of Ulsters/Royal Group of Hospitals Trust in Belfast, Ms Kim Manley, CBE practice development head of the Royal College of Nursing Institute, and Associate Professor John Loughran from the Faculty of Education at Monash.

The one-day conference will be held on Monday 12 February at Monash's Peninsula campus, with the residential program commencing on Sunday 11 February and continuing through to Thursday 15 February at the Peninsula Country Golf Club in Frankston.

Police watchdogs needed for emerging democracies

BY DEREK BROWN

In Eastern Europe and much of Latin America, new and emerging democracies are struggling with issues such as police accountability, corruption and protecting their citizens' human rights.

According to Dr Colleen Lewis, senior lecturer in criminal justice and criminology at Monash University, who edited *Civilian Oversight of Policing: Governance, Democracy and Human Rights* with Professor Andrew Goldsmith from Flinders University, without effective police accountability true democracy is not possible.

"Police are the coercive arm of the government. When the police are corrupt or abuse their power, there are serious ramifications for human rights and the efficient functioning of democratic institutions," Dr Lewis said.

The authors, who look at countries including Israel, South Africa, Haiti, the US, Australia, Brazil and Colombia, analyse whether Western legal and political ideals about policing and human rights can be successfully transferred to regions with a different social and political environment.



While Dr Lewis (pictured) hopes the book will provide emerging democracies with models for dealing with police accountability, she believes a researcher looking at police behaviour in other nations must take note of the cultural context in which policing takes place.

"In Colombia, for example, there is effectively a war being waged in the streets between police and drug cartels, leftist guerillas and other paramilitary groups. Unfortunately, despite the government's best attempts to police the situation, they often don't win the law and order battle," she said.

"Also, in divided societies such as Northern Ireland and Israel where opposing groups co-exist, police numbers are generally made up from the majority group. It is unlikely that a Palestinian living in Israel will go to an Israeli police officer with a complaint about police behaviour."

Dr Lewis believes Australians must be careful not to pass judgements on emerging democracies without looking at our own record.

"In Australia and other strong and well-established democracies, we often try to export our ideas of police accountability to emerging democracies around the world. However, we need to look at how well we are doing at ensuring effective police accountability in our own countries first. It is clear that we are often exporting theory rather than practice," she said.

Art in a modern world

An exhibition of artwork by masters and PhD students from the Faculty of Art and Design on show this month takes a look at life in an increasingly complex and technological world.

Powder: The Controlled Space includes a selection of works from seven postgraduate students and reveals the visual creativity of a new wave of artists.

For these artists, the computer, the internet and the technological world are as integral to their creativity as the paint brush and carving chisel of the romantic past.

The exhibition brings together some of the best work of the faculty's postgraduate research students to present a representation of what it means to be living in the modern world.

Cresside Collette has created 'Revealing Grace' (pictured), an investigation in the woven textile form of a woman trapped within a moment of Renaissance time, while David Fitzsimmons's swirling 'Domestic Wilds No 1' explores the controlled daily grind of our everyday life and the machines of our domestic environment.

The ceramic plate in Irene Grishin-Seizer's 'Decayed Fruit' explores the process of decay and degradation and, in 'Embrace,' Greer Honeywill utilises the common kitchen grater as a metaphor for change. 'Embrace' illustrates a time where, for the 1950s suburban homemaker, the kitchen was the defined centre of the universe.

Using the circle as a signifier of cycles, Tyra Hutchen has created 'Album' as a representation of memory, experience and time lived. Hutchen's work is designed to remind us that the sophisticated technology of today is, in reality, already passed.



'Still Life' by Zai Biao Kwang is an investigation into interior domestic space and private loneliness. The work evokes a sadness that is often played out every night in countless homes and apartments.

Ms Louise Rippert's 'Blanket' is not a typical functional bed covering but a symbol of continual change and growth that looks at the history and guidance that is passed from one generation to another.

What: *Powder: The Controlled Space*, an exhibition of masters and PhD student artwork from the Faculty of Art and Design
Where: Monash Faculty of Art and Design Gallery, Caulfield campus
When: 2 February to 24 February (official opening 6 pm, 1 February)
Contact: Mailcom Bywaters on (03) 9903 2882

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