

DNA used in battle to save the wombat



Out in the field – Ms Faith Walker with one of the many wombats that have made their way past her sticky-tape. Photo S. Grover/Wombat Rise Sanctuary

WILDLIFE RESEARCH

A project by a Monash University researcher to determine the impact of loss of habitat on wombats is yielding information that could prove vital in the quest to save the endangered northern hairy-nosed wombat.

Funded by an RSPCA Alan White Scholarship, the National Geographic Society, Australian Geographic Society and Mark Mitchell Fund, the project aims to determine how habitat fragmentation affects the social and genetic

structure of the southern hairy-nosed wombat.

By examining the southern hairy-nosed wombat's response to habitat fragmentation, Ms Faith Walker, a PhD student in the School of Biological Sciences, is hoping to better understand the effect of long-term isolation on the social organisation of the northern hairy-nosed wombat, thought to number less than 150 in the wild.

The southern-hairy nosed wombat, which is not endangered, can be found mainly in South Australia. It has suffered a similar loss in habitat to the endangered northern

hairy-nosed wombat, through what researchers say is the result of European settlement, agriculture and vermin such as the rabbit.

Using innovative techniques, Ms Walker is attempting to answer long-standing questions about the biology of the wombat, a difficult task due to its size and nocturnal, trap-shy nature.

Ms Walker's use of a simple yet effective method of gathering samples for DNA testing, which does not require trapping or taking blood

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Monash to lead biotech centre of excellence

A \$43.5 million Centre for Stem Cells and Tissue Repair at Monash University will rapidly advance the research and development of both adult and embryonic stem cells for the treatment of a range of diseases and conditions.

The facility, to be based at the Science Technology Research and Innovation Precinct (STRIP) on the Clayton campus, will be funded by the federal government, with an additional \$10 million provided by the state government. The new centre will include research partners from several leading Australian universities, research organisations and biotechnology companies.

In making the announcement in Parliament House late last month, Prime Minister John Howard said this field of research had the potential to find new treatments for diabetes, vascular, bone and nerve damage, kidney disease and diseases of the blood and the skin.

He said Australia needed to establish centres of excellence in research to be competitive on a world basis.

"Under Professor Alan Trounson's leadership, the Centre for Stem Cells and Tissue Repair will provide the vehicle for Australia to compete in the rapidly growing area of tissue regeneration and cell therapies," Mr Howard said.

Vice-chancellor of Monash University Professor David Robinson said Australian researchers would remain at the forefront of developments in stem cell technology.

"The federal government's commitment to establishing this biotechnology centre of excellence will position Australia as a regional and world centre for innovation in biotechnology," Professor Robinson said.

The new centre will bring together research groups across the fields of biomedicine, biotechnology, IVF technology, genomics, bioinformatics and

nanotechnology. It will be housed in the STRIP, currently under construction, close to the site of the proposed Australian Synchrotron at Monash.

Monash's key partners are the University of Adelaide, the Victor Chang Cardiovascular Research Institute, the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, the universities of New South Wales, Queensland and Melbourne, the Australian National University, Swinburne University of Technology, the Australian Genome Research Facility and the commercial operations of ES Cell International and BresaGen Limited.

Education programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels will be offered through the centre, along with a community education program to inform schools and the general public about issues in biotechnology.

The Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development will be a leading player in the development, together with many other research groups across the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Professor Alan Trounson will head the centre as its chief executive officer. He is currently the director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, and has made a significant contribution to reproductive medicine over three decades.

A pioneer in in vitro fertilisation technology, Professor Trounson has expanded his expertise in reproductive technology into agriculture, endangered species, genomics and stem cells.

Professor Trounson said the centre would capitalise on Australia's leading edge capability and credibility in stem cell technology. "The centre will allow a more rapid and coordinated effort in delivering health benefits across a range of debilitating diseases and conditions."

David Bruce

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Peninsula \$1.5 million student village opens



Secure and convenient – The new accommodation consists of five houses, each offering six single bedrooms. Photo Peter Anikijenko.

Thirty Monash students have taken up residence in new on-campus accommodation at the university's Peninsula campus.

According to student residences manager Ms Tricia Thorne, the \$1.5 million Student Village offers students a secure and convenient environment.

"The new accommodation is within walking distance of all campus facilities, including dining and recreational facilities," she said.

"It is also within walking distance of Leawarra railway station, which is one stop from the Frankston station, and close to the sporting facilities at Jubilee Park."

The accommodation consists of five houses, each offering six single bedrooms.

The completion of the facility, which is located at the rear of the campus on land adjoining the new hockey field, means the campus can now accommodate up to 105 students.

The village is one of the first major projects of the recently established Monash Residential Services, which oversees student accommodation at the Berwick, Caulfield, Clayton and Peninsula campuses.

Monash Residential Services director Mr Vladimir Prpich said the accommodation provided a valuable opportunity for students to develop peer networks when they come to university.

"Most students who live on campus have usually come from regional Victoria, interstate or overseas," he said.

"The on-campus accommodation at Monash provides these students, who are often living away from home for the first time, with a safe and accessible place to live close to campus facilities and services."

Monash Residential Services is also planning a new residential village on the corner of Blackburn and Wellington Roads, adjacent to the Clayton campus.

The \$5 million village will house up to 120 residents and offer a choice of accommodation including three-bedroom single-storey houses and one or two-bedroom multi-storey self-contained apartments. Construction is expected to start early in 2003.

For further information about Monash Residential Services, visit the website at www.monash.edu.au/mrs

Julie Ryan

State Library director joins Monash

Monash University has appointed the former director of the State Library of Victoria to manage its extensive network of libraries.

Ms Cathrine Harboe-Ree (pictured), who took up her position at Monash

last month, said she looked forward to her new role, in which she aimed to see an even greater implementation of new technologies.

"It is exciting to come into an organisation already geared towards change

and experimentation, exploring new approaches to customer service and technology," Ms Harboe-Ree said.

"We are well into the digital revolution and are able to see that this will change information management and scholarly communication profoundly, which is both challenging and exciting."

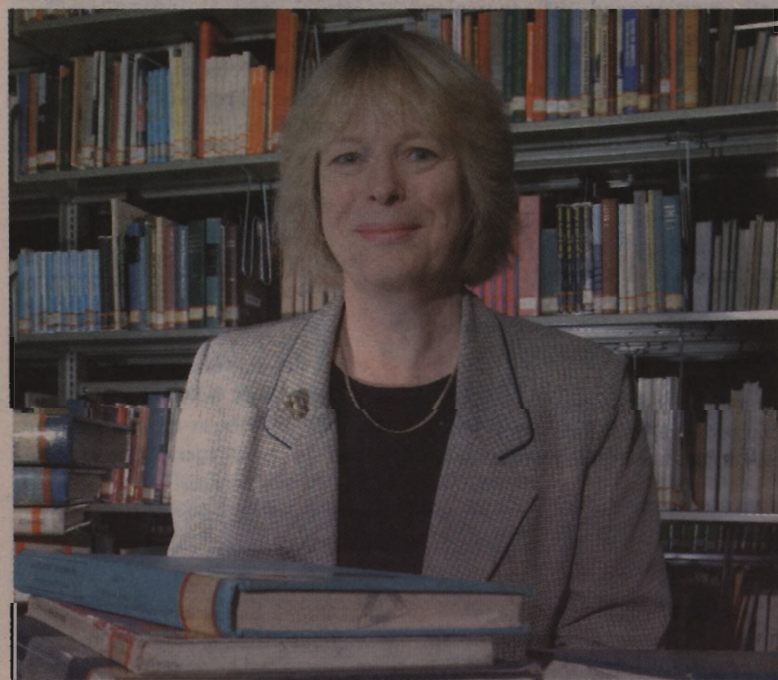
"University library staff of the future will play a much more active role, working with academics and students to sift through the huge amount of information to collect, produce and deliver just what is needed, when it is needed."

As University Librarian, Ms Harboe-Ree is responsible for all the libraries across Monash's six Victorian campuses, as well as the library at the South Africa campus. She will also be working in partnership with the library at Monash University's Malaysia campus.

Ms Harboe-Ree graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science (Librarianship) from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and completed a Certificate of Business Administration at Swinburne University of Technology.

She has held a number of key roles in library and business administration at the State Library, including director of Communications and Marketing, director of Marketing and Services and director of Collections and Services. She has also worked for the former Victorian Ministry for the Arts (now Arts Victoria) and numerous municipal libraries.

**Diane Squires and
Konrad Marshall**



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INBRIEF

Ridgeway to speak on Mabo legacy

Deputy leader of the Australian Democrats Senator Aden Ridgeway will this month present the second annual Castan Centre for Human Rights Law Lecture on the 10th anniversary of the landmark High Court Mabo judgement.

Senator Ridgeway will explore the Mabo legacy and address the broader contemporary issues of reconciliation, land rights, human rights and social and economic security a decade on.

Castan Centre director Professor David Kinley said it was appropriate that Senator Ridgeway, as Australia's first Indigenous politician to hold a leadership position in a federal political party, will be speaking on such an important anniversary.

The lecture will be held at 12.30 pm on Monday 3 June at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne. For more information, contact Ms Kay Magnani on +61 3 9905 3327.

Banksia artwork on show

A collection of banksia paintings managed by the Monash University Museum of Art has taken centre stage at the State Library of Victoria.

The exhibition, *The Banksias: Watercolours by Celia Rosser*, from the Monash University Collection, will be displayed in the library's Murdoch Gallery until 30 June.

It is the first time the complete series of banksia paintings will be displayed alongside some of the artist's preliminary sketches.

Ms Rosser, an internationally known botanical artist, spent 25 years working on the banksias project, under the management of Monash.

The project includes 76 life-sized watercolours which bring to life all the known species of banksia.

Ms Rosser's paintings are accompanied by text written by botanist Mr Alex George, formerly with the

West Australian Herbarium and the Australian Bureau of Flora and Fauna.

Together the two sought to make the works as scientifically accurate as they could, making regular field trips to study the many species of banksia.

The banksias project is seen as Ms Rosser's finest artistic achievement and has helped to distinguish her as one of the world's finest botanical artists.

In 1997 Ms Rosser became the first Australian recipient of the Linnaeus Society Medal for her contribution to botanical art.

Rural health leader leaves for Canada

The head of Monash's School of Rural Health, Professor Roger Strasser, has been appointed founding dean of the Northern Ontario Medical School at Laurentian University and Lakehead University, Canada.

Professor Strasser's appointment follows a long and distinguished association with Monash that has seen him emerge as a pioneer of rural health as a discreet clinical and academic discipline.

Congratulating Professor Strasser on his appointment, dean of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash Professor Nick Saunders said the importance of the position was highlighted by the fact that it had been 30 years since the creation of a new medical school in Canada.

He said the school would be one of only a small number of rurally located medical schools worldwide.

"Professor Strasser's appointment to this position is recognition of both his and Monash's standing in medical education and rural health around the world," Professor Saunders said.

DNA used in battle to save the wombat

Continued from page 1

samples, has attracted the attention of the scientific community.

"I suspend double-sided sticky tape across burrow entrances and then wait for wombats to kindly make hair donations, from which I extract DNA from single follicles," she said. "I then definitively identify individuals, including their gender, with what are basically forensic techniques."

Using this method, Ms Walker said she was able to study the genetic fingerprints of individual wombats and then establish the relatedness between them.

"From a single hair, we can determine sex, relatedness, individual movements and the amount of gene flow between populations."

Ms Walker has also determined that unlike most mammals, it is the female wombat that tends to stray from home.

"We found that wombats are different from most mammals -- it is the females that disperse, while the males spend their lives around where they were born," she said.

"What we don't know yet is why this is occurring -- what age, social or ecological factors are at play."

While it is known that when wombat populations become isolated they are in danger of becoming extinct, Ms Walker said, there was no clear understanding of how that isolation affects their mating system or behaviour.

"I've also found that many populations that appear to be isolated are not necessarily genetically different from neighbouring ones," she said.

It was important, she explained, to establish which populations were truly genetically isolated so they can be used as study groups and compared to the small and genetically isolated population of northern hairy-nosed wombats.

"If we can find out how southern hairy-nosed wombats are responding behaviourally to isolation, then we will have a better idea of how to manage their northern counterparts."

Mary Viscovich

AMREP opening to boost research and education

Monash University has joined with The Alfred Hospital, the Baker Heart Research Institute and the Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health to form one of the largest and most advanced medical research facilities in Australia.

The opening of the new Alfred Medical Research and Education Precinct (AMREP) will give medical research and education at Monash University a boost and potentially attract strong commercial support from the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

The new \$93 million complex was opened on 23 May by Victorian Premier Mr Steve Bracks and Health Minister Mr John Thwaites. It will offer state-of-the-art equipment and provide the Monash Medical School with at least three new floors of laboratories, offices, seminar rooms and shared facilities, including a new library.

According to Monash's dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Professor Nick Saunders, the complex represents an

exciting new collaboration between Australia's leading medical institutions.

He said Monash would play a key role in establishing the new facility as one of the leading academic medical centres in Australia.

"With the completion of AMREP, Monash University's medical research will continue to spearhead developments in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease for all Australians," Professor Saunders said.

"Monash Medical School and other research organisations at The Alfred have enjoyed a fruitful relationship over four decades, with a strong collaboration of teaching and research expertise, developing many of Australia's finest young doctors, scientists and clinical investigators.

"The combination of two of Victoria's leading medical research institutes, a major teaching hospital and a leading university in the one complex will cement our reputation as leaders in Australian medicine."

The major clinical focus of current research at AMREP is in the areas of

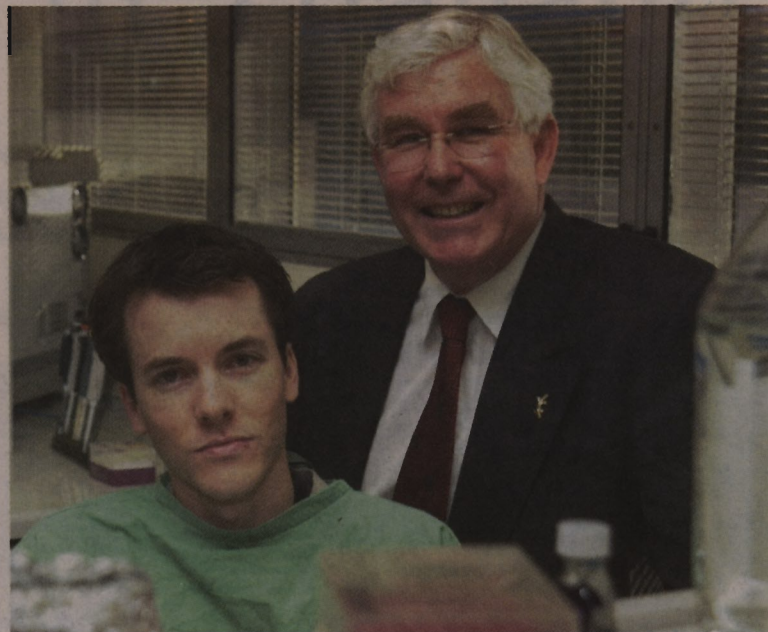
autoimmunity, cancer, allergy, immunodeficiencies and transplantation.

The Monash research and teaching component of AMREP will come from the departments of Pathology and Immunology; Medicine; Surgery; and Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine.

The head of the Central and Eastern Clinical School and the Department of Medicine at Monash Medical School, Alfred Hospital, Professor Napier Thomson, said the establishment of AMREP would facilitate better integration of biomedical research between the organisations in The Alfred precinct.

"Researchers at Monash's Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences working within AMREP can now collaborate more effectively with other biomedical researchers in the precinct, sharing ideas, techniques, research equipment and other resources," Professor Thomson said.

Mary Viscovich



Mr Mark Coulson, a Monash PhD student working within AMREP, with dean of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Professor Nick Saunders. Photo Melissa Di Ciero

Debate tackles stem cell controversy

A panel of prominent advocates and opponents of stem cell research involving human embryos presented a lively and entertaining debate on the issue

during Monash University's Vice-Chancellor's Debate held last month.

Arguing the case 'That human embryos should be used for stem cell

research' were deputy director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development Professor Alan Trounson, director of the ethics program at the Murdoch Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital Professor Julian Savulescu and Monash bioethics masters candidate Ms Angela Ballantyne.

Taking the negative position were Right to Life president Ms Margaret Tighe and bioethics consultant with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Ms Anna Krohn.

Established in 1995 and sponsored by Monash University vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson, the debate is an annual event. Past notable speakers have included Professor Peter Singer, Reverend Tim Costello and Senator Lynne Allison.



Ms Margaret Tighe talks stem cells with Professor Alan Trounson. Photo Peter Anikijenko.

A slam dunk for Monash South Africa Open Day



Prospective students had a taste of university life at the Monash South Africa Open Day on 11 May. More than 500 people visited the campus, taking part in a range of activities to learn about the university. Visitors were given a tour of the facilities by current Monash students and were encouraged to discuss their options with staff from student services. The event was also used to showcase the campus's new basketball courts, with teams from local schools invited to play against a Monash team.

Search to end cycle of violence in Indigenous communities

INDIGENOUS STUDIES

Indigenous communities in both Australia and the US are finding new ways to deal with family violence, a survey by a Monash University PhD student has found.

Ms Kyllie Cripps (pictured), from the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research in the Faculty of Arts, surveyed four indigenous communities – an urban and a tribal community in the US and an urban and a rural community in Australia – for her PhD dissertation, 'Indigenous communities surviving family violence in the US and Australia'.

Ms Cripps said she had believed that the US communities would be more advanced than their Australian counterparts in their approach to dealing with issues of family violence and that Australia could learn from them, but she found that was not the case.

Her study has revealed that each community dealt with issues of family violence in ways that best suited its own needs.

Initiatives that had been established included a data entry system that would record all occurrences of family violence, a support program to help victims, a satellite clinic that could be accessed by neighbouring communities and a dedicated law enforcement officer to deal specifically with 'elder abuse'.

Ms Cripps said the tribal community in the US approached the issues from a different perspective because of its existing structure.

"Because they have sovereignty over their land, with more power to regulate the behaviour of their communities through local laws, they had a better opportunity to do what they felt was right."

Ms Cripps, who was awarded a Daniel Scott Postgraduate Award for Indigenous Australians in 1999 and a Fulbright Scholarship in 2000/2001, said that in each of the communities the most important aspect of dealing with family violence was to listen to all members of the community, including both the survivors and the perpetrators.

"A lot of it has to do with communication within the community," she



said. "The first thing to identify is how the community wants to deal with it."

Her own experience as a victim of violence had taught her that mainstream counsellors did not always listen to the specific needs of Indigenous people, she said.

"I found that we would talk about the family for a while and then go on to another subject. I would get back to the issue of family and the counsellor would say 'we've already dealt with family'," she said.

"But family is so important in Indigenous communities."

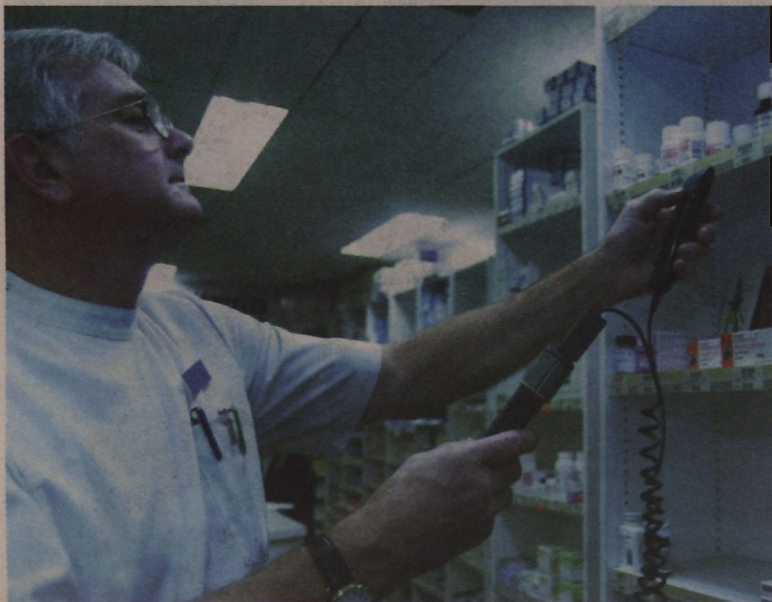
While undertaking her honours thesis, which focused on Victorian Indigenous women who had survived sexual assault, she also found that mainstream counselling did not always recognise the importance of family in Indigenous communities.

"You have to look at the broader picture of sexual assault – it has an emotional impact on all members of the family and affects everyone in the community," she said.

Ms Cripps said she believed it would take longer to train mainstream counsellors in dealing with issues specific to Indigenous communities than it would to implement programs in the communities themselves.

Diane Squires

Net medicine – more harm than good?



Which drug is right for me? Consumer driven demand for online health information is on the increase. Photo AAP.

HEALTH RESEARCH

Despite an increase in the number of people seeking health information and medicines on the internet, little is known about the associated benefits or risks, according to a Monash University researcher.

Ms Tracey Bessell, from the Monash Institute of Health Services Research (MIHSR), is investigating consumer experiences of online health information and the sale of medicines via the internet as part of her PhD research project.

"The internet is revolutionising the way medicines and information are delivered to consumers, but there is a lack of rigorous research about the true impact of health information and services delivered in this way," she said.

"About a quarter of 15 to 54-year-olds look for information about health on the internet. We need to know how, when and why people seek online health information and what effect it has on their relationship with health care providers and, most importantly, on their health outcomes."

Ms Bessell said she believed that while the internet was a useful tool, her research had so far found that it required careful consideration by consumers.

"Using the internet for health information has real benefits, including getting 'a second opinion', anonymity and round-the-clock access to information, but there are significant downsides," she said.

"Making health care decisions based on information provided over the internet can be risky because much of it is inaccurate, commercially influenced, out of date or not evidence-based."

"It is also sometimes difficult to determine exactly who is providing the information and whether they are properly qualified and unbiased in their views."

She warned that as consumer-driven demand for online health information increased, both consumers and health professionals would need to be able to easily identify and critically appraise the quality of online information.

In addition, she said, the market for online medicines had the potential

to expand rapidly, despite an initial reluctance by consumers to buy online. "Given the likelihood that this area will grow, we need to ensure that consumers are being adequately safeguarded from fraudulent operators."

Ms Bessell is currently recruiting people who have bought medicines via the internet to take part in her research, which is being funded by a Quality Use of Medicines Scholarship from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

Her research had been supervised by the late Professor Chris Silagy and is currently being supervised by Associate Professor Jeremy Anderson from MIHSR, Professor Janet Hiller from Adelaide University and Professor Lloyd Sansom from the University of South Australia.

Those wishing to participate in Ms Bessell's research can contact her by email at tracey.bessell@med.monash.edu.au or visit www.med.monash.edu.au/healthservices.

Mary Viscovich

Schools



Careers teachers seminar

The Monash Careers Teachers Seminar will be held on Thursday 13 June at the Clayton campus. All careers teachers and Year 12 coordinators are welcome to attend this university-wide event. Programs and booking forms have been sent to all schools. If you require additional information, contact Ms Val Foster on +61 3 9905 4164.

Chemical engineering experience

A two-day holiday program, to be held in July at Monash's Clayton campus, will give Years 10 to 12 students who are interested in a career in science, chemistry or engineering the chance to find out about chemical engineering.

The program offers hands-on activities, laboratory sessions, an industrial site visit and the opportunity to interact with practising chemical engineers.

The program will be held from 9 am to 4 pm on 2 and 3 July at

the Department of Chemical Engineering at Clayton campus. There is a registration fee for participants. Morning tea and lunch will be provided each day.

For further information and bookings, contact Ms Lilyanne Price on +61 3 9905 1872 or email lilyanne.price@eng.monash.edu.au

Explore Monash

The next Explore Monash program for regional and interstate students will be held on 11 July at the Gippsland campus and on 8 July at the Clayton campus.

The programs provide an excellent opportunity for prospective students and their families to visit Monash during the school holidays.

The sessions include an introduction to the university as well as information on courses, fees, scholarships and accommodation options. Students also get the chance to speak with faculty representatives and tour the campus with current students.

Participants in the Clayton program may choose to visit another campus in the afternoon.

For further information and bookings, contact Ms Lyndal Knop on +61 3 9905 4213 or email lyndal.knop@adm.monash.edu.au

Study to reveal tax burden on small business operators

LAW

How small business has fared under the 1999 Ralph taxation reforms is the focus of a collaborative study by researchers at Monash University and the University of New South Wales.

The comprehensive three-year study, led by Monash law researcher Associate Professor John Glover and Dr Binh Tran-Nam, an economist from the University of New South Wales, is examining the tax advantages and disadvantages of the 1999 reforms, and whether those reforms unfavourable to small business have been counterbalanced by reduced taxation compliance costs.

The Ralph reforms included a simplified tax system, abolition of accelerated depreciation, reduction of the company tax rate from 36 per cent to 30 per cent, new methods of valuing trading stock and the abolition of balancing charge roll-overs. Additional reforms introduced by the Federal

Government have included the GST, the Australian Business Number (ABN) and the Pay As You Go systems.

The 1999 review of business taxation report, *A Tax System Redesigned*, predicted that the effect of tax changes would be offset by various reforms.

The research will explore whether the assumptions the government made to sell the reforms to small business were justified and will look at ways of fine-tuning the reform process.

The project pinpoints regional and rural small businesses, as very little is known about the compliance costs of these enterprises. Forty farms and small businesses across Australia have volunteered to take part in the study.

Participants' compliance cost burden is being measured by means of structured interviews based on a questionnaire. Participants are also being asked to keep a logbook of the amount of time spent on business tax affairs.

According to Dr Glover, compliance costs have been shown to be particularly regressive for the small business sector. "Many small businesses have claimed that quarterly reporting has added to their overheads, making staying in business unfeasible," he said.

"The results of our study are expected to assist in fine-tuning tax law for farms and other small businesses – an outcome that may lead to the adoption of a fairer and more efficient business tax structure in Australia."

At the end of the study in 2004, the project teams will prepare a report of findings, including law reform recommendations. The two chief investigators will also jointly prepare a shorter version for commercial publication.

The study is supported by a \$350,000 grant under the Federal Government's Strategic Partnerships with Industry Program.

Fiona Perry



The results of a study examining the 1999 Ralph taxation reforms are expected to assist in fine-tuning tax law for farms and other small businesses. Photo Newspix.

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Beating corruption in Thailand

OPINION



Confronting corruption in Thailand means more than strengthening the country's laws and institutions. Thai economist and Monash University 2001 Distinguished Alumni Award winner **PROFESSOR PASUK PHONGPAICHIT** believes there must be a closer analysis of the connection between Thai politics and business, both legal and illegal.

IN 1991–1992, I became concerned by the way discourses about corruption became part of the struggle between military dictators and civilian politicians. Generals who took power in Thailand by coup in 1991 justified their action in part on grounds that the overthrown (Chatchai) government had been corrupt. This was undoubtedly true. Some of the members of Chatchai's 'buffet Cabinet' had openly confessed to corrupt practices and had accused their colleagues of even worse behaviour.

What stuck in my throat was that military dictators, who had a record of spectacular corruption in the past, could use this argument to legitimise themselves and roll back democratic reforms. Out of this came my book *Corruption and Democracy in Thailand*.

Starting from this, our team at Chulalongkorn University has done a series of studies on corruption and related issues. Here I highlight two of the important findings.

First, corruption in Thailand is highly focused and specific. In 1999, we carried out a survey of household experience of corruption, with a representative sample of more than 4000 households all over the country. We found that the vast majority of people do not have to pay squeeze money at government offices, public utilities and similar places and that generally they are satisfied with the services they receive. We found that bribe-taking is concentrated in a small number of offices, but here the amounts are truly large. These offices are those that have influence over significant monetary transactions – namely the land department, the tax and customs offices, the transport department which controls vehicle licensing, and the police. These five offices accounted for 95 per cent of the total corruption income.

We found that most of the total corruption money came in the form of big bribes (not petty squeeze), that most of the bribe-givers are businessmen, that the procedures for offering a bribe and negotiating the amount are well known and understood, and that most of the bribe-givers were confident that their gifts would have the desired result. In other words, the system is well established.

In short, most corruption in Thailand is about business deals. The parties involved are businessmen and the bureaucrats and political office-holders who are in a position to influence business profits. There is also some gate-keeping and racketeering in the police. But the big issue and the big money are about the interface between business and government.

The second finding is about money politics. In the *Corruption and Democracy* study, we looked at the money flows in Thai politics. There is no doubt that the democratic politics that developed over the 1980s and 1990s involved large money flows. Parliamentary candidates invest huge sums in getting elected. Indeed, by some estimates (not ours), the total unofficial expenditure on a Thai general election is equal to the official expenditure in a US presidential campaign. This, of course, is quite bizarre.



Photo AAP.

Party leaders have to offer cash to attract good electoral candidates. Recently, we have had so-called 'fertiliser formulas', like 5–10–10–20, which indicate the sums (in millions of baht) a candidate will receive when he expresses interest (five million), when he signs up to join the party (10 million), when he succeeds in getting elected (10 million), and so on.

We also know that leaders have to pay retainers to keep their parties together, that money has sometimes been paid for votes on parliamentary

That still didn't seem to explain the spectacular amounts, but it gave us a hint: the explanation for the high amounts invested in money politics would probably be found outside politics – in business. Moreover, the highest levels of profit come from businesses which are illegal. Perhaps, then, there was a connection between money politics and the illegal economy.

That train of thought led to our study of Thailand's illegal economy. We looked at illegal gambling, gunrunning, drugs, prostitution, smuggling

came out to say that he had always been puzzled by the size of position buying and investments in politics and felt that this study put the jigsaw puzzle in place.

THROUGHOUT the 1990s, international organisations, including the World Bank, IMF and Asian Development Bank, funded studies on corruption in various parts of the world. They made these conclusions on corruption: that it is pervasive, that it results from the lack of proper rules and institutions, and that it inhibits economic growth.

To put it another way, in any capitalist economy, businessmen want access to political power because it affects their profits. In a democratic system, that access is transacted through both the parliamentary and bureaucratic systems. When these transactions are not governed by any set of rules, we tend to call them 'corruption'.

So, to return again to the agenda of international organisations, we agree with them that we need the rules, institutions, punishments, checks and balances to control corruption. Indeed, Thailand's 1997 constitution has introduced many new and appropriate innovations.

But we don't share the belief that rules and institutions can make corruption disappear. We believe they can help bring corruption down to levels that are acceptable or manageable, but we also think that such rules and institutions on their own are only part of the story. We need to think more closely about the connection between business and politics.

■ This is an edited version of a speech by Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit to the Monash Asia Institute on 2 May 2002, titled 'Good Governance, Money, Politics and Honest Mistakes'. For a full transcript of the speech, go to <http://piomexchula.ac.th/~ppasuk/>

"... we don't share the belief that rules and institutions can make corruption disappear."

motions, and that, of course, these expenditures have to be recouped. We also know that senior posts in the bureaucracy are often up for sale and that again such investments need to be recouped.

From the start, our team was puzzled by the amounts involved. They seemed too large given the potential revenues available from political office. The reason is, of course, that becoming a political figure has many 'externalities'. The status, contacts, networks and so on enhance the politician's capacity to earn money completely outside the money flows in the political system.

and human trafficking. We tried to estimate the scale of these businesses. We suggested the extent to which these businesses operate because they are practised and protected by people who have political and bureaucratic power. We managed to detail the links between money flows in some of the illegal economy and money flows in politics. But we did not identify specific people involved – largely because we wanted to stay alive.

The response to the study suggested we had got the basic pattern right. A number of people got rather angry, particularly in the police. One senior, and straight, political figure

Our studies suggest a rather different viewpoint. Corruption in Thailand seems to be mainly about the intersection between business and politics. Businessmen buy opportunities and favours. Office-holders sell opportunities and favours. Because Thailand has a rather weak rule of law and rather primitive capitalism, illegal or semi-legal business activities are significant for the process of capital accumulation. Such businesses have special needs for the kinds of opportunities and favours which politics can provide (particularly protection, status, immunity). Hence they contribute significantly to political investments.

New exhibition explores loss on a global scale

While emotions surrounding the death of a loved one can be overwhelming for most people, one artist has been able to channel her grief into a powerful message for environmental protection.

According to Ms Marian Crawford, whose work will be on show at Monash University's Gippsland campus this month, the effect of global warming on the ice shelves of Antarctica and the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef are strong metaphors for her own grief.

"In my work, I am trying to use environmental degradation as a symbol for loss, a linking between the destruction of natural wonders and the loss of people in my life," she said.

Ms Crawford's mother died in 1997 and her father in 2001. She said the power of her emotions in response to

the loss of her parents was a revelation to her.

"Just as Antarctica is the least explored continent of our planet, grief was an unexplored emotion for me. I felt there were certain parallels with the enormity of this emotion and the awe inspired by the vastness and the mystery of Antarctica. I felt a need to explore this through my art."

Ms Crawford used prints on pieces of paper, which she joined together and then cut, to create large paper icebergs.

"The icebergs are about the size of a person – about 1.8 m tall and 60 or 70 cm wide – and each has been named after people I have known who have died in the past five years," she said.

In addition to representations of icebergs, other works on display in the exhibition, *Other Treasures*, are based

on Ms Crawford's concerns about the destruction of coral reefs in both Australia and around the world.

They include more than 200 white paper cutouts, created to represent the endangered creatures that live on the Great Barrier Reef and the bleaching of coral.

"These dangers are real – our reefs and the wilderness of Antarctica are possibly in jeopardy because of the impact humans have had on these environments. It is a loss we will all share," she said.

What: *Other Treasures*

When: 19 June to 11 July

Where: Switchback Gallery, Gippsland campus

Who: For more information, contact the gallery on +61 3 5122 6261

Derek Brown



The 2000 cast of *Mum's the Word* provide a humorous and often brutally honest look at parenting.

Mum's the word in comedy

From nappies and temper tantrums to sleepless nights, a new production opening at the Alexander Theatre at Monash's Clayton campus this month presents the joys and agonies of bringing up children.

Through the stories of six women, *Mum's the Word*, brought to Monash by Picture: This! Productions in association with the Glen Street Theatre, gives a humorous and often brutally honest look at parenting.

According to producer Ms Sandy Paterson, the performance focuses on the taboos of parenthood and, in doing so, validates the experience of being a mother or a father.

"The show is important because it allows parents, and especially mothers, to talk openly and to laugh and cry about their experiences of having and looking after children," she said.

"As a parent, you often spend a lot of time alone with your child, and sometimes it can seem that you are the only one facing these difficulties – but you're not. This show helps to highlight that each of us share similar experiences and heartaches."

Ms Paterson believes the theatre production helps parents put the day-to-day events of looking after children into perspective.

"Often incidents such as having to discipline your child or losing sight of them in a crowd can be daunting, depressing and confronting, but when you put the scenarios up on stage, people can stand back from their own emotions and see the funny side," she said.

Mum's the Word has proven popular with audiences across Australia and

has had sell-out seasons in both metropolitan and regional areas.

For Ms Paterson, the show's popularity is an indication of the universality of many aspects of parenting.

"I think being a parent is one of the few things that actually does cross cultural and socio-economic barriers – no matter what country you live in or how many degrees you have, your baby is still going to wake up in the middle of the night," she said.

What: *Mum's the Word*

When: 13 to 15 June

Where: Alexander Theatre, Clayton campus

Who: For more information, contact the Alexander Theatre on +61 3 9905 1111

Derek Brown

Student work on show in Victorian art prize

Artwork by university and TAFE students from across the state will be on show this month at Monash's Gippsland campus in the Victorian Campus Art Prize and Exhibition for 2002.

The prize is run by Campus Activities Victoria, a group of student associations from several Victorian tertiary institutions, and is open to all students from member campuses.

The winner, to be announced on 4 June at the exhibition opening, will receive \$1150 in cash and art supplies and gain automatic entry into the national tertiary art prize to compete with entrants from around Australia.

The exhibition will run at the Switchback Gallery from 4 to 14 June. For more information, contact the gallery on +61 3 9902 6261.

Australian artists step into the blue

Work by six leading artists will be showcased in a new exhibition at the Monash University Museum of Art at the Clayton campus this month.

Featuring new pieces by Sarah Elson, Cherine Fahd, Robert Pulie and others, *Into the Blue* is an exhibition held together by a shared tone rather than a theme.

Instead of selecting artworks according to a specific subject matter or topic, each of the artists has chosen pieces that show the light, humorous and unpredictable side of their art.

Into the Blue will run from 25 June to 24 August. For more information, contact +61 3 9905 4217 or visit www.monash.edu.au/muma.

ARTSCENE

Old classic gets new lease on life

There's sure to be just a little swash-buckling going on when members of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Victoria take to the stage at Monash's Alexander Theatre early next month.

The society, which has been performing Gilbert and Sullivan's works since 1935, is set to present the classic tale of love, loss and mistaken identity, *The Pirates of Penzance*.

The story of Frederic, a man apprenticed to pirates as a child who falls in love with a major-general's daughter, *The Pirates of Penzance* has entertained audiences for more than 100 years.

The Monash performance will be held from 4 to 6 July at the Clayton campus. For more information on the show, visit www.gilbertandsullivan.org.au or to book, contact +61 3 9817 3683.

Concerts reveal echoes of the past

Music from the Renaissance and Baroque periods enchanted audiences this month during a concert held at the Robert Blackwood Concert Hall at Monash's Clayton campus.

Presented on 1 June by Melbourne-based group Past Echoes, the concert included works by Percell, Telemann and Bach.

Past Echoes is a group of specialist musicians who use traditional songs and instruments in performances of early music.

The concert was the second of three Past Echoes concerts planned for 2002, with the third scheduled for 10 August. For more information on the upcoming concert, contact +61 3 9905 1111.

Bringing the bush to life

Adventurous bush fairies and devious banksia men are set to entertain visitors to Monash University's Clayton campus early next month when the Alexander Theatre presents *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*.

An Australian children's classic, May Gibbs' book *The Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* was first published in 1918 and records the adventures of two bush fairies as they journey on a quest to find a human being.

Gibbs' love of the Australian bush was expressed in a number of books including *Gumnut Babies*, *Flower Babies* and *Wattleblossom Babies* through which she aimed to encourage a love of nature in her young readers.

Her writing has produced a number of uniquely Australian characters that continue to fascinate children, including the friendly Mr Lizard, the

orphan Ragged Blossom and the wicked banksia men.

In the Monash performance, presented by Canute Productions and directed by Chris Canute, five young actors will provide a lively characterisation of the bush characters and their adventures.

The show runs for just under one hour and there is no interval. It is suitable for children aged four to 10.

What: *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*

When: 12 July

Where: Alexander Theatre, Clayton campus

Who: For more information and bookings, contact the Alexander Theatre booking office on +61 3 9905 1111.

Derek Brown



May Gibbs' well-loved characters will be brought to life in *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*. Image Copyright The Northcott Society and the Spastic Centre of NSW.

Love by the book

Love is a many splendoured thing. Love is all you need. Love is the key – name the cliché and Dr John Armstrong has heard it.

Love, or the human perception of it, has for the past few years been the focus of Dr Armstrong's research and the subject of his new book, *The Conditions of Love: The Philosophy of Intimacy*.

Dr Armstrong, an associate research fellow in Monash University's School of Philosophy and Bioethics, has spent two years researching the meaning of love and says that despite the reverence our society places on all things romantic, he believes the popular concept of love is flawed.

"People have this belief that there is someone out there for them. It seems imprinted on our nature to seek out another person."

This notion of romantic love, he says, has survived from 500 BC.

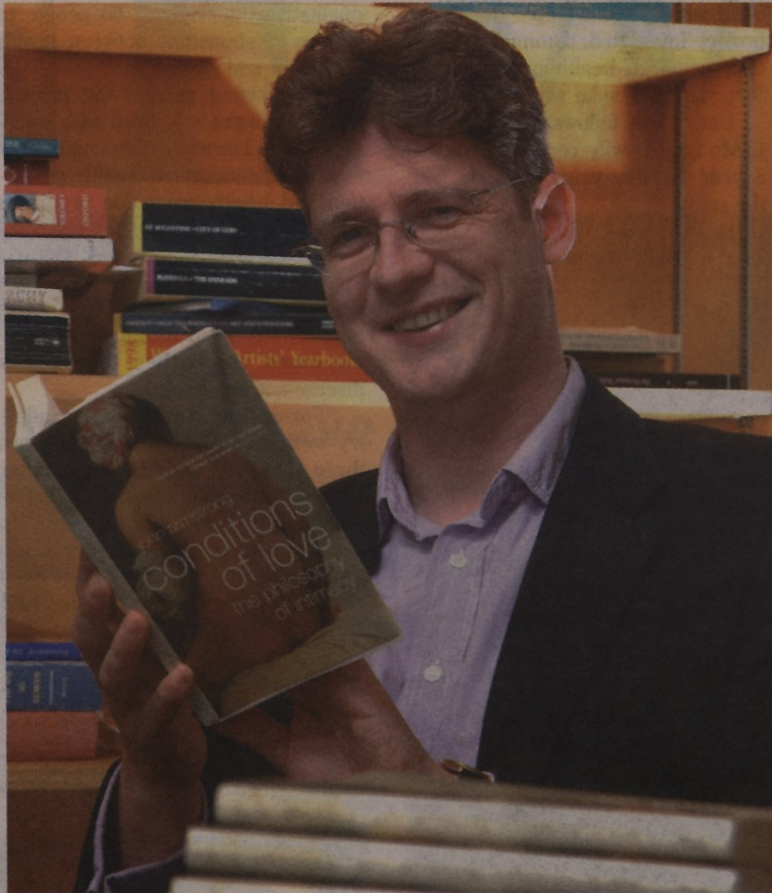
"The idea comes from an enduring Greek myth, in which all beings were split by the gods and scattered throughout the Earth. Their task was to find their other half – their true love."

But falling in love may not be enough, according to Dr Armstrong, who says that while love between two people often begins as an intense romantic infatuation, the relationship often falters after individuals are exposed to the imperfections of their other halves.

"Love creates its own problems. It involves getting very close to someone, and no-one, no matter how perfect they seem at first, is without their faults," he said.

According to Dr Armstrong, true love is based on sustained and honest intimacy and does not reflect the romanticism commonly expressed in poems and love songs.

"Long-term relationships based on open and honest communication is what leads to mature love," he said.



Up close and personal – Dr John Armstrong tackles the philosophy of intimacy in his new book. Photo Peter Anikijenko.

It was after working in the area of art appreciation that Dr Armstrong was inspired to explore the concept of love.

"I was struck by the idea that our view of art and love is subjective. Both are afforded great status in our society, yet few people understand their true nature," he said.

"It's all a matter of perception. You might see one seemingly inconspicuous thing, perhaps the way someone sneezes, as representative of their whole personality. This is similar to looking at a painting, where one

brush stroke can make all the difference to a person's opinion."

He hopes his book will help increase our understanding of the philosophy of love by exploring it without the usual complexity of philosophical language.

"I have tried to take these issues and write about them in a way that would give them a broader appeal. The research of love should not be confined to the language of philosophy and academia."

Konrad Marshall

Modern maestro of mobile melodies

Imagine a concert hall, the audience hushed as the auditorium darkens and the conductor taps his baton. The silence is broken by the ring of a mobile phone. Incredible rudeness? Perhaps not.

The staccato rings could, in fact, be the first notes of a symphony written by Monash music honours student Mr Clint Small, which he hopes to see performed one day.

Mr Small's ring-tone opus, *Mobile: A Musical Work for Cell/Mobile Phones*, is a musical performance piece in which all sounds are generated or triggered by the ringing or vibrating of mobile phones.

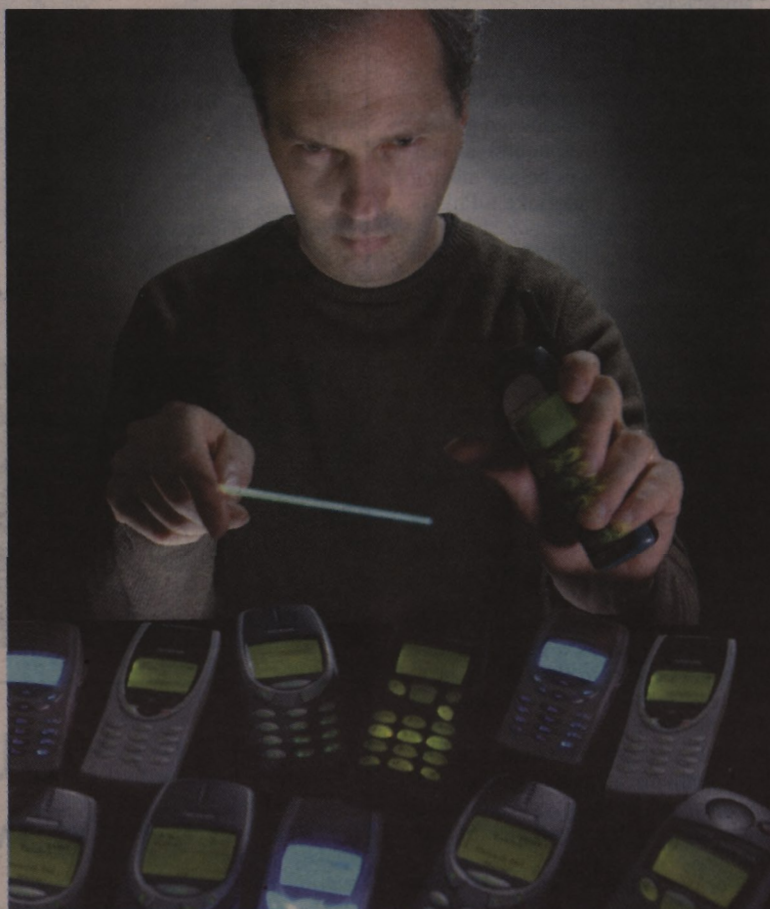
Explaining how the piece works, Mr Small said he envisaged a group of people coming together with their mobile phones and, under the direction of a conductor, telephoning each other a predetermined number of times, either individually, in small groups or as an ensemble.

"It's an amorphous piece, with a number of short melodic motifs in a pentatonic scale with a little bit of disharmony to keep things interesting," Mr Small said.

The modern symphony took a year to compose and has been formally registered with the Australian Performing Rights Association.

Mr Small said he imagined his work being performed by at least 100 people, making use not only of ring-tones but also of phones set to vibrate on piano, guitar strings and timpani skins.

Inspiration for the work, Mr Small said, came when he attended a



Annoying today but a symphony tomorrow – Mr Clint Small has written a ring-tone opus which he hopes to see performed one day. Photo Greg Ford.

Stravinsky concert recently and an audience member's mobile phone rang during the performance.

While the other patrons' patience was tested, a friend of his, who was

performing in the orchestra, was taken aback by the timing of the ring and the tidy counterpoint it struck.

Konrad Marshall

INPRINT



Australia and Israel:

An Ambiguous Relationship

By Chanan Reich

Published by Melbourne University Press

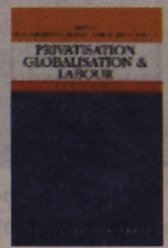
RRP: \$29.95

On the surface, Australia seems to have always been a close friend of Israel, but, in fact, this has often not been the case. This new text by Dr Chanan Reich, which examines the history of the relationship, comes at a time when diplomatic relations between Israel and the rest of the world are under intense scrutiny.

The text shows that during 1939–1941, the Menzies government was very hostile to the Jewish community of Palestine and put pressure on Britain to adopt a much harsher policy against Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe who wished to go to Palestine.

Also explored is Australia's support of British and American policies and the period during which Australia became pro-Israel.

Dr Chanan Reich is a visiting scholar and lecturer at the Centre for the Study of Jewish Civilisation at Monash University and a lecturer in political science at the Yizre'el Valley Academic College in Israel. Although now living in Israel, he lived and worked in Australia for 20 years.



Privatisation, Globalisation and Labour:

Studies from Australia

Edited by Peter Fairbrother, Michael Paddon and Julian Teicher

Published by Federation Press

RRP: \$49.50

What is the scope and scale of corporatisation and privatisation in Australia in the past two decades and what are their implications for management, labour and industrial relations? This new book tackles the complex issue of globalisation from a local perspective.

Through a collection of essays, this text documents the extensive scale of the process of state restructuring and the increasing variation in the arrangements for providing public goods and services.

It grapples with these issues through a series of case studies on Qantas, Telstra, the electricity industries in New South Wales and Victoria, Job Network and others, providing a detailed analysis of the resulting changes in employment and industrial relations.

Peter Fairbrother is an honorary research fellow at the National Key Centre in Industrial Relations at Monash University, Julian Teicher is acting head of the Department of Management at Monash, and Michael Paddon, formerly at Monash, is an associate professor at RMIT.



Unsantifying Human Life:

Essays on Ethics

By Peter Singer, Edited by Helga Kuhse

Published by Blackwell Publishers,

RRP: \$27.95

Peter Singer has been described as one of the world's most influential philosophers, as well as one of its most controversial. This new collection, selected by Singer's close colleague Helga Kuhse, provides readers with a one-volume account of his underlying philosophy, as well as its practical implications for everyday living.

Unsantifying Human Life brings together some of Singer's best and most challenging articles from 1971 to the present. The book includes early critiques of various approaches to philosophy and the role of philosophers, followed by topical works on the moral status of animals, infanticide, euthanasia, the allocation of scarce health care resources, embryo experimentation, environmental responsibility, and reflections on how we should live.

Award-winning author Professor Peter Singer is the Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University's Centre for Human Values and a former professor at Monash University. The book's editor and the author's long-time collaborator Associate Professor Helga Kuhse is a senior research fellow in the School of Philosophy and Bioethics at Monash University.

POSTscript

Karen Green, a senior lecturer in the School of Philosophy and Bioethics at Monash, has released her new book, *Dummet: Philosophy of Language*, a further addition to the Key Contemporary Thinkers series published by Polity Press. The book provides a comprehensive introduction to British philosopher Michael Dummett's philosophy of language and an overview and summary of his most important arguments.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming book, contact monashnews@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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www.monash.edu.au

Health of blue-collar workers under spotlight

HEALTH RESEARCH

The health of Victorian blue-collar workers will be examined in a major study to be undertaken by Monash University lecturer Dr Anthony LaMontagne.

The project, which is expected to start this month, will investigate issues associated with high behavioural risks, such as smoking or lack

of physical exercise, and adverse working conditions among low status workers.

As part of the project, new intervention strategies are expected to be developed to protect and promote the health of Victorian blue-collar workers.

Dr LaMontagne, senior lecturer in the university's Department of Epidemiology and Preventive

Medicine, has been awarded a VicHealth fellowship for the project 'Integrated, community-based approaches to health promotion for Victorian blue-collar workers'.

Under the fellowship award, Dr LaMontagne will receive \$165,000 a year for five years to undertake the study.

He will work with the Victorian Trades Hall to conduct an initial

survey of 600 people and an in-depth qualitative interview of 60 people to identify relationships between health behaviour and job stress.

In a second part of the project, Dr LaMontagne will work with members of the Latrobe Valley community to develop integrated health promotion and health protection programs focusing on the burden of asbestos-related disease.

He will also work with the Gippsland Asbestos-Related Disease Support Group to formulate community-based approaches to asbestos disease and smoking.

"Former and current power industry workers in the Latrobe Valley are three times more likely than other Victorians to experience an asbestos-related disease," he said.

"The Latrobe Valley study will formulate community-level measures and workplace interventions which target current employees."

The project builds on research undertaken by Dr LaMontagne and Professor Glorian Sorensen and colleagues at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard School of Public Health in the US, where

Dr LaMontagne worked before moving to Australia two years ago.

In this work, it was found that where workplace issues were addressed in conjunction with health promotion, blue-collar workers were twice as likely to quit smoking as those who had only taken part in health promotion programs.

In his VicHealth funded project, Dr LaMontagne will build on that work, aiming to bridge the traditionally separate fields of health promotion and occupational health.

"Healthy working environments are as important in preventing chronic diseases as adopting positive health behaviours – working conditions are an under-recognised and substantial contributor to chronic disease burdens," Dr LaMontagne said.

"By broadening the traditional emphasis of health promotion on individual behaviours to include addressing healthy working conditions, a more comprehensive and effective approach to preventing chronic diseases can be realised."

Diane Squires



The Latrobe Valley – Dr LaMontagne will work with community members to develop integrated health promotion and health protection programs focusing on the burden of asbestos-related disease. Photo AAP.

Thai anti-corruption crusader receives award

MONASH ALUMNI

Following two decades of pioneering investigations and research into the Thai illegal economy, Monash alumnus Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit was last month presented with a Monash University Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of her efforts.

The highly acclaimed Thai economist's published work has reached far outside the university to the very core

of Thai society, opening up discussion, especially in the Thai media, on the issue of corruption.

"I want to broaden people's view of our society and encourage them to think democratically," Dr Pasuk said.

Currently working in the Faculty of Economics at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and as a member of Thailand's Counter-Corruption Commission, Professor Pasuk visited Monash last month to receive her

award and present a seminar on 'Confronting corruption' at the Monash Asia Institute.

Her research has exposed the extent to which institutional corruption and intimidation affect the lives of the poor, quantifying the contribution of underground activity to the Thai economy.

In doing so, she has earned a reputation as one of Asia's most courageous and outspoken scholars, emboldening others to write about corruption and bringing the debate into the public domain.

Professor Pasuk was awarded a Colombo Plan scholarship to Monash in 1965, where she completed a bachelors degree (with honours) in economics and a masters before moving to Cambridge to undertake a PhD in 1979.

While at Monash, Professor Pasuk conducted research into wages and economic development with specific reference to Thailand, and later undertook a study of social movements in Thailand.

She has also held teaching posts at the University of Cambridge and the prestigious Johns Hopkins University in the US.

"Monash exposed me to a very democratic and liberal way of thinking, which made me appreciate the power of ordinary people," she recalled, citing the Australian trade union movement as a good example of people's power to change things.

Monash University Distinguished Alumni Awards are awarded to Monash graduates or diplomats who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievements, inspirational leadership and exceptional human qualities.

Former winners include Reserve Bank governor Mr Ian Macfarlane (1996), Aboriginal spokesperson Mr Mick Dodson (1998) and author and social commentator Reverend Tim Costello.

Professor Phongpaichit's opinion piece on beating corruption in Thailand can be found on page 5.

Konrad Marshall



Monash alumnus Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit visited Monash last month to receive a Monash University Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of her efforts in investigating the illegal economy in Thailand. Photo Peter Anikijenko.

Education
credit union
intelligent banking

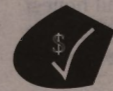
GOLD AWARD
PERSONAL INVESTOR
MAGAZINE
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PERSONAL LOAN
2001

What do we offer?



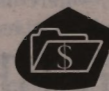
Savings

- Fixed Term Investments
- Christmas Club
- Budget Accounts

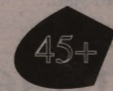


Loans

- Home
- Car
- Personal
- Investment



Financial Planning

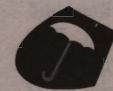


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