

MONASH NEWS

NEWS FROM THE CAMPUSES OF MONASH UNIVERSITY
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MONASH
UNIVERSITY

The high price of gastro

HEALTH

Gastroenteritis costs Australia more than \$342 million each year in treatments and lost work time, a Monash University study has found.

This enormous cost to the community, which equates to more than \$18 per person a year, has highlighted the need for ongoing research so that the main causes of endemic gastroenteritis can be identified and the cost of the disease to the community reduced.

The study, by researchers in the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, has provided the most accurate cost of gastroenteritis to date by including calculations of the total number of cases of gastroenteritis and the proportion of people who visited their doctor, took medication or had time off work.

Researchers Dr Margaret Hellard and Dr Martha Sinclair looked specifically at endemic gastroenteritis in Australia rather than outbreaks of the disease and estimated that more than 15 million cases of gastroenteritis occur annually.

Their research has been published in the *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*.

"We estimated that the total cost of endemic gastroenteritis in Australia was \$342,855,616 a year, of which \$75,908,274 was direct medical costs and \$266,947,342 was time costs and the costs for time off work to care for a sick family member," Dr Hellard said.

The definition of gastroenteritis used was any of the following symptoms in a 24-hour period: two or more loose stools, two or more episodes of vomiting, one loose stool together with abdominal pain or nausea or vomiting, or one episode of vomiting with abdominal pain or nausea.

"Endemic gastroenteritis has become an important illness in developed and developing countries," Dr Hellard said.

"Although in developed countries the majority of individual cases are mild to moderate in their severity, this study has shown that the overall costs are significant."

The study found that there were 15,173,430 cases of gastroenteritis per annum in Australia requiring 1,024,214 visits to the general practitioner and 1,128,491 days off work.

Worldwide, it is estimated that diarrhoeal diseases are the second most common cause of death after cardiac disease and are the leading cause of childhood deaths. The burden of disease is highest in developing countries, with an estimated 4.6 to six million deaths in Asia, Africa and Latin America each year.

"Although gastroenteritis deaths are not as common in developed countries, this illness remains a significant problem. In Australia there have been, on average, 70 deaths a year due to diarrhoeal illness or gastroenteritis and an estimated 6400 deaths a year in the United States," Dr Hellard said.

"If we want to reduce the cost and prevalence of community gastroenteritis, we need to take into account the common sources of endemic gastroenteritis and not simply rely on data from outbreaks of gastroenteritis."

— Penny Fannin

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Holding the baton: Conducting has a quality that "is physical, like dance", says Mark Shiell.

Photo: Peter Anikijenko

Graduate joins top conductor program

MUSIC

A Monash University graduate has been accepted into a prestigious program to train as a conductor of a symphony orchestra.

One of only 16 young Australians accepted into the Symphony Australia Conductor Development Program, Mr Mark Shiell will begin his training with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra next month.

Mr Shiell completed his honours year in the School of Music — Conservatorium at Monash last year and is the first Monash graduate to take part in the program.

The program, which started about six years ago in response to a lack of training for conductors in Australia, consists of seven five-day modules with professional symphony orchestras across the country. Successful applicants are selected from a nationwide audition process and then allocated time with participating orchestras.

Originally a budding flute player, Mr Shiell only seriously considered a career in conducting while at Monash. He enrolled to study flute, but then transferred to conducting after deciding it held more interest for him.

"There is a real physical pleasure in conducting," he said. "As a child I was

introduced to classical music through Tchaikovsky. With its often highly emotive, loud and powerful aspects, conducting has a quality to it that is physical, like dance."

Mr Shiell, who teaches the flute at Monterey Secondary College, conducts for the Napier Chamber Orchestra, Victorian Flute Ensemble, Kenja Melbourne Choir, Kenja Melbourne Orchestra and Lowther Hall Secondary College Senior Concert Band.

— Diane Squires

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Centre wins Swedish projects

ROAD SAFETY

The Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) has secured almost \$400,000 worth of research projects with the Swedish Government.

The projects are being undertaken for the Swedish National Road Administration, the national agency responsible for road safety initiatives throughout Sweden.

MUARC was successful in six out of the nine projects it bid for, out of a total of 20 projects put out to international tender.

MUARC director Dr Ian Johnston said the high success rate was an indication not only of the quality of research being undertaken at the centre but also of MUARC's international standing.

"The centre is regarded worldwide as a leader in research into injury prevention including, of course, road safety," he said.

"We are undertaking a number of other projects around the world, but to be successful with the one organisation in these six key projects – each designed to capture the current state of knowledge in a critical area – shows how highly the centre's work is regarded."

While Sweden is renowned as having one of the best road safety rates in the world, a stall in the declining death rate prompted the government to undertake a critical review of its strategies to further decrease the number of accidents on its roads.

Research projects being undertaken

by MUARC for the Swedish organisation cover bike helmet usage; rural road safety initiatives; road safety public education campaigns; the effects of chronic illness on accident involvement; suicide and natural deaths in traffic; and senior citizens as road users (as both cyclists and pedestrians).

While much of the research is in its early stages, MUARC has just completed its first project looking at measures to increase the use of bicycle helmets.

MUARC reviewed helmet use throughout the world and found that across most cultures the lowest rate of helmet-wearing was among adolescents aged 13 to 17.

"That's not surprising," Dr Johnston said. "But what we didn't expect to find was that the higher the

level of bike-riding in a given country, the lower the level of helmet wearing. For example, the lowest helmet-wearing rates were in Holland, where cycling is at very high levels. Moreover, no country with high bicycle use had mandated helmet wearing."

In countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada, where cycling was not very common, the number of people wearing helmets varied from very high, where helmet wearing is compulsory, to relatively low, in the absence of legislation.

– Diane Squires

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Animal books bring colour to Afghan children

REFUGEES

Thousands of displaced children in Afghanistan are learning about animals of the world, thanks to the efforts of Professor Pat Vickers-Rich, who has created an educational colouring book especially for them.

Animals of the World teaches some simple science and geography as the children using it find out about the animals, their habitats and characteristic lifestyles.

The book, which has been translated into Dari and Pashto, was illustrated by freelance artists Andrew Plant and Draga Galt.

Professor Vickers-Rich, who is the director of the Monash Science Centre, said everyone involved, including the artists, translators and printer, either donated their time and skills or provided services at cost to produce 5000 copies of the book.

"The colouring book is a gift to the children of Afghanistan from the children of Australia," she said.

"My concern is that refugee children, if not given something to do, will go down the path of so many disenfranchised people around the world who know almost nothing of the world outside their local area. The fact that someone cares enough to provide such materials is also meaningful. As well, the books will give the adults who can read in the camps something to teach with."

– Robyn Anns



A gift for the children: From left: Mr Ron Flint of Aspect Printing, Professor Pat Vickers-Rich and artist Mr Andrew Plant with Afghan students Mr Massoud Sofi and Ms Homaria Bashari.

Photo: Greg Ford

IN BRIEF

US funds for prostate research

Monash University's Institute of Reproduction and Development has been awarded \$800,000 to investigate the role of adult stem cells in the incidence of prostate disease.

The grant was one of the few successful applications worldwide made to the Department of Defense Prostate Cancer Research Program in the US.

The project aims to identify the adult stem cells in the prostate and determine which of those are the cells of origin for prostate cancer.

Degree joint venture between Monash, HK

A new course that teaches law to both lawyers and non-lawyers is under way in Hong Kong as part of an innovative joint venture between Monash University and the Hong Kong-based Institute of Professional Development.

The Master of Business Law degree, developed in 2000 by the Department of Business Law and Taxation in the Faculty of Business and Economics, is the first law degree to be offered in Hong Kong in full face-to-face mode by an Australian university.

Course director Professor Richard Cullen said the degree would offer students options not commonly available as part of other offshore programs in Hong Kong.

\$1m grant for kidney stem cell research

Monash researchers have been awarded \$1 million by the Australian Kidney Foundation to investigate how kidney health can be improved.

The funding has recognised Dr Sharon Ricardo, a research fellow in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, as a promising researcher in the field of kidney and urinary research.

Dr Ricardo is one of a team of researchers investigating how injecting stem cells into damaged kidneys might improve kidney health.

The project, selected from a field of 18 applications, will receive funding of \$200,000 a year for five years.

Monash Law in the city

Monash Law's new city presence at 472 Bourke Street, Melbourne, has hosted its first postgraduate class.

The new Monash University Law Chambers are in the heart of the city's legal precinct and next to the Law Institute of Victoria.

The chambers will be officially opened later this year, but students are already enjoying the facilities at the new centre.

Bobsleighters on a roll

Three Monash law students are part of an Australian team that has qualified to compete in the European bobsleigh championships next year.

Final-year students Mr Kris Hendrata, Mr Christopher Schaerf and Mr Peter Thomas were part of the Australian team that competed in the championships in Germany and France at the end of last year.

Student Accommodation Available

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Tel: 9544 5933 Fax: 9544 1903

Email: enquire@bvviewcc.com.au

Human rights specialist to examine South African law

RESEARCH

United Nations volunteer researcher Mr Tetsuro Yoshida has joined the Centre for Law and Reconstruction in Southern Africa (CLARISA) at Monash's South Africa campus.

Mr Yoshida specialises in public international law focusing on human rights issues and will spend the next two years with CLARISA in a research capacity.

He will analyse the development of the principles of human rights contained in the South African Constitution in decisions handed down by the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal and the High Court, especially as they pertain to socio-economic rights.

Mr Yoshida has worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassy of Japan, in Paris and at Foreign Affairs in Tokyo.

Director of CLARISA Professor Theo Scheepers said Mr Yoshida's work formed part of ongoing research done by the centre to provide advice and education on human rights and the law, both generally in the development process in Africa and more specifically in the development of local government process in South Africa.

One of CLARISA's key aims is to ensure that people from all levels of society have access to the law.

– Jennifer Smit

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Still little trust in politicians, study finds

POLITICS

Politicians are seen to have lost touch with the community and are perceived as creating personal profiles specifically to win seats, preliminary results of a Monash University study have found.

The first stage of the study, 'Protecting the reputation and standing of the institution of parliament: a study of expectations, realities and reforms', was undertaken last year and assessed public perceptions of Victorian state politicians.

In the study, 12 focus groups from communities in metropolitan and rural Victoria were asked questions that aimed to assess their expectations



Dr Lewis: the study "is not an exercise in bashing politicians".

of the behaviour of politicians and whether their views had any effect on the standing of parliament. The study

found that a general lack of trust in politicians had manifested itself in the belief that politicians do not run the state in the community's interests.

It also found that many people could not differentiate between state and federal politicians and many also did not know who their local state member was.

In a second part of the study, to be undertaken this year, researchers Dr Colleen Lewis, from Monash's School of Political and Social Inquiry, and Dr Ken Coghill, from the Department of Management, will seek input from politicians on how they believe they are perceived by the community.

Dr Lewis said the study was not

"an exercise in bashing politicians", but rather it aimed to identify gaps between politicians' beliefs and public perceptions and to recommend strategies to address those gaps.

The study, which is funded by an ARC grant and the Victorian State Parliament, was prompted by a concern about the community's declining lack of trust in politicians.

"The community believes that politicians are not truthful and are power seekers who profit from their own positions, distort circumstances to suit their own agendas, avoid responsibility for their actions and arrange jobs for the boys," Dr Lewis said.

Dr Lewis said she was con-

cerned that the decline in the reputation of politicians would have a negative impact on the institution of parliament.

"We are genuinely concerned that if we don't do something about protecting the institution of parliament, we could be endangering our system of government," she said.

"The aim of this project is to identify reforms which will protect and strengthen parliamentary legitimacy."

— Diane Squires

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Protein success brings organ transplant hope

MEDICINE

In a development that could lead to greater success with organ transplantations, Monash University scientists, working in collaboration with the University of Melbourne, have solved the structure of an immune system protein that is crucial in keeping Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) infections in check.

About 90 per cent of the population is infected with EBV — a virus that usually produces no symptoms but, particularly in teenagers, EBV infections can lead to fever, sore throat and swollen lymph glands.

Now, researchers from Monash's Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Melbourne University's Immunology Department have used x-ray crystallography to reveal the three-dimensional shape of the protein receptor, called a T-cell receptor, which stops EBV from wreaking havoc in the body.

They have used the same technique to solve the structure of a molecule called HLA B8, which transports EBV to the surface of cells where the virus is recognised and suppressed by the T-cell receptor.

The research, which was a collaboration between Dr Jamie Rossjohn and Dr Craig Clements from Monash and Professor James McCluskey and Dr Lars Kjer-Nielsen from the University of Melbourne, was recently published in the international journal *Immunity*.

It is the third protein structure to be determined by Monash's Protein Crystallography Unit, which was set up only 12 months ago.

Dr Rossjohn said the findings gave great insight into the function of T-cell receptors in the body and might also lead to products that could reduce the rates of organ transplant rejection.



Structure solution: Dr Jamie Rossjohn says the researchers' findings might lead to products that reduce the rate of organ transplant rejections.

Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

"The T-cell receptor we have studied interacts with Epstein Barr Virus and stops it from running rampant through the body but, in some transplant patients, the receptor can also interact with molecules in the organ being transplanted and contribute to it being rejected," Dr Rossjohn said.

Before an organ transplant, patients are HLA typed (a process similar to blood typing) to check that the donor and the recipient are immunologically compatible.

About 25 per cent of the Caucasian

population is HLA type B44. There are several variants of HLA B44, and some of these can cause problems for organ recipients who are HLA type B8.

In the case of Epstein Barr Virus infection, T-cell receptors bind to HLA B8 to stop the infection taking hold. But when a HLA B44 organ is donated to a HLA B8 patient, the T-cell receptor sometimes interacts with the B44 molecules and causes transplant rejection.

"Now that we know the structure of the T-cell receptor, we can also begin to understand the molecular basis for

transplant rejection," Dr Rossjohn said.

"If we can find a general mechanism for immune recognition of foreign tissues, then perhaps this can be blocked so that transplants can proceed without fear of rejection."

The National Health and Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust funded the research.

— Penny Fannin

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Program will picture children learning

EDUCATION

A Monash University Faculty of Education program to improve literacy and numeracy skills for young people in the Hastings area in Victoria has received almost \$40,000 from the Federal Government.

The Innovations and Initiatives Project was launched last week by the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan

Nelson, as part of the Innovative Projects Initiative 2002.

The project was one of 10 initiatives across the country to share in \$400,000 of funding.

Professor Marilyn Flear and her team from the Education faculty will work in consultation with the Hastings community to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of up to 200 pre-schoolers. Members of the team include Dr Barbara Clarke,

Ms Marie Hamner, Ms Anne Kennedy, Ms Avis Ridgeway, Ms Jill Robbins, Ms Lynne Surman and Education dean Professor Sue Willis.

Staff of child care centres and preschools, as well as the families of children who attend them, will document literacy and numeracy experiences of the children by photographing them undertaking various tasks in the home, community and the centres and preschools.

Professor Flear said these images would document the range of ways in which children become literate and numerate. Effective teaching and learning strategies will be identified through pre and post-project testing of the children.

— Diane Squires

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'Populate and publish' call to returning scientists

GRANTS

Academics from Monash University's Faculty of Science who are returning from maternity leave can now apply for a \$15,000 grant on their return to assist in their research endeavours.

The grant is part of the faculty's 'Populate and Publish' initiative.

The program is believed to be a first for an Australian university and is aimed at encouraging female science academics to maintain the momentum of their research programs.

In announcing the initiative, Professor Margaret Clayton, convenor of the Science faculty's equity committee, said she believed the grant would provide the faculty's female academics with the impetus needed to continue their research careers.

"The faculty recognised that the experimental work of science disciplines placed a particularly high demand on staff members' time," Professor Clayton said. "This grant offers targeted support for female academics engaged in teaching and research positions in the faculty and will make it easier for them to take maternity leave without any adverse impact on their careers."

The \$15,000 untied grants can be used for any research-related purpose and will be made available to research-active academics returning from maternity leave from this year. The number of grants available will not be limited.

Professor Rob Norris, dean of the Faculty of Science, said the grant was one of several initiatives through which the faculty aimed to address gender imbalance.

"We are trying to be creative and provide initiatives that will, in the long run, help us retain good female academic staff. This grant creates an environment where young women academics can feel comfortable about having a family and advancing their careers."

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Stunted growth

Despite recent rain, Australia continues to suffer the devastating effects of drought. And Monash University researchers have revealed the economic impact will be far worse than previously thought.

Diane Squires reports.



Economists from Monash's Centre of Policy Studies, clockwise from top left, Dr Glyn Wittwer, Associate Professor John Madden, Dr Mark Horridge and Dr Phillip Adams.

Economists in Monash University's Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS) have warned that the drought is having a far greater impact on gross domestic product (GDP) than previously estimated.

The study, 'Drought, regions and the Australian economy between 2001-02 and 2004-05', was undertaken by centre researchers Dr Phillip Adams, Dr Mark Horridge, Associate Professor John Madden and Dr Glyn Wittwer.

It found that the 2002-03 GDP was likely to be 1.6 per cent less than it would have been in the absence of any drought.

It estimated that the drought, one of the most severe and most widespread over a nine-month period, will reduce agricultural output on average by almost 30 per cent in the current financial year. This fall is expected to remove 1.0 percentage points from Australia's GDP growth rate, while flow-on effects to the rest of the economy are expected to lower real GDP growth by a further 0.6 percentage points.

The projected negative effect of the drought on GDP of 1.6 per cent is about twice that of previous estimates.

Dr Madden said there were two reasons behind the more pessimistic forecast.

The first came from taking into account the negative effects of de-stocking on the livestock industries when estimating the direct effects of the drought on total agricultural production.

"We took the view that drought-induced sales to abattoirs should not

be considered as an increase in farm production," he said. "Thus, as well as accounting for the reduction in summer and winter crops forecast by ABARE, we also took into our calculations a fall in the true value of livestock production."

"This led to a 0.2 per cent reduction in GDP, in addition to the 0.8 per cent reduction from crops."

Dr Madden said the second reason for the greater estimated effect on GDP was that the researchers used a 45-region economic model to estimate the flow-on effects to industries outside the agricultural sector.

The study also found that the drought was likely to reduce the average number of jobs in Australia in 2002-03 by 0.8 per cent.

"While the impact on employment is estimated to be more modest than on output, it still amounts to around 70,000 less jobs on average than would otherwise have been the case in this financial year," he said. "Very little of this job reduction is expected to occur in the agricultural

sector itself, as there is little scope for farmers to reduce labour inputs."

Most of the estimated 5500 jobs to be shed by the agricultural sector will be in the agricultural services industry, which undertakes activities such as crop spraying and harvesting and fruit picking.

However, the main job losses from the drought are expected in the wholesaling, retailing and repairs sector (about 25,000 jobs), in business services (12,000 jobs), in the food processing and beverages sector (10,000 jobs) and in transport (9000 jobs).

The study found that all mainland states would experience a significant reduction in their gross state product (GSP) and employment as a result of the drought. Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia would be the worst hit, with their GSP growth rates expected to be reduced by about two percentage points.

Dr Wittwer said the drought was projected to have severe economic consequences across a wide area of Australia. "Thirty-nine of the regions

in our model are outside the capital cities," he said. "Almost half of these regions are estimated to have their gross regional product (GRP) reduced by more than 5 per cent by the drought - 11 of them by over 10 per cent."

The study found that the worst affected regions were south-west Queensland (with a -21 per cent change in GRP), north-west NSW (-18 per cent), the WA wheatbelt (-17 per cent), the Victorian Mallee (-16 per cent) and northern NSW (-15 per cent).

Dr Wittwer said the amount a region's economy was likely to suffer from the drought depended mainly on how important agriculture was to the region and how severe the rainfall deficit had been in that area.

"The current drought is distinguished from many previous droughts by how widespread it is," he said. "This has meant that all regions highly dependent on agriculture are estimated to experience serious economic effects."

"The worst-affected regions include all 14 of Australia's regions that had 20 per cent or more of their 2001-02 output in the agricultural sector."

The worst-affected region, south-west Queensland, is projected to have its employment lowered by 5.5 per cent (compared with a reduction in GRP of 21 per cent). Altogether 15 regions are projected to have their employment reduced by 2 per cent or more as a result of the drought.

Australia's capital cities will also be affected by the drought, with employment expected to drop by 0.4 per cent in Melbourne and Perth and 0.8 per cent in Brisbane.

However, if the drought breaks in the next few months, as anticipated, few of the negative economic effects are expected to persist into 2003-04.

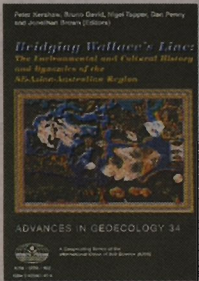
Dr Wittwer warned that an exception to this would be the livestock industries in some inland regions, which will take time to recover from the de-stocking that has occurred during the drought.

The study will be published in the next issue of *Australian Bulletin of Labour*.

The Centre of Policy Studies, in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University, specialises in applied economic research, especially in economic modelling. The centre has provided detailed assessments of the economic consequences of many of the major issues facing the Australian economy.

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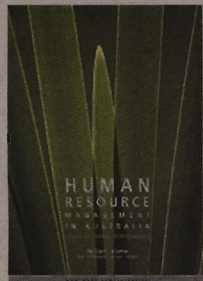
**Bridging Wallace's Line:**

The Environmental and Cultural History and Dynamics of the SE-Asian-Australian Region

By Peter Kershaw, Nigel Tapper, Bruno David, Dan Penny and Jonathan Brown (Editors)
Published by Catena Verlag

Bridging Wallace's Line reviews and collates recent research on aspects of the environmental and cultural history and dynamics of Southeast Asia and Australia. It incorporates a different approach to Wallace's Line (a dividing line between two zoogeographic regions, the Oriental and Australian regions, that extends northward between Borneo and Sulawesi) by focusing on geographical continuities rather than differences.

Professor Peter Kershaw is director of the Centre for Plynology and Palaeoecology in the Faculty of Arts at Monash University, Professor Nigel Tapper is head of Monash's School of Geography and Environmental Science, while Dr Bruno David is a research fellow in the school. Dan Penny is a research fellow at the University of Sydney and Jonathan Brown is a Monash PhD student.

**Human Resource Management in Australia:**

Strategy People Performance

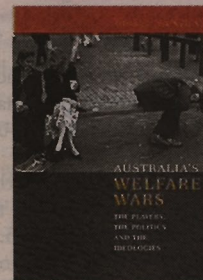
By Helen De Cieri and Robin Kramar
Published by McGraw-Hill Australia

Human Resource Management in Australia presents the best of classic and contemporary knowledge in the area of human resources. It focuses on

contemporary issues in human resource management in Australia and pays special attention to its role in strategic formation and implementation.

This book emphasises human resource management as a means of creating value and gaining competitive advantages in business and illustrates how human resource strategies and practices have helped organisations meet global, quality, social, technological and structural challenges.

Associate Professor Helen Di Cieri is co-director of the Monash REACH (Research, Education and Consulting in HRM) Unit in the Department of Management at Monash University. Associate Professor Robin Kramar is from Macquarie University.

**Australia's Welfare Wars:**

The Players, the Politics and the Ideologies

By Phillip Mendes
Published by UNSW Press

Australia's Welfare Wars looks at the roles played by key ideologies and lobby groups in determining welfare state outcomes with specific reference to current theories about globalisation.

The book looks at the role of players such as lobby groups, including the Australian Council of Social Services and the ACTU, as well as the business sector, churches, welfare consumers, neoliberal thinktanks and the media. It also explores the influence of politics and the impact of ideology.

Using contemporary case studies and source materials, the book analyses current Australian welfare state policies and outcomes and questions many of the key assumptions that underpin contemporary social welfare policies.

Dr Phillip Mendes is a senior lecturer in social policy and community development in the Department of Social Work at Monash University.

POSTscript

The historical, sociological and practical elements of mathematics within vocational education are discussed in the context of the emerging impact of technology in this new book, *What Counts as Mathematics? Technologies of Power in Adult Vocational Education*.

The author, Dr Gail FitzSimons, an ARC-funded postdoctoral research fellow and lecturer in Monash's Faculty of Education, draws on an extensive literature base, as well as two decades of practical teaching experience, to critique the impact of recent neo-liberal government policies on mathematics education. Differences between education institutions and the workplace are raised as sources of tension as well as offering new possibilities for vocational mathematics education.

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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Werewolf mythology on display at Gippsland

A growing fascination with her Lithuanian heritage following the death of her grandmother more than 10 years ago resulted in Ms Jazmina Cininas's masterly work *The Girlie Werewolf Project* – Switchback Gallery's first major exhibition for 2003.

Essentially about identity, the unusual exhibition features costumes, photographs, intricate prints and handmade books exploring wolf stereotypes as well as video references of the werewolf in contemporary film.

"I began looking into the iron wolf symbol used for Vilnius – Lithuania's capital. Further research into the wolf and how it is represented through literature, film, folklore and the internet showed a complex evolution of the wolf through time," she said.

Ms Cininas, a multi award-winning printmaker based in Melbourne, created the work for her fine art masters degree, which she undertook at RMIT. It was previously exhibited at RMIT's city campus and the Kauno Galerija in Lithuania during the European summer, where it attracted much interest from the arts community.

"In its current incarnation, the wolf has been represented as a women's champion. Of all the animals, the wolf



Iron She-Wolves: 'Daine & Arielle 2001' is one of the images on display in *The Girlie Werewolf Project*.

most embodies our revised notions of the wilderness – no longer a force to be tamed and conquered, but rather a precious resource to be protected and nurtured. Once a feared predator, its 'endangered' status has seen it recast as a victim," she said.

"The wolf exists on the edge of humanity. Tamed, it is a dog; if it is wild it can become a werewolf. Its privileged position as 'liminal human' and its shifting status in the popular imagination makes it a unique barometer for changing attitudes, not only towards the natural world and the environment but also in shifts in perceptions of women."

According to Ms Cininas, *The Girlie Werewolf Project* "is an attempt to create a personal werewolf mythology that acknowledges traditional and contemporary werewolf folklore, with particular reference to my Lithuanian background".

For the record, Ms Cininas says she is definitely not a werewolf.

– Karen Stichtenoth

SHOW NOTES

What: *The Girlie Werewolf Project*

When: Until 27 March

Special viewing and talk by artist: 11 March, 6 pm

Where: Switchback Gallery, Gippsland Centre for Art and Design, Gippsland campus

Who: For more information, contact the gallery on +61 3 9902 6261

Boarding house secrets

The mystery and secrets of living in Melbourne's boarding houses, hotels and flats early last century are uncovered in a new book, *Together Apart*, by Monash University historian Dr Seamus O'Hanlon.

"For a minority of Melburnians, 'home' was always a boarding house, hostel or flat," he said. "While circumstances often meant the 'ideal' suburban house was unattainable, some simply preferred that way of life."

Dr O'Hanlon's interest in these types of residences in inner Melbourne, particularly those built before World War 2, was first sparked when he lived in inter-war flats during the 1980s and 1990s.

The book unveils fascinating aspects – both amusing and depressing – of the lives of those in such accommodation. While today society equates boarding houses with the poor and dispossessed, it was a very different story early last century.

"Boarding houses were relatively common and provided accommodation for between 5 and 10 per cent of Melbourne's population, including the rich and famous," Dr O'Hanlon said.

He uncovered, for example, records of a spinster who lived in an affluent South Yarra boarding house for at least 28 years until her death in 1940. Her situation was indicative of the boarding house culture – she left an estate of almost 7500 pounds, but had virtually no personal possessions.

The book also traces the development of church-based hostels from the late 1910s to the 1920s – largely a result of boarding houses beginning to fall into disrepute and concern about the dangers of city life for young women moving to the city for work – and their gradual decline up to the 1960s.

Dr O'Hanlon said many at the time regarded the initial development of flats during the inter-war years as a disturbing example of non-traditional social and living patterns, including the growing independence of women.

Similar issues are being faced today, he said, and we need to look at a variety of options for housing.



Author on residences: Dr Seamus O'Hanlon says that 'home' can mean different things to different people.

Photo: Greg Ford

"We need to investigate new forms of dwelling types, including accommodation for those who want to live independent, but not isolated, lives."

"These may take the form of modified boarding houses or hostels with private bathrooms, but with provision for shared meals and amenities."

"We need to realise that 'home' means different things to different people – for some it is a suburban brick veneer, for

others it is a hostel room, and for others still a Docklands apartment."

– Allison Harding

Together Apart: Boarding House, Hotel and Flat Life in Pre-War Melbourne

By Seamus O'Hanlon
Published by Australian Scholarly Publishing
RRP: \$44.95

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Mavis launches performing arts program

The 2003 Monash University Performing Arts season began last month with an official launch at the Alexander Theatre on the university's Clayton campus.

Performing Arts Program director Ms Jan Clancy said this year's program would feature some of the biggest names in Australian theatre.

"The revamped Alexander Theatre will host powerful performances by some of Australia's leading actors and contemporary dancers, including shows for young people – all with life-affirming themes of humour and humanity," Ms Clancy said.

"Various areas of the university community have been involved in bringing about this year's line-up," she said. "For the third year in a row, the School of Business Systems is sponsoring a performance by Bell Shakespeare. The Monash Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Business Administration Centre has also extended its support to a theatrical presentation (Griffin Theatre's *Wicked Sisters*), as well as the concert series."

A highlight of the launch was the appearance of well-known actor Ms Anne Phelan (*Prisoner/Something in the Air*), who stars in the first play of the season – *Mavis Goes to Timor*.

The play, researched and written by Angela Chaplin, Katherine Thompson and Kavisha Mazzella, is based on the true story of Mavis Taylor, a determined great-grandmother from the Victorian country town of Yarrawonga who decides to do something practical to help the East Timorese.

She was so affected by the atrocities in East Timor that she filled shipping containers with goods and flew to East Timor with her daughter and granddaughter in 2000 to teach the Timorese how to sew and run a business. It was the first time Mrs Taylor, who was aged 86 at the time, had been overseas. Some 23 sewing centres have since been established.

The inspiring story of Mavis Taylor led to the creation of the critically acclaimed play, which began its Melbourne season last month at the CUB Malthouse, South Melbourne. *Mavis* begins its run at the Alexander Theatre on 6 March,



Putting on a show: From left, Chunky Move choreographer Gideon Obarzanek, *Mavis Goes to Timor* director Angela Chaplin, actor Anne Phelan and vice-chancellor Professor Peter Darvall at the launch of the 2003 Performing Arts Program.

Photo: Peter Anikijenko

with two evening performances and one matinee scheduled.

Other productions for the season include the Sydney Theatre Company's *Christian Brothers*, Bell Shakespeare's *The Servant of Two Masters*, The Royal

Shakespeare Company's acclaimed production *The Hollow Crown*, the dance production *Wanted: Ballet for a Contemporary Democracy*, the Melbourne Symphony *Bosch Monash Series* and Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*.

Subscriptions to the Performing Arts Program are now available. Contact the Monash Box Office on +61 3 9905 1111 for a 2003 season brochure.

– Karen Stichtenoth

Timely Feedback at Monash

Globalisation, politics and the experience of conflict and racism are all placed under the microscope with the thought-provoking and timely exhibition *Feedback: Art, Social Consciousness and Resistance* at the Monash University Museum of Art.

The exhibition is being curated by Monash alumna Ms Charlotte Day, who graduated with an arts degree and a masters in museums and material culture. She is MUMA's first guest curator for 2003.

Feedback looks at the relationship between micro and macro politics, world events and individual experiences, through the art of young Australian artists including Louisa Bufardeci, Tom Nicholson, Raquel Ornela, Silvia Velez and the artist group Damp.

"The exhibition brings together works by young Australians which look at how artists respond to the complex social and political issues that confront them and society as a whole," Ms Day said. "In doing so, they consider what potential there is to resist present conditions and whether



Global view: Silvia Velez's work, 'Tipicos/Typicals', is part of the *Feedback* exhibition.

it is possible to be an active agent for change."

The motivation behind the exhibition, which Ms Day spent six months putting together, stems from her concern with recent world and local events and the escalating radical conservatism of Australian politics.

"*Feedback* attempts to take a broad look at politics as a combination of powerful institutions/systems, media, public events, and conscious and subconscious individual responses that influence our experience of everyday life," she said. "The artists in *Feedback* are more concerned with being citizens

of the world than with debating specific political ideologies. That is not to say their work exists in a political vacuum. In fact, it directly engages with pervading stereotypes, symbols, public events and media commentaries, and translates and reconfigures this data to construct new meanings.

"I chose the title *Feedback* because it implies being part of a social process where there is likely to be a difference between the desired or stated and actual result. This 'gap' provides the space for artists to interpret and reflect on existing issues and situations and, in some cases, take action."

A floor talk featuring artists Tom Nicholson and Louisa Bufardeci will take place at 1 pm on 19 March at MUMA, ground floor, building 55, Clayton campus. A second talk, by artist group Damp, will be held at 12.30 pm on 26 March in room G104, Faculty of Art and Design, Caulfield campus. Admission is free. For more information, contact +61 3 9905 4217 or email muma@adm.monash.edu.au.

– Karen Stichtenoth

Show Notes

What: *Feedback: Art, Social Consciousness and Resistance*
When: 19 March to 26 April
Where: Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), Clayton campus
Who: For more information, contact the gallery on +61 3 9905 4345

ARTS BRIEFS

Summer art for Korean students

A group of South Korean students have enjoyed a summer study school in Australia run by Monash University's Faculty of Art and Design.

The school began in early January when 21 visiting students from three art and design institutions in Seoul arrived at Monash's Caulfield campus to take part in the intensive course in design and drawing studio, English language and cultural context studies.

The summer study school, which operates from early January to mid-February, is open to students from all countries. For information about next year's program, contact the Faculty of Art and Design on +61 3 9903 2707 or email enquiries@artdes.monash.edu.au.

Lecturer takes his fine art to Brisbane

Monash alumnus and lecturer in fine arts Mr Michael Doolan is exhibiting his work at the Brisbane City Gallery until 23 March.

Good as Gold, which features sculptural works in clay, is Mr Doolan's first solo exhibition in Brisbane. He said the works in the show were inspired by popular cultural images, most notably children's toys.

"But *Good as Gold* also brings together ideas beyond the single object. For instance '3 Bears' forces viewers into the role of Goldilocks the instant their reflection appears in all of the three characters," he said.

Art collaboration on show at Caulfield

Prominent Melbourne-based artists, academics and curators Lyndell Brown and Charles Green will present their first solo museum exhibition at Monash University's Faculty Gallery this month.

Arcadia is the artists' first solo museum exhibition after more than 14 years of collaborative production.

It surveys the last four years of their collaboration with a collection of photographic images that blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, past and present, active engagement and meditative states of being.

Arcadia will be on display at the gallery at Monash's Caulfield campus until 28 March.

Supporting women through music

Orchestra Victoria gave a performance recently in support of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development's Women in Scientific Excellence (WISE) program.

The string and wind ensembles played music by Handel, Stravinsky and Strauss for more than 300 guests at Temple Beth Israel in St Kilda in February.

WISE was established last November as an initiative of IJD.

It aims to provide a permanent and substantial funding base for young scientists, especially women, who wish to study through the institute.



Earth's fire: Lava pours down the slopes of Mt Etna, Italy, in 2001, providing a glimpse of the built-up energy within the earth.

Photo: Newspix

Planet Earth: the cause of mass extinctions?

SCIENCE THEORY

Mass extinctions and other global catastrophes could have been caused by a tectonic plate collapsing into the Earth's mantle, according to a new theory devised by Monash University researchers.

These catastrophic events, when much of life on Earth was extinguished, also coincided with processes that worked deep in the Earth to create mineral wealth – for example, 440 million years ago when most of the gold in Victoria was formed. These coincidences have led Professor Gordon Lister and Mr Ivo Vos in the School of Geosciences' Australian Crustal Research Centre to develop the system Earth theory.

The theory proposes that our planet organises itself so that built-up energy is released catastrophically.

Earth spends most of its time in equilibrium where its processes are gradual – ice melts, mountains are



built and species are lost. But during these periods, tectonic movements lead to an accumulation of mass in mountain belts. These zones can become unstable and create an excess of potential energy.

The system Earth theory dictates that from time to time the energy stored in and around mountain belts is released, primarily as the result of a 'foundering event' where the tectonic plates suddenly begin to collapse into

the Earth's mantle. "This process rips mountains apart, tears ribbons of land from the sides of continents, abruptly changes sea level and causes mass extinctions," Professor Lister said. At the same time, volcanoes containing diamonds erupt and enormous accumulations of metal develop.

"Throughout Earth's history there have been great mass extinctions where most living things are destroyed. We don't know much about them except that they were abrupt," Professor Lister said.

"The onset of the plate foundering events seems to coincide with extinction events, and we believe there is a link."

Professor Lister believes the mass extinction that occurred 440 million years ago was linked to the onset of one of the Earth's great outpourings of energy.

"Around 440 million years ago, there was an extinction event that wiped out the graptolites, a group of

animals that included echinoderms, trilobites and nautiloids. At the same time, a great gold mine was formed in the region around Bendigo and Stawell," he said.

"Geological evidence suggests that there may have been a foundering event 440 million years ago. This is where the plate began to rapidly roll back as it started to founder and rapidly sink into the mantle, ripping the continent apart. This produced a lot of heat and fluid movement, and flushed gold that was in the mantle towards the surface.

"We believe the foundering process changed sea level quite abruptly, producing wide shallow seas. The current theory for the extinction 440 million years ago is glaciation. We think it was the changes to the sea level and other events initiated by the tectonic plates starting to collapse that led to the extinction of the graptolites."

– Penny Fannin

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Synchrotron twice as bright

MAJOR PROJECTS

Australia's first synchrotron, to be built at Monash University, is to be twice as powerful as that originally proposed.

The new design, known as Boomerang 20, will generate light twice as bright as the previous design – brightness that is essential for the analysis of complex compounds such as the structure of proteins in cancerous cells.

Monash's professor of x-ray and synchrotron physics, Rob Lewis, said the increased power of the synchrotron would produce much narrower light beams, giving researchers more options for conducting experiments.

"The design will also be able to accommodate more beamlines, which means many more researchers will be able to use the machine at the one time," Professor Lewis said.

Boomerang 20 will now have a larger circumference – 216 metres – to

accommodate more than 30 beamlines. The previous design was limited to around 24.

An international team of synchrotron experts, the International Machine Advisory Committee, has recommended and endorsed the new design.

The Victorian Government has increased its funding for the synchrotron and will provide \$157 million for the synchrotron building and machine.

A consortia of universities, research institutions, other governments and the private sector will fund the cost of the beamlines. The total cost of the project will be more than \$200 million.

The new design will not impact on the synchrotron completion date of early 2007.

– Penny Fannin

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First grants from new institute

RESEARCH

An inter-faculty research project looking at the relationship between global markets, migration and social protection is just one of three projects to receive funding through the recently developed Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements and the Monash Research Fund.

The project, being led by Professor Chris Nyland from the Department of Management and involving experts from the faculties of Arts, Business and Economics, Education and Law, will consider how globalisation shapes and is shaped by social policies that are intended to provide for migrants.

The research team has been awarded \$400,000 over two years and will investigate the socio-economic, cultural and legal challenges faced by migrants and the resulting effects on communities. The project aims to develop an understanding of the social protection needs of migrants who are forced to move and the ability of communities to provide for their own security.

Two other research projects, *The Effect of Global Movement on Health and Wellbeing*, and *Sustainable Government of International Trade, Finance and Investment: 21st Century Challenges*, have been awarded \$200,000 each over two years.

The projects are the first to receive funding through the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements, which was established last year.

The institute brings together the faculties of Art and Design, Arts, Business and Economics, Education and Law in a bid to address the consequences of global movement, including the movement of people, trade, capital and culture.

The foundation director of the institute, Professor John Nieuwenhuysen, said that as well as acting as a research agency, the centre would facilitate visits of international scholars to the university to lead debate on the issue.

"The main challenge for us is to encourage further research on the topic through the faculties and also to spread interest in the topic overseas and through other institutions," he said.

Professor Nieuwenhuysen was appointed director of the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements in February.

Before taking over the helm of the institute, Professor Nieuwenhuysen, who is a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, was chief executive of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA).

The Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements will be officially launched on 24 July at the Windsor Hotel in Melbourne.

– Diane Squires

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