

# Alchemy

College Magazine Issue 09 Summer 2005

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Our angels: the next  
generation of graduates

The Victorian College of Pharmacy began life in 1881 as the School of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria. In 1992, it became a faculty of Monash University.

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*Alchemy*, the alumni magazine of the Victorian College of Pharmacy, a faculty of Monash University, is published twice a year. The next issue is due for publication in May 2006.

The magazine is published for the Victorian College of Pharmacy community, which includes alumni (both pre and post the Monash amalgamation), current and former staff, students and their families, friends and colleagues of the college.

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**Front cover photo:** Fourth year pharmacy students celebrating in style at the VPSC farewell breakfast on the last day of classes for 2005 – Jaimee Anderson, Joanne Gross, Sally Welsh, Hayley Zarth and Jane Booth.

## Celebrating 125 years in 2006

Next year, the college will be proudly celebrating 125 years of service to the pharmacy profession and the Australian community.

To mark this significant milestone, the college is putting together an exciting calendar of celebratory events. One of the highlights will be a black tie dinner on 8 April at the Grand Hyatt for alumni, staff, former staff and colleagues. Other celebrations will include public lectures and a huge 'back to the college' day.

Another initiative to commemorate the anniversary is our innovative *125 stories* project. College staff are currently gathering a range of stories – big and small – that best represent the events and people who comprise our history. These stories will be progressively posted on the college website.

To keep informed about the celebrations visit

[www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125)

To contribute to *125 stories* email [125years@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:125years@vcp.monash.edu.au)

# From the dean

In 2006 the college will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, making us one of the oldest schools of pharmacy in Australia and the third oldest in the world.

There is a lot to be proud of in our history, which stretches from classes at the old Melbourne Museum site in 1881 to today's modern, state-of-the-art college.

Our world-class reputation grows every year. We were recently chosen from an international field by the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates to assist in establishing a new pharmacy school. And the Department of Pharmacy Practice's pharmacy teaching symposium in Prato, Italy, continues to grow in prestige, this year with delegates from eight countries attending.

College researchers continue to attract a high level of government and industry support each year, including a substantial number of ARC and NHMRC grants considering the relatively small size of the college compared to other institutions.

Students contribute to life at the college with passion and focus, forging links with other health students, supporting the development of pharmacy in third world countries and winning many state and national awards.

Our programs are growing as well. We recently established the first Chair of Formulation Science in Australia and we are very pleased to announce that Professor Barrie Finnin will be leading this

area. Another new Chair was also established this year – the Chair of Clinical Pharmacy, the first position of its kind in Australia to jointly hold a Director of Pharmacy role. Professor Michael Dooley, who is Director of Pharmacy at The Alfred, is bringing great innovation and expertise to this position.

The campus is developing too. In July, construction began on the first new building since the Manning building opened in 1971. The new building will house the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, a centre of excellence that will greatly enhance the college's expertise in drug development and design. This building is the first phase of a large redevelopment that also includes an upgrade of the Manning, an extension of the library and a long-desired pharmacy museum.

We are planning a year of celebrations to mark this milestone anniversary in 2006. I hope all our alumni, current and former staff, students and their families will join us in celebrating our past and our future.



Professor Colin Chapman (1970)



Professor Colin Chapman with fourth year pharmacy students.



College and University of Sharjah staff.



University of Sharjah.

## University of Sharjah chooses college expertise

The college has been granted a US\$2.5 million, five year contract by the University of Sharjah to assist in setting up a Bachelor of Pharmacy at its new health sciences campus. Chosen from an impressive international field of pharmacy schools, this selection validates the college's world-class position in pharmacy education.

Sharjah is the third largest of the seven United Arab Emirates. Situated in the centre of the United Arab Emirates, it is famous for its architecture and juxtaposition of modern and ancient culture. The University of Sharjah, established in 1997, is a not-for-profit university with about 5000 undergraduate students in eight colleges.

Under the arrangement, the college is providing pharmacy curriculum and course materials, helping recruit senior teaching staff and assisting with the design of a new hospital and separate research building. Graduates of the course will be awarded a University of Sharjah degree. The first intake of 55 students began on 3 September.

"Our expectation is that numbers will grow quite rapidly," said Professor Colin Chapman, dean of the college. "This as an exciting opportunity to be part of the establishment of a truly world-leading pharmacy teaching faculty, with potential for research collaboration and staff and student exchange."

The first instalment under the contract has been used to fund new initiatives at the college, such as parts of the new anti-infective and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) laboratories, a Small Grants Research Scheme, a Research Award, new postgraduate scholarships and the annual Victorian College of Pharmacy Teaching Award to support excellence in teaching. The funding will also provide for new postgraduate and undergraduate student facilities.



# Publishing the college's history

Historian Dr Janette Bomford is currently writing a formal history of the college, to be published during the 125th anniversary celebrations. Dr Bomford recently wrote the history of the Pharmacy Board of Victoria with David Newgreen (1964).

The book covers the history of the college, from its very earliest inception as the teaching school of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria to the modern-day college. It focuses on the men and women who showed great leadership throughout this time, and outlines how the college grew and responded to the changing needs of the profession and the pharmaceutical industry.

The following draft excerpt covers the controversy surrounding the college's first female student, who sent shock waves through the profession by winning the gold medal.

"Jane Wollen was the first woman to attend lectures for the intermediate examination. As was the case with most of the early female pharmacists, Wollen was related to a pharmacist. She was apprenticed to her father and proved to be a gifted student, winning a bronze medal in materia medica and botany, and the lecturer's prize in botany. This academic achievement shocked many Council members. In 1896, the Society had formalised the practice of making the position of demonstrator within the right of the gold medallist and honourman of the year. Suddenly, the prospect loomed of having to offer the position to a woman. The educational committee sought to pre-empt the possibility by recommending the appointment of the entire staff for 1898, arguing that the yearly change of demonstrator was detrimental to the efficiency of the college. The matter was postponed. Five candidates entered the honour examination held on 29–30 December and Jane Wollen topped the list, scoring 246 marks, with C.P. Rowan one mark behind her.

The Council of the Society met on 6 January 1898 and noted that: 'Under the existing conditions the dux student of the year, who is the successful competitor for the gold medal, is entitled to the appointment. In the present case, the successful student, having to serve a period of two years before the apprenticeship

indentures would be completed, was ineligible'. The incumbent, Benjamin Lewis, was re-appointed. The incident had caused sufficient apprehension that E.G. Owen gave notice that, at the next meeting, he would move that the Council rescind the resolution appointing the dux to the position of demonstrator and that the Council should have some discretionary powers. This was passed at the February meeting.

At the prizegiving, the Society's president praised the high attainments and teaching abilities of the lecturers and said that if students failed 'it can be no fault of the lecturers'. The behaviour of the students had been excellent and if the 'presence of an amiable lady student contributed to produce this satisfactory and pleasing result' this initiative should be encouraged. The gold medallist was described as a 'vigilant, painstaking, industrious and successful student' and it was noted that the botany examiner had awarded her 100%, stating it was the best botany paper he had ever examined. At the same event, a female medical student, Eileen Fitzgerald, also won the lecturer's prize for practical pharmacy for medical students.

At the annual meeting of the Society held on the morning of 26 March 1902, it was noted that three women had been admitted to the Society during the year. While entering the profession in greater numbers, there were still stereotypes to overcome and a jovial condescension to be tolerated, which was adopted by some of the speakers at the various social events. That evening a conversazione was held and the prizes distributed. The guest of honour was His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Madden, who welcomed the advent of female pharmacists because 'when the delightful smiles of the ladies are transmitted into the physic, it will surely be greatly improved'."

## Be a part of the college's history!

Dr Janette Bomford is still seeking memories of student life and the lecturers and events that stand out.

Write as little or as much as you like, but don't forget to include your contact details, years of attendance and a statement granting permission to quote from your letter in the book and to attribute the quote to you. All respondents' names will be included in the acknowledgements.

Please write to: Dr Janette Bomford, PO Box 160, Newport Vic 3015.



# Minister launches college expansion

Work has begun on a major renovation that includes the construction of a new building to house biomedical research. The Minister for Innovation and State and Regional Development, the Honourable John Brumby, launched the building works on 15 August 2005.



The Honourable Mr John Brumby, Professor Colin Chapman and John O'Rourke, Principal of the Plenary Group, launching the redevelopment.

The last major change to the college was the construction of the Manning building in 1971. Over the past 10 years, the number of students at the college has doubled and the Manning has outgrown its ability to house the college's laboratory and research spaces.

Construction has now begun next to the Manning, on what was previously the college car park. The new building will accommodate biotechnology research and innovation and will greatly enhance the world-class standing of the college's research into drug discovery and delivery. It will also house the planned Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Mr Brumby said the Victorian Government was a key supporter of biomedical science and research, and the building works were a good 'fit' with its vision for Victoria as a leading science and research hub.

"The Institute will go a long way towards filling a gap in the 'value chain' between the discovery of targets for drug development and the successful development of new pharmaceutical products for the world market," said Professor Colin Chapman.

"It will be based on current research strengths in the college and will play an important role in translating drug discoveries made at Monash and elsewhere into effective medicines," he added.

The redevelopment will also include an upgrade of the Manning building, an extension of the C.L. Butchers library and the establishment of a new

simulated clinical practice teaching facility. It is also hoped that part of the redevelopment will include the opening of a pharmacy museum to house the Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) collection and other pharmacy archival materials not currently on display due to lack of space.

The building will be architecturally eye-catching and will also house a new café open to the public, as required by the City of Melbourne when granting the permit for construction.

The new building, the first phase of this major expansion, is due for completion in 2007.

## Plenary Group's gift to the college

Both construction of the college's new building and renovation of the Manning building are being undertaken by a new finance company called the Plenary Group.

The Group was established by experts in finance and public infrastructure as an independent specialist public-private partnership business. It aims to generate effective infrastructure solutions that create lasting benefits for governments, business and the community in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

As part of Plenary's commitment to ensuring the college has the best facilities and resources, the Group recently made a \$20,000 donation to the college's Foundation.

# NAPSA Congress 2007 bid success!

At the recent National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) AGM in Hobart, the Victorian Pharmacy Students' Association (VPSA) and the Bendigo Association of Pharmacy Students (BAPS) joined forces to make a successful bid for the rights to host the 2007 NAPSA Congress in Melbourne.

The event will attract over 400 pharmacy students from around Australia as well as new pharmacy student colleagues from the recent Asia-Pacific International conference held in Tokyo, Japan. The theme for the Congress is 'Pharmacy: Moving On'.

The Victorian bidding team put together a video to showcase Melbourne locations to incorporate into the proposed Congress program. This was complemented by an educational and social program, budget, sponsorship, full itinerary and nine supporting letters from Victorian pharmacy organisations.

The college and the college's Foundation supported VPSA's efforts with letters of support and administrative assistance. The Foundation also provided \$660 for the printing of booklets as part of the bidding package.

The VPSA has been very active in 2005, instigating a new series of events that included



networking nights with allied health students. The first event brought pharmacy students from the college together with medical, dental, nursing, optometry and physiotherapy students. It was a great opportunity for all to meet their future working colleagues, have some fun and begin to form networks.

**For further information about the VPSA visit [www.vpsa.org.au](http://www.vpsa.org.au)**

**I-r: Alana Meaklim (Education Officer), Jo McDowall (helper), Ewan Dowie (President BAPS), Mary Poon (Treasurer), Nader Mitri (Sponsorship Officer), John Nguyen (VPSA President and Chairperson Congress).**

# New Chair of Clinical Pharmacy: six month report

In March 2005 the college appointed Professor Michael Dooley as the Chair of Clinical Pharmacy. Along with his position at the college, Michael is also the new Director of Pharmacy of Bayside Health with responsibility for pharmacy services to The Alfred, Caulfield and Sandringham hospitals and the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre.



At Bayside Health, he oversees an annual expenditure of around \$50 million and is responsible for over 80 staff dispensing \$65,000 in medications each day. In his college role, Professor Dooley contributes to undergraduate teaching and the effective development of clinical practitioners, and is directly responsible for teaching, research and supervision of PhD students in this important and growing area of practice.

"The main advantage of my joint role is that it can link undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research with cutting edge practice in hospital pharmacy," Professor Dooley said.

Professor Dooley spent the first six months in his dual roles consolidating the various pharmacy areas at the three hospitals and establishing many new initiatives, both at the hospital and the college.

In his hospital role he manages three hospital pharmacy departments spread across the Network. The Alfred hospital pharmacy provides a wide range of specialised pharmacy requirements, with dispensing activities accounting for less than a quarter of the work. The Alfred is primarily a trauma hospital, but also has specialist cancer, burns, transplant and HIV services among others. This all requires specialist clinical pharmacy services.

Clinical pharmacy specialists also work on all the wards, including the Emergency and Trauma Centre, the Intensive Care Units and the Day Oncology Centre. Other innovative pharmacy services include the coordination of an adherence clinic for patients with HIV.

In early October, the clinical pharmacy services underwent a major change, with the majority of pharmacists allocated to clinical

units rather than specific wards. This resulted in opportunities for pharmacists to become much more integral to the medical units. A key aspect of this is routine participation on medical ward rounds and involvement in clinical education programs. Some wards now have up to four clinical pharmacists seeing patients and this is much more closely linked to the medical model of care, with clinical practitioners following patients rather than the location of the bed.

The ongoing development of these clinical pharmacy services has enabled the creation of a number of senior clinical specialist positions within the pharmacy department. Clinical pharmacists with extensive experience and expertise will be appointed to these new positions over the coming months, a reflection on the increasing sophistication of hospital pharmacy services and the growing contribution of pharmacists to patient care.

A range of existing activities within the pharmacy department include provision of a community outreach program for patients who take complex medications. Professor Dooley recently consolidated this program and appointed new practitioners to the area. The department has just been awarded a Department of Health Services (DHS) grant to expand the clinical services to include a pharmacist in the disease management unit, as a link between the patient and their GP, the specialist and community pharmacy.

"In the future, we plan to further strengthen the links between the outreach pharmacists and community practice for the patients with chronic diseases," Professor Dooley stated. "Another area of potential is the coordination of

pharmacy services to include pre-admission work for patients undergoing elective surgery and direct collaboration with their community pharmacists."

The pharmacy department has also introduced a new website called DrugNet. It gives further support and information for patients, providing guidelines for dosage and education about their medicines.

At the college Professor Dooley, together with other researchers from the Department of Pharmacy Practice, is focusing on the palliative care area to enhance the role of community pharmacists in improving medication management. This project was awarded a grant from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

An immediate advantage of Professor Dooley's dual role is the transfer of knowledge and skill between the hospital and the college. One example is the five college third year pharmacy students awarded vacation scholarships over the summer to undertake short research programs at The Alfred.

In addition, work is underway to further develop a research centre within the college to focus on medication safety and use. This research covers both community and hospital use of medicines. A number of projects are already well developed.

"I also hope to encourage clinical and community pharmacists to pursue their interests in research by undertaking part time Masters and PhDs," Professor Dooley added.

**For further information contact Professor Michael Dooley, email [M.Dooley@alfred.org.au](mailto:M.Dooley@alfred.org.au)**

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## Professor Barrie Finnin: Australia's first Chair of Formulation Science

Professor Finnin, formerly a senior lecturer in the college's Department of Pharmaceutics, leads an internationally-recognised transdermal drug delivery program. His appointment follows the creation earlier this year of the college's Chair of Formulation Science – the first in Australia and one of only a few worldwide.

Formulation science is about inventing new products and enhancing existing products. The Bachelor of Formulation Science, introduced in 2000, provides graduates with both a solid science education and the vocational skills for positions in product development. Students explore the science involved in formulation, product development and project management, and undertake practical experience placements. Graduates from the course quickly find employment in product development in the pharmaceutical, personal care, food, agricultural and consumer chemical industries.

A current strength of the Bachelor of Formulation Science is the inclusion of lectures from industry experts in areas such as agricultural formulations, cosmetic chemistry, paint chemistry, perfumes and colours, Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), clinical trials and drug approval.

In his new role, Professor Finnin will lead, organise, develop and manage formulation science activities within the college. His duties will include management of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, strategic research development, and the further development of linkages with the many industries that depend on formulation science.

One of Professor Finnin's first tasks will be to establish a Centre for Formulation Science with strong links to other parts of Monash and with other universities, research institutes and allied industries.

Professor Finnin graduated with a PhC from the college in 1967, followed by a BPharm in 1969 and a PhD from the University of Melbourne in 1980. His general research interests are in transdermal drug delivery, topical drug delivery, mucosal drug delivery and cosmeceuticals. His current research is in the localisation of drugs during penetration through the skin, the mechanism of action of transdermal penetration enhancers and drug uptake by the buccal mucosa.

Professor Finnin's teaching responsibilities have included biopharmaceutics, pharmaceutical microbiology, formulation chemistry and product development. His transdermal drug delivery research program led to the establishment of pharmaceutical company Acrux Limited, which listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2004.

Professor Finnin said he was looking forward to his new role.

"This provides an opportunity to develop an exciting new area of applied science with potential for impact on the international stage," he said.

His family has a strong affiliation with the college. Wife Karen graduated with a BPharm in 1974, followed by a Graduate Diploma in Hospital Pharmacy in 1983. She was the coordinator of the formulation science program for many years, before retiring at the end of 2005. Their son Ben graduated from the Bachelor of Formulation Science course earlier this year. He is currently undertaking his Honours in Formulation Science.

### Formulation focus

In August 2005, the formulation science program launched an e-newsletter aimed at keeping its industry partners, alumni and associated friends up to date with happenings in formulation science at the college.

The newsletter will be produced three times a year. The first issue covered research initiatives, industry placements, postgraduate news, course issues and the long hoped for announcement of the construction of the new building. The building will allow for the establishment of a formulation science precinct, which will house teaching, research and office space for staff associated with formulation science.

To subscribe to the newsletter contact [formulationscience@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:formulationscience@vcp.monash.edu.au)

# Volunteer for tsunami relief

College wound care expert Jan Rice spent several months earlier this year working with aid agencies and local people in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami.



Jan Rice in Banda Aceh.

Jan is manager of education and clinical services in the Wound Foundation of Australia, based at the college. She volunteered through AusAid to assist with the relief effort in Banda Aceh, arriving on 28 March to give nursing lectures to surgical ward staff. On 30 March an aftershock, centred on the small island of Nias, struck the already desolated area.

Jan was deployed to Nias the next night and stayed until 19 April to conduct reconnaissance trips to find victims and organise their medical evacuations. She also set up male and female surgical wards and a surgical outpatient clinic, helped supply those clinics and trained the staff.

"Nias was an amazing experience. Working with professional organisations like AusAid, SurfAid International and International SOS was a privilege. The work was demanding, the conditions sometimes extreme but the people we helped and worked with were extraordinary," Jan said.

"Our team of three treated over 80 people in five hours, providing dressings, splinting and antibiotics. From the first day of work we evacuated 11 patients to a facility set up to

manage and care for complex issues. We were a very mobile unit and so needed to move the complex injured on to those set up to receive and hold the victims," she explained.

During her stay, Jan was frustrated by the uncoordinated and often inappropriate international emergency relief efforts in relation to donated medical supplies.

"Aid groups were doing everything they could and really working hard but were hampered by the thousands of boxes of donated medical supplies that were unusable because they were out-of-date or couldn't be stored at the correct temperature," she said.

"The world responded in a way never seen before to these two disasters. It seemed every single person or organisation had gone to some trouble to pack up what they considered spare. This was a wonderful response, but there was no central agency organising these donations and months later the people of these areas are still trying to sort through the goods. Much of the donations will end up as landfill because they were damaged, out-of-date or unsuitable," she said.

Jan urges those who are donating goods to think carefully about what they are sending and to contact an aid organisation working in the area to ascertain what is actually required.

Jan's trip to Indonesia was not her first volunteer experience. She is a member of the Surgical Committee of Interplast Australia, a non-profit humanitarian organisation founded by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and Rotary International, which provides voluntary medical teams to undertake programs of plastic and reconstructive surgery in neighbouring developing countries.

As part of her work with Interplast she is currently caring for a young boy from Bangladesh, Joyanta, who was the victim of a bear attack. Flown to Melbourne to undergo surgery, he is staying with Jan and her family (and other volunteer families) until Christmas, when his surgery is completed and he is well enough to return home.

Jan has also recently co-authored (with Jill Storch) a book entitled *Reconstructive Plastic Surgical Nursing*.



## Prestigious industry post for Dr Craig Rayner

**Dr Craig Rayner departed for London at the end of August to commence a new role as a Clinical Pharmacologist in Global Pharma Development with international pharmaceutical company Roche.**

Dr Rayner graduated with a BPharm in 1995, followed by a Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science (Honours) in 1997. He obtained a Graduate Certificate in Education from Monash in 2003 and later travelled to the USA to complete his PhD.

Dr Rayner was a senior lecturer in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and was also the director of the college's newly established Facility for Anti-Infective Drug Development and Innovation (FADDI).

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the past five years at the college and I would like to thank all of my colleagues, mentors and students for making this time such a professionally and personally rewarding experience," said Dr Rayner. "I would like to especially thank my friends and colleagues within the Department of Pharmacy Practice."

We thank Dr Rayner for his contribution to the college, and wish him, his wife Michelle and cat Austin best of luck with the move!





## Pharmacy Careers Expo 2005

The Second Pharmacy Careers Expo, held on 3 May, attracted over 600 pharmacy students from the college interested in finding out more about their career options. Over 20 exhibitors attended the event to speak to students about opportunities in a variety of sectors, including hospital, community, defence and industrial pharmacy.

Exhibitors at this year's Expo included: Amcal, Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia (APESMA), Association of Regulatory and Clinical Scientists (ARCS), Defence Force Recruiting, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK),

Healthwise, Mayne, National Pharmacies FSMA, Pharmore, Quality Pharmacy Services, Raven's Pharmacy Services, Slade Pharmacy Services, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (Victorian branch), the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch), the Pharmacy Board of Victoria and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists (Victorian branch).

**For information about exhibiting at the 2006 Pharmacy Careers Expo contact Louise Gray, tel: 613 9903 9504 or email [louise.gray@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:louise.gray@vcp.monash.edu.au)**

## Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice

The college's pre-registration course assists pharmacy graduates to make the transition from student to independent, competent professional. Graduates of the pre-registration course are halfway towards earning a postgraduate qualification – a Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice.

This can be obtained by completing additional elective units, which add further knowledge and skills in a range of pharmacy practice-related areas and provide a great opportunity for ongoing professional development.

The Graduate Certificate can also provide long-term benefits such as enhanced career opportunities and higher salary. For example, in public hospitals, graduates are entitled to a higher qualification allowance.

The elective units can be completed during the pre-registration year or they may be deferred until after registration. Units can be taken in geriatrics, dermatology, wound care, business and economics, evidence based practice, people management and risk management.

"I would recommend the electives I have undertaken, particularly the Australian Healthcare and the Pharmaceutical Environment, as it teaches you about the many influences surrounding healthcare and pharmacy today," said Marijana Putnikovic, who was a pre-registrant in 2004.

"I believe we should all have a working knowledge of the issues covered in this unit and the Graduate Certificate is the most convenient way to do it. The opportunity certainly isn't common."

The college offers a range of quality postgraduate coursework degrees designed to give pharmacists a professional edge. An information session, held in September in Cossar Hall, allowed prospective postgraduate students to speak directly with course directors about studies in wound care, pharmacy management, clinical pharmacy and pharmacy practice.

**For further information about postgraduate study visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/courses](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/courses)**

**Pre-registration Course**  
(Applied Pharmacy Practice 1 & 2)  
12 credit points

+

**Elective Units**  
12 credit points

=

**Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice**



Marijana Putnikovic, pre-registrant 2004.

## Interested in Evidence Based Practice?

There is growing interest in this area of practice, which is based on careful and conscious use of current best evidence to guide decisions made in patient care.

A unit in Evidence Based Practice is currently offered at the college as part of the Master of Clinical Pharmacy and also as an elective in the Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice and the Master of Wound Care.

The unit provides students with theoretical information on evidence based practice as well as the skills to incorporate evidence based

medicine into their clinical practice. Topics include formulation of clinical questions, searching the literature for best evidence, evaluating the evidence and applying the evidence in patient care. The unit is offered via WebCT (a web based platform).

From 2006, the college will be making this unit available as a stand-alone subject.

**For further information contact Kirstie Galbraith, email [kirstie.galbraith@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:kirstie.galbraith@vcp.monash.edu.au) or visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/courses/clinicalpharmacy](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/courses/clinicalpharmacy)**





Cardiff University.

## Best practice microbiology teaching in Wales

Keri Jones, assistant lecturer in the Department of Pharmaceutics, recently spent two months in Cardiff assisting the Welsh School of Pharmacy to assess its teaching of microbiology.

Leaving Australia in late April on the invitation of Professor Stephen Denyer, Head of School, Keri worked in Cardiff until the end of June. Cardiff's MPharm program was re-accredited in April 2005. Keri joined Professor Denyer and Dr Jean-Yves Maillard post-accreditation to re-examine some aspects of microbiology teaching at the Welsh School, survey examples of good practice in these areas and create changes in the syllabus.

A document containing a suggested framework for an integrated microbiology curriculum was prepared. Where available, the microbiological course structures from other schools of pharmacy were considered when compiling this report.

Consideration was also given to the indicative syllabus for UK pharmacy degree courses and academic standards for pharmacy.

The report will serve as a basis for discussion for curriculum review and possible restructuring at the Welsh School. Keri's continued involvement is sought as Cardiff staff move towards a review of the MPharm course and possible implementation of the recommendations contained in Keri's report. In addition, maintaining contact will provide insight into current educational trends in UK schools of pharmacy, and the role and influence of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in the development of course materials for pharmacy students.

"I relished the opportunity to work on a curriculum development project and benefited from the experience," said Keri. "However, I did miss the students back at the college."



University of Indonesia conference delegates.

## Pharmacy practice in Indonesia

Rohan Elliott (1991), course director of the college's pre-registration programs and Graeme Vernon (1974), Drug Information Pharmacist at Austin Health and a senior associate in the Department of Pharmacy Practice, were recently invited to participate in a seminar at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta.

This was a part of celebrations for the School of Pharmacy's 40th anniversary. The seminar was entitled 'Pharmaceutical Care and Pharmacy Education in the 21st Century - A Global Perspective' and dealt with the issues of how to implement pharmacy practice in pharmacy curricula, as well as how to put it into practice in community and hospital pharmacies.

As in many developing nations, pharmacy practice in Indonesia is poorly developed. Even basic services that we take for granted in Australia, such as patient counselling, are uncommon. There are many problems associated with the way drugs are prescribed and used. Therefore, there is a great potential and an urgent need for clinical pharmacy services and independent sources of drug information.

Following the seminar in Jakarta, Rohan and Graeme visited Dr Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital, Indonesia's largest teaching and referral hospital, where they spent time in the pharmacy department and the geriatric and paediatric units.

They also contributed to a workshop on clinical pharmacy and drug information prior to the Indonesian Pharmaceutical Society's Congress in Bali.

This was Graeme's eighth visit to Indonesia and Rohan's second. Graeme has been visiting since 1999, when he helped to establish a drug information service at Dr Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital. Since then he has provided drug information support to the pharmacists at Cipto Hospital through Austin Health Drug Information. Rohan visited for the first time in 2002 and contributed to clinical pharmacy workshops for pharmacists and students.

"There are many challenges facing pharmacists in Indonesia as they strive to develop the practice of pharmacy and improve the way drugs are used," said Rohan. "Despite the many barriers that need to be overcome, there is a high level of enthusiasm among the pharmacists and pharmacy students and it was very rewarding to be able to assist them in some small way."



College WILDFIRE members Luke Prust, Josie Ibrahim, Viliria Mikhael and Andrea Yates.

## WILDFIRE supporting rural students

'WILDFIRE' stands for Working in Leading Development for Indigenous and Rural Education. The group encourages and supports rural students studying health courses across Monash campuses, and urban students who have an interest in rural health and rural practice.

WILDFIRE began in 1993 and offers its members a variety of career and social opportunities, including educational lectures, clinical skills days, dinners with informative guest speakers, social events and chances to attend rural health conferences.

Membership initially comprised pre-clinical medical students at Monash and has grown to include medical, pharmacy, psychology and nursing students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The club is very active at the college.

"I joined the club because I was very interested in rural health and wanted to meet and network with others at the college and Monash with similar interests," said member Josie Ibrahim. "I've especially enjoyed learning more about the role of pharmacists in the area of indigenous health and

going to events such as the Matthew Campbell memorial service – an informative evening about remote and indigenous health issues held by WILDFIRE at Monash's Clayton campus."

WILDFIRE was founded, and continues to be supported, by the Monash University School of Rural Health.

**For further information about WILDFIRE visit [www.med.monash.edu.au/wildfire](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/wildfire)**

## Regional pharmacy workshop in Ballarat

A group of 30 college alumni, preceptors and pharmacists working in the Ballarat area braved a cold, wintry night to meet with college staff and students to discuss the challenges facing rural pharmacists and to assess and strengthen the college's rural focus.

Held in style at Neider Wiesel on 10 August, Ballarat put on one of the coldest nights of the year for the event, with a winter show of white treetops and snow on the ground.

The workshop was hosted by Professor Roger Nation, head of the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Katrina Fitzsimon, who coordinates the Rural Advanced Practical Experience (APE) program in the Bachelor of Pharmacy.

Professor Nation spoke at the event about the college's achievements in pharmacy training and in particular the ways that the college is supporting rural pharmacists. He outlined the college's Rural Entry Scheme, which encourages students from rural areas to enter the Bachelor of Pharmacy course. He also advised the gathering about the Bachelor of Pharmacy Rural Scholarship, which assists and encourages applicants from rural areas into the pharmacy course.

"I am especially proud of the college's compulsory APE program. Through this program, and other aspects of the rural curriculum introduced to the college's Bachelor of Pharmacy, all our pharmacy students gain an appreciation of the health care issues confronting people who live in rural regions – and also come to realise the benefits of rural pharmacy practice and lifestyle," Professor Nation stated.

"Even for those graduates who choose not to work in rural Australia, it is important that they have an understanding of the important role of the pharmacist in the towns outside the large cities," he added. "The college is very grateful to the preceptor pharmacists in rural Victoria who provide this wonderful experience to our pharmacy students."

Four students who were currently doing their rural placement in Ballarat attended the meeting to give first-hand accounts of their experiences. One student, Ester Koh, spoke about the generosity of her preceptors and the varied experience she had gained that included visits to an aboriginal health centre, other health care professionals, a pharmacy depot and a farm.



Professor Roger Nation with Graham Flett and Murray Stevens.

Elizabeth McBrearty, from Wendouree near Ballarat, a first year student and current recipient of the Pharmacy Rural Scholarship, also attended and spoke about the scholarship and how winning it has assisted in her studies.

Katrina spoke about the APE program in detail and the growing list of preceptors across Victoria who are willing to take on college students.

**For further information about the college's rural programs or to become a preceptor in the placement program contact Katrina Fitzsimon, tel: 613 9903 9043 or email [pep@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:pep@vcp.monash.edu.au)**



# ARC linkage grants

Reinforcing its strong record of attracting prestigious industry and government research support, the college received three Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grants in the latest funding round.

ARC grants foster excellence, partnerships and the highest ethical standards in research and research training in all fields of science, social sciences and the humanities. ARC Linkage grants are designed to build links between research centres in Australia and overseas by funding collaborations.

Professor Peter Scammells, head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry, and Dr Chinh Thien Bui from partnering organisation Iliad Chemicals, received a grant of \$225,000 over three years for a project entitled 'Development of a diversity-oriented synthesis platform'.

Genomic, proteomic and other studies of the molecular basis of disease are providing a constant stream of biomolecular targets for drug discovery. Identifying suitable drug candidates to affect these targets centres on procuring a suitable library of compounds for screening. This application addresses some of the key issues related to the development of appropriate compound libraries for such screening programs.

Dr Ossama El-Kabbani, a senior lecturer in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry, in collaboration

with Sanwa Kagaku Kenkyusho Co. Ltd, received a grant of \$80,000 over three years to investigate the 'Structure-based discovery of dipeptidyl peptidase IV inhibitors'.

Diabetes afflicts approximately 151 million people worldwide, with an estimated increase to 221 million by 2010. To date, no therapy for the treatment of diabetes complications is widely accepted. The enzyme dipeptidyl peptidase IV has shown promising results as a target for the treatment of type 2 diabetes. Structural studies of dipeptidyl peptidase IV in complex with inhibitor will be conducted to elucidate the details of the enzyme-inhibitor interaction. The results will be used to identify the molecular basis of potency and selectivity of dipeptidyl peptidase IV inhibitors and may lead to the discovery of pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of diabetes sufferers.

Dr Kay Stewart, a senior lecturer in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and dean, Professor Colin Chapman, along with academics from La Trobe University and partner organisations Schering Pharmaceuticals and Sexual Health and Family Planning of Australia, received \$120,000 over four



Professor Peter Scammells.



Dr Kay Stewart.



Professor Colin Chapman.



Dr Ossama El-Kabbani.

years for their project, 'A study of the provision of the emergency contraceptive pill over-the-counter in Australia'.

Australian abortion rates, especially among young women, are a major concern. The emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) is an effective method for the prevention of unwanted and unplanned pregnancy, with the potential to reduce abortions. The study aims to produce evidence of whether the rescheduling of ECP in Australia, so that pharmacists as well as doctors can provide it, has improved its accessibility and use by women at risk of abortion. It will also assess

whether pharmacists feel confident, well-trained and supported to provide it and whether abortion rates have reduced. The study will provide policymakers with the evidence to assess whether this important initiative is effective and what is needed to improve its effectiveness.

Kay Stewart has recently been invited to serve on the Editorial Board of the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, the official publication of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy.

## ARC Centre of Excellence: Centre of Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology

College researchers have joined with other partners from industry and Australian universities to form a new ARC Centre of Excellence.

The Centre of Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology comprises 12 university investigators (from the University of Melbourne, ANU, the University of Sydney, Monash and QUT) and five partner investigators (from the CSIRO, Bluescope Steel, CUB, Orica and the Howard Florey).

The Monash investigators are Professor Peter Scammells, head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry, and Professor Roy Jackson from the School of Chemistry in Monash's faculty of Science. The Centre was awarded \$12 million in funding from the ARC and will receive up to \$4.3 million in matching funds from the institutions involved.

"This will result in the appointment of research staff and students at the college who will be working on the design, synthesis and evaluation of new cardio and neuroprotective agents, the development of new antioxidants and the study of radical reactions relevant to pharmaceutical synthesis," stated Professor Scammells.



## Pfizer grant for research into anti-diabetes drugs

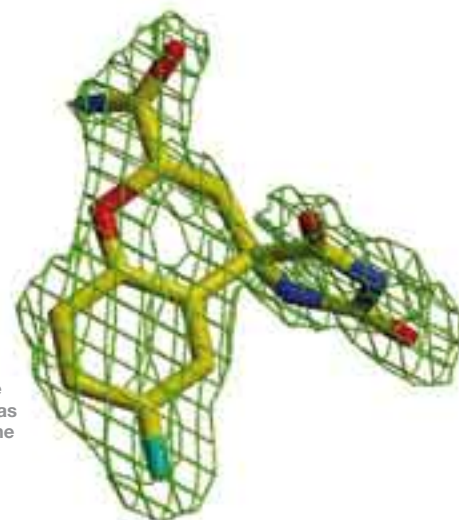
Dr Ossama El-Kabbani, a senior lecturer in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry, has been awarded a US\$10,000 Pfizer grant.

The funds will be used to study the sensitivity of sugar metabolising enzymes towards Pfizer anti-diabetes drugs.

Dr El-Kabbani and his team have been investigating different aspects of the treatment of diabetes for many years. Parts of their work have involved the use of synchrotrons

in the USA and Europe, where they determined the structure of a diabetes enzyme-drug complex at one of the highest resolutions ever known for an enzyme of its size in complex with a drug.

"We hope the results may lead to the design of better inhibitors of the enzyme for the treatment of diabetes sufferers, at least until better methods for maintaining metabolic control are developed," Dr El-Kabbani said.



The high resolution data (shown in green) obtained at the Swiss Light Source from crystals of the enzyme complexed with the drug was used to accurately determine the orientation of the drug molecule (shown in yellow) in the binding site of the enzyme.

## Research into pressure ulcers wins MJA/Wyeth prize

The MJA/Wyeth prize is awarded for the best clinical research published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, as judged by independent experts.

The tenth MJA/Wyeth Prize was awarded to Associate Professor Damien Jolley and his co-investigators, who included Robyn Wright, the college's course director of postgraduate studies in wound care in the Department of Pharmacy Practice. Dr Michael Lee, Medical Director of Wyeth Australia, awarded the prize at the 2005 Australian Medical Association conference in Darwin.

The prize-winning research addressed the prevention of a common but unglamorous condition – the pressure ulcer. In a head-to-head randomised trial that compared the efficacy of Australian sheepskin versus usual treatment to prevent pressure ulcers, patients resting on medical sheepskin developed new pressure ulcers at less than half the rate of those undergoing standard treatment.

**For further information about the research contact Robyn Wright, email [robyn.wright@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:robyn.wright@vcp.monash.edu.au)**



l-r Mark Hickey, Robyn Wright, Ken Montgomery, Rodney Sinclair, Don Campbell and Damien Jolley.

## Pharmacists win Clinical Pharmacy Research Grant

Congratulations to Dr David Kong (1990), lecturer in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and senior pharmacist at The Alfred.

Together with Peter Stuchbery (1973), Director of Pharmacy at Northern Health and Giovanna De Santis, Director of Pharmacy at Western Health, he was recently awarded a \$20,000 Bristol Myers Squibb Clinical Pharmacy Research grant from the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

The title of the project is 'Identifying the activities and time commitments of clinical pharmacists according to patients' diagnosis related group classification'.

The project aims to classify by diagnosis related group classification the activities performed by clinical pharmacists on behalf of their patients. It will help identify those patients with both high and low pharmacy service needs; potential applications of the resultant

diagnosis related groups (DRG) weights include staffing allocations; and workforce planning. Further standardisation of clinical activities according to agreed practice standards has the potential to provide a more accurate estimate of the funding levels necessary to provide clinical pharmacy services.



## Third Pharmacy Education Symposium in Prato, Italy

Forty-seven delegates from eight countries attended the Third Pharmacy Education Symposium in July in Prato, Italy, to investigate the theme 'Exploring Issues Relating to Assessment'.

Organised by staff from the Department of Pharmacy Practice and chaired by Dr Jennifer Marriott, a senior lecturer from the department, the symposium was this year hosted in conjunction with King's College London. This arrangement helped to increase the profile of the symposium and to identify both institutions as innovative leaders in pharmacy education.

The symposium provided a collegial forum for the consideration and sharing of issues related to education in pharmacy. Past symposia have explored 'Experiential Teaching and Learning in Pharmacy' and 'Innovations in Teaching and Learning', with outcomes and resources being freely available after the events.

College lecturer Greg Duncan commenced proceedings by throwing down the gauntlet to all attendees to consider the problems of assessment and explore solutions. The problems included growing numbers of students and the increasing complexity of courses, combined with the pressure of new technologies. Daily themes included 'Assessment in the Traditional Environment', 'Assessment in the Practice Environment' and 'Assessment in the Virtual Environment'.

Plenary sessions were delivered by experts such as Professor Tom Zlatich (St Louis) on 'Assessment of Active Learning', Dr Paul Rutter (Portsmouth) 'Making the Best Use of OSCEs', Associate Professor Janie Sheridan (Auckland) 'Dealing with Plagiarism or Cheating', Ann Lewis (RPSGB) 'Competence Assessment', Professor Claire Anderson (Nottingham) 'Assessment in a Practice Environment' and Dr Laurie Lomas (London) 'Constructive Alignment of Assessment'.

One of the highlights of the symposium was the dinner held at Ristorante Biagio at Artimino, in the hills a half-hour from Prato. A great meal in pleasant surroundings was made very special by a magnificent view of the entire valley, from Prato to Florence.

"There is no equivalent forum for academic discourse on issues relating to pharmacy education and the symposium answers an urgent need," said Dr Marriott.

"The ability to conduct the symposium at the Monash Centre in Prato makes it accessible to a large number of academics from northern hemisphere institutions, broadening its scope and increasing the likelihood of attracting a larger number of participants," she added.



The organisers would like to thank Monash for the contribution of \$5000 toward the conduct of this successful education symposium.

**For further information about the symposium series, or to access outcomes and resources from all three events, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/practice/symposia/](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/practice/symposia/)**



Pharmacy graduate James Nevile (2004).

## Healthy career outlook for pharmacy graduates

Newly-registered Australian pharmacists are well paid, fully employed professionals and most are keen to work in rural areas, a recent survey has found.

It found pharmacists' wages almost doubled 12 months after they graduated, rising from an average \$30,000 in their pre-registration year to \$58,000 the following year.

The survey respondents also had a very high employment rate, with just over 92% in full time work and just over 52% planning to work in rural areas.

The Pharmacy Post-Registration Survey for 2005 was conducted by Graduate Careers Australia for the Committee of Heads of Pharmacy Schools in Australia and New Zealand.

Dean of the college Professor Colin Chapman, who chairs the committee, said the results provided the first true picture of young pharmacists' incomes and employment prospects.

"Until now, Graduate Careers Australia has reported the results of its annual Graduate Destination Survey, which is conducted in the

year after students completed their studies at Australian universities," he said.

"Because pharmacists must undertake a pre-registration year after completing university studies, their salaries and employment circumstances are substantially different from that year to the next.

"This new survey looks at newly-registered pharmacists in their first real year in the workforce and it shows that all aspects of their career prospects are healthy," Professor Chapman added.

"It is particularly encouraging to note that earnings for graduate pharmacists are competitive with all other professions and that survey respondents are keen to work in rural areas, where there are severe shortages of pharmacists."

**To download a copy of the full report visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/news/gca-survey.html](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/news/gca-survey.html)**



# Alumni profile: Elizabeth Grant

Elizabeth graduated in 1951 at the age of 21 following apprenticeship to her father, Leslie Blair Allen, who graduated from the college in 1925 and had been a well-known pharmacist in Mornington, later practising in Melbourne.

She became very involved in the development of the profession like her father, who had been president of the RSL Chemists Sub-Branch and was involved in the dedication of the college as a war memorial building.

Elizabeth studied with many ex-servicemen after the war. She found herself in a minority of 'just-out-of-school' pharmacy students.

"However, I felt lucky to study pharmacy, as there were very few places available to women due to the many returning servicemen and women who took priority in the course," said Elizabeth.

A keen distance freestyle competitor, Elizabeth represented Victoria at the Australian Swimming Championships and the Australian Indoor Lifesaving Championships. She was able to keep up her interest in the sport due to her father's support. "He gave me time off to swim, that's how I managed to keep up my swimming interests while I studied," she noted.

Elizabeth opened her own pharmacy in Briar Hill near Greensborough in 1958 and later served the Gippsland community as a private and hospital pharmacist. She married Howard Grant, an engineer. The couple has two children – Allen and Sue – and four grandchildren.

The early years of their marriage involved a lot of travel due to Howard's work and they decided to sell the Briar Hill pharmacy in 1963. They first moved to Mt Gambier and then to Traralgon. Mt Gambier was where Elizabeth first became involved in a wide range of community groups and interests. "I joined everything!" she added with a laugh.

The Grants moved to Canberra in 1971, where Elizabeth continued as a locum pharmacist. She became involved with the shaping of medical research policy following her appointment as 'Eminent Laywoman' representative on the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in 1982 and served in this position until 1986. She also served on a range of NHMRC Committees including the Medical Research Ethics Committee 1982–91 and the Medical Research Committee 1982–present (now the Research Committee), and was Chair of the NHMRC Special Purposes Committee, Dental Standing Committee 1990–91. She has

been closely involved in the development of the Australian Code of Practice for the use of animals in research and teaching and is currently chair of the NHMRC Animal Welfare Committee, of which she has been a member since 1985.

She is a member of the Australian Defence Force Human Research Ethics Committee and the ACT Department of Health and Community Care Human Research Ethics Committee, of which she was appointed chairman in 1997.

Her breadth of knowledge and commitment has benefited many community enterprises over the past 25 years in sports, the arts and community service. These include the ACT Arts Development Board, ACT Parole Board, National Exhibition Centre Trust, YMCA Board of Directors, ACT Festivals Inc, ACT Centenary of Federation Committee, ACT Olympic Fundraising Committee, and the ACT Women's Consultative Council.

Elizabeth has always been generous with her expertise, acting as a business mentor. She is a past president of the ACT Division of Business and Professional Women. In addition, she represented her local community as an elected Member of the ACT House of Assembly 1979–82.

Still very active in business, she is a director of an information business, Commerce Management, and is a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, having maintained her passion for politics.

Elizabeth is also a life member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch) and was appointed a Member in the Order of Australia in 1987.

In 2005, she received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Monash for her work with research ethics in humans and animals and she delivered the Occasional Address at the May college graduation ceremony.

Although it has been some years since she practised as a pharmacist, she believes her work in the profession gave her a great grounding in the health sciences and knowledge of community needs, so important for her later work.

"Pharmacy is a way of life. Because of the hours, it really is part of your existence," said Elizabeth. "It is so highly regarded. It involves you in the community in a great way. I loved it."



"I felt lucky to study pharmacy, as there were very few places available to women due to the many returning servicemen and women who took priority in the course."

## T-Bags help students clean-up

College entrants in this year's Young Achievement Australia (YAA) Tertiary Business Skills program are set to market an innovative product and at the same time contribute to the environment.

Previous college teams have all won state and national awards against fierce competition. In the process, they have enjoyed business success and gained management and leadership skills.

This year's entrants have formed a team called Desiyah, consisting of 16 Monash students from a range of disciplines. Desiyah is proudly sponsored by Sigma, who is supporting the pharmacy team for the third consecutive year.

Desiyah's innovative product is the T-Bag – a towel that turns into a waterproof bag for children's aquatic activities. The concept for the product came from brainstorming different ideas.

"It was really difficult at first," said Marketing Director Julianne Heng. "But then we all started talking about our past experiences and how it was really frustrating to keep plastic bags to store wet towels."

The T-Bag allows children to be responsible for their own swim gear. It is easy to use and children only need to remember to bring home one item.



I-r: Mun Yee, Laura Mulligan (Environmental Director, pharmacy student), Sharlina Lingam (Sales Manager, pharmacy student), Julianne Heng (Marketing Director) and Diana Tang (Finance Director).

The bag also features a clear vinyl pocket so it can be personalised by inserting a name card.

To support the product, Desiyah is organising a clean up day. For each bag sold, the company will dedicate 10 minutes to picking up rubbish at a designated public area.

The T-Bag will be available in a store in the Victoria Market, thanks to sponsorship by the Italian House of Leather. Visit [www.desiyah.com.au](http://www.desiyah.com.au) to purchase the T-Bag online, or for information about other distribution outlets.

## Mathew Peck Travelling Scholarship trivia night

The 'Drink to a Dream' night – to raise funds for the scholarship to honour Mathew's life – is in its third year, raising \$6690 in 2005.

The recent fundraiser was a trivia night held on 20 May at the Clyde Hotel. Over 170 people, including students, staff, friends of Mathew and his family, gathered to ensure the future of the scholarship, which continues Mathew's ideals and commitment to international health issues. Mathew's family would like to thank Jason, Dhineli and the team of helpers who organised the night.

This year's winner of the scholarship is fourth year pharmacy student Jana Dostal. Issue 10 of *Alchemy* in May 2006 will have an update on her experience over the coming summer of working on a health program in a developing nation.

To find out more about the scholarship, the next 'Drink to a Dream' fundraiser and how to make a donation visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/students/mpeckscholar](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/students/mpeckscholar)



## Pharmacy students travel to Tokyo and Germany

Eleven pharmacy students, from across all year levels, travelled to Tokyo in July to attend the fourth Asia-Pacific Pharmaceutical Symposium (APPS). This was the first time that Australia attended the APPS.

The theme of the symposium was 'Public Health', with a particular emphasis on infectious diseases. This was supported by lectures and workshops on subjects including lifestyle diseases, medicines handbook, poliomyelitis and the separation of dispensary and prescribing.

Verna Wan, a third year student and VPSPA secretary 2005, received a grant from the SHPA to attend the symposium.

"I was very fortunate to have been awarded a grant from the SHPA to attend, and relished the opportunity to meet and learn from other pharmacy students from different countries, especially our neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region," said Verna.

The VPSPA's International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF) local exchange officer, Sharlina Lingam, also from third year, found the workshop on AIDS particularly eye opening.

"I was interested in gaining an appreciation of its management in various countries. I knew that there was little education about AIDS in many

Asian countries, but I was surprised to hear that even in major universities and schools in the heart of their capital cities it is still a 'taboo' subject," said Sharlina.

"I was reminded how fortunate we are to have this information readily taught to us and available to the public, plus the support groups that exist not just for AIDS but for many disease states," she added.

A poster exhibition on infectious diseases was held, involving presentations from each country. Verna and Sharlina collaborated with five other college students to produce a poster (with the assistance and guidance of Dr David Kong) that discussed Australia's response and efforts in controlling HIV/AIDS and STDs, such as harm reduction programs.

The symposium wasn't all hard work. Many new friendships were made with pharmacy students from around Australia and the world including Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, Slovenia, France, China and Nepal.

Particularly memorable was the International Night, at which each country organised a performance unique to their nation.

"We decided to promote our multicultural society, and brought outfits from India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and China," said John Nguyen, retiring president of the VPSPA.

While at APPS, John ran for an elected position on the Asia-Pacific committee and was successful in his bid, becoming Secretary General for the IPSF Asia-Pacific Regional Office. John also attended the 51st International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation Annual Congress in August in Bonn, Germany.

John's travels were partly sponsored by the college, in his role as president.

"I am most grateful to the college for making this experience possible. It was very inspirational to meet with enthusiastic students from across the world," he said.

## Michael Nunan wins PSA (Victorian branch) Student of the Year

Fourth year pharmacy student Michael Nunan was recently announced Victorian state finalist in the second annual Pharmacy Student of the Year award held by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch).

The competition has counselling as its focus and all final year pharmacy students in Australia are eligible for the award. The process of identifying the national winner has two stages. In the first stage, each Pharmaceutical Society of Australia branch operates a contest to identify its state finalist.

The second stage is the National Counselling Event, held at the 2005 Pharmacy Australia Congress (PAC) in October in Melbourne. This involves all six finalists demonstrating their counselling skills in front of a panel of judges. The winner will be announced at the conclusion of a major plenary session on 31 October 2005.

The award is sponsored by Alphapharm. As well as the prestige of being named as a state

finalist, each finalist also receives the Alphapharm State Travel Prize of travel, accommodation and registration to PAC2005.

The national winner will receive the Alphapharm National Travel Prize of a travel voucher plus travel, accommodation and registration to the 2006 IPSF conference to be held in Cairns, Queensland.

"I am very proud to have won. Much of the credit goes to all the teaching staff at the college and the pharmacists who have been my preceptors on my student placements," said Michael. "I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic staff at the Heathmont Pharmacy, where I have worked for five years and from whom I have learnt a lot."

Good luck, Michael!



Michael Nunan with Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch) staff Bill Horsfall (1960), CPE Coordinator (left), and Jane Mitchell, Pre-Registration Coordinator (right), and Nicholas Reilly, Coordinator and Home Medicine Review (HMR) Facilitator with the National Prescribing Service (NPS).

## Remedy update

Student group Remedy was formed in 2003 with the aim of sharing resources with pharmacy institutions of underdeveloped countries and to educate the college community on health and pharmacy practice issues in underprivileged areas.

Remedy's activities include events to raise money, share information and encourage involvement in their goals. They actively support the Drug Information Centre of Annamalai University in India and also sponsor a child in Ecuador.

Late in 2004, the group began developing a relationship with the Department of Pharmaceutical Services on the island nation of Kiribati. Remedy regularly sends pharmacy text books and health reference guides to both the university and Kiribati.

In August 2005 they held their first International Health Information Night called 'Beyond Our Borders'. The evening featured guest speakers who shared their experiences of working in underdeveloped, resource-poor settings.

Speakers included Chad Hughes, who spoke about his work on an HIV program development in Nepal; Jane Goller, a Medecins Sans Frontieres nurse in Dafur, Sudan; and college graduate Jonathan Dartnell (1983), who spoke about pharmacy program training in Belize, South America.

In September 2005 they held their second 'Reality Bites! Remedy's Real World Dinner'. The annual event has a twist in that diners, who all pay the same price, either dine on a feast or sit on the floor with a bowl of food donated by more privileged guests – to highlight the inconsistency and pure chance of poverty versus wealth in the world.

Reality Bites co-organisers, fourth year pharmacy students Jana Dostal and Dhineli Perera, said all diners came prepared for a third world experience.

"We randomly allocated the type of meal served to each person to emphasise the fact that, for the less privileged of the world, reality does bite – every day," said Jana.

This year's dinner had a tribal island theme and the entertainment included a performance of a student-choreographed Polynesian dance. Guest speakers included Sarah Andersson who spoke about her time working in the Northern Territory and college graduate Andrew Harding (1993) who was a volunteer pharmacist in the Marshall Islands



through Australian Volunteers International. The 2004 Young Australian of the Year, Hugh Evans, Founder of the Oaktree Foundation, also spoke.

This year's event raised \$3000, which will support the Department of Pharmaceutical Services in Kiribati, specifically to enable weekend conferences to be held for doctors and nurses to meet and put together national treatment guidelines that will be used on the outer islands as well as in the hospitals.

In 2005, Jana and Dhineli handed over the reins to new leaders Sharlina Lingam and Madelaine Nguyen, both currently in third year pharmacy.

Jana, Dhineli and all the students involved in Remedy have done a great job in getting the group started and we are sure that Sharlina and Madelaine will continue its good work.

**For further information about Remedy, or to receive Remedy's email newsletter, email [vcp\\_remedy@hotmail.com](mailto:vcp_remedy@hotmail.com)**



# Queen's Birthday Honours

College alumni often feature in the Queen's Birthday and Australia Day Honours lists. Last June, three graduates were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for their contributions to pharmacy, health, aged care, the arts, heritage, sport and their local communities. The awards are well deserved public recognition of their many activities, achievements and years of service.



**Neil F. Werner OAM (1956)** Shepparton

*Service to performing arts through Australian National Piano Award; health, aged care and welfare groups.*

Neil moved to Boort with his wife Erna after his studies and lived there for seven years, before moving to Shepparton in 1964. There he set up a pharmacy from scratch and was in practice for 35 years, retiring in 1999. While in Boort he was on the board of the hospital and when he moved to Shepparton he was quickly invited to join the board of the Goulburn Valley Hospital on which he served for many years, with two terms as President. He was on the committees that established the Valley Drug and Alcohol Services and the Personal Emergency Telephone Counselling service, which was later taken over by Lifeline. Since 2000 he has served on the Shepparton Retirement Village Board, which oversees the care of 600 local aged people.

Neil has a passion for the arts and was instrumental in establishing the Australian National Piano Award, which grew out of a local initiative – the Shepparton Piano Award. The Award attracted such a wealth of talented young people from around Australia that it has grown into the pre-eminent award for Australian pianists. Neil also represented the Goulburn Valley on the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (Victorian branch) Board for several years.

"It was a great honour and surprise, I was delighted," said Neil. "But half of the award should go to my wife Erna. It has been a team effort over the years!"



**Irvine Newton OAM (1969)** South Yarra

*Service to the pharmacy profession and to the community, particularly through promoting harm minimisation programs.*

Irvine has put in years of service on the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch) and has been Chair of that organisation's Harm Minimisation Committee and Practice Committee. He devoted much of his professional career to the important area of harm minimisation, including implementing pharmacy services for illicit drug users. Instrumental in creating a culture of change within pharmacy and the wider community, he unstintingly worked to eliminate prejudice towards drug users. He was spokesman of the National Pharmacy Illicit Drug Training Project and in 2002 was awarded an Australia Day Award by the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA). He was also awarded the coveted Professional of the Year 2003 by Professions Australia. He is currently Chair of the PAC2005 organising committee.

"I was overwhelmed but very proud to have received the medal," said Irvine. "I take it as an acknowledgement of the role pharmacists are playing in so many ways. We have helped move attitudes toward drug and alcohol treatment and programs. I have always enjoyed serving our great profession and my local community."



**Pauline E. Powell OAM, nee Praetz (1955)** Rye

*Service through heritage, sporting, service organisations.*

Pauline and her husband Jim, a pharmacist who graduated in the year above her, married and sailed for London. They travelled through Europe and worked in the UK for two years, returning with their first child in 1958. They bought into a small pharmacy in Rye and, after re-building twice to cope with its growth, they sold the business in 1994. The couple had three children (and three grandchildren). Jim passed away in 2002.

On arriving in Rye, Pauline and Jim quickly became involved in the local community. They worked together in the pharmacy and fields of mutual interest, but also individually in other areas. Jim was the Founding President of Rye Tennis Club and Pauline is a Life Member. A member of Portsea Golf Club for over 40 years, Pauline has served terms as Ladies' Captain and Ladies' President, and co-authored the Club history. Pauline's activities have included Girls Guides District Commissioner, member of the Shire of Flinders Heritage Committee, Chair of the Rye/Tootgarook Committee for Victoria's 150th Anniversary and she was an active member of the former Rye Chamber of Commerce. She was Charter President of the Rye Lioness Club in the 1970s, instigating many projects of benefit to the community, and has been President since foundation of the Rye Historical Society.

"The award was a complete surprise to me and I am really humbled by all the messages I received," said Pauline. "Pharmacy gives one a truly community perspective, particularly for those of our era. When you have lived in one place for nearly 50 years you tend to grow with and in it."

## Happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to Miriell Witt

In 1943 the college appointed its first woman staff member, Miriell Witt, who was recruited by A.T.S. Sissons, dean of the college during World War II.

She worked as a demonstrator in pharmaceutical chemistry to help replace male staff who were overseas. The dean and Council also thought it was time they appointed a woman, as there was by then a large number of female students.

Miriell was a very popular lecturer, who stayed on staff until she retired at the age of 65. This year, in October, Miriell is celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!



## Women pharmacists' annual reunion

Miriell, along with Dawn Sayers, was a founding member of the Women Pharmaceutical Chemists Association of Victoria. The hard working organisation disbanded in 1979, as members had succeeded in reaching their goals, which included equal pay for woman pharmacists, establishment of the 'Continuing Education' lectures, representation on major industry bodies and formation of a national body.

A group of Victorian women pharmacists, many of whom were involved in the Association, still meet annually at the Hilton Hotel to catch up and reminisce about their journey through life and pharmacy.

Their get together this year was held on 9 October.



The 2004 get-together with Miriell Witt (seated centre).

## Dr David Graham



Congratulations to pharmacist, pharmacologist and toxicologist Dr David Graham (1968), who was appointed National Manager of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) in August.

The TGA, one of the world's leading independent regulatory systems, evaluates the quality, safety and effectiveness of therapeutic products based on submission of evidenced based, internationally-derived dossiers. David, along with others, worked tirelessly to develop the Therapeutic Goods Act and to subsequently establish the TGA.

David managed the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) 1992–1998. He subsequently served as the Division Head (First Assistant Secretary) responsible for the totality of ageing and aged care activities of the Australian Government 1998–2002. His service in aged care was followed by three years as the General Manager, Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) Australia – a business unit of the Department of Health and Ageing, providing services to persons with disabilities through service centres across Australia.

## 1984 and 1985 reunion

On 8 October, 62 graduates came from as far away as Shepparton, Wangaratta and Yarrawonga back to the college to catch up and share stories.

The evening was organised by Dimitra Tsucalas (1985) and Richard Czermak (1985). A highlight of the night was a display of student photos put together by Richard, including shots of the basketball and netball matches popular with students from that era.

Eighties music was the choice for the night, blaring out from the Snake Pit, a new venue at the college. And many had a hard time dragging themselves away from the college – how times change!

**For further photos of the reunion visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/alumni](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/alumni)**

**To organise a reunion, contact the Alumni Office on 613 9903 9087.**



Jane Cameron (1985) and Lisa O'Byrne (1985).

## Have you moved house?

Stay in touch with the college community and don't miss out on the next issue of *Alchemy*.

Fill in the update form, tear it off and send it to:

*Alchemy*

Victorian College of Pharmacy

381 Royal Parade

Parkville Victoria 3052

Australia

Or fax to: 613 9903 9058

(confidential fax).

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Country

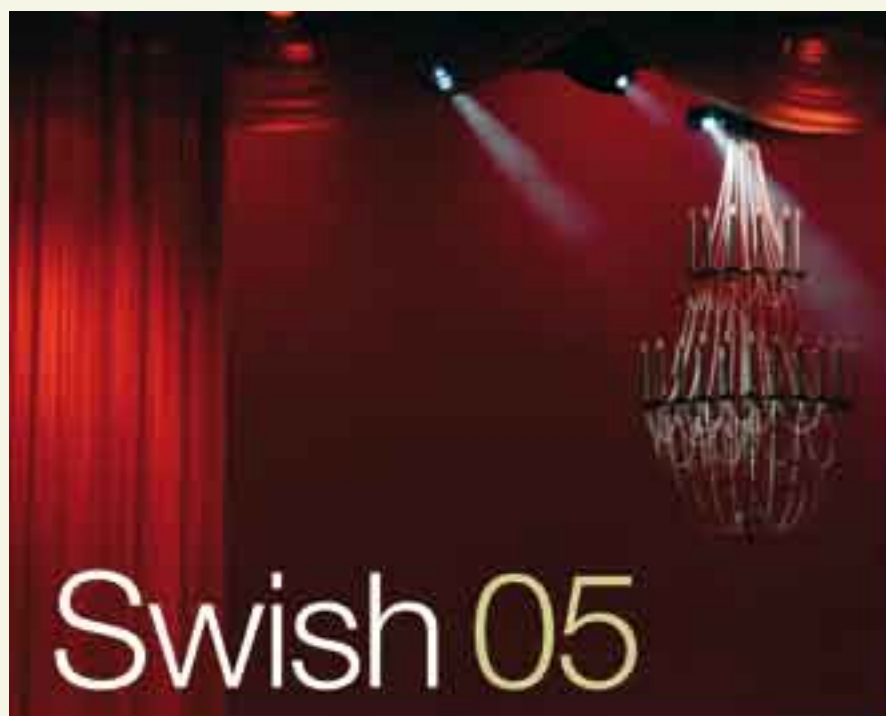
Telephone (H/B)

Email (H/B)

Fax (H/B)

- Are you a:
- ☐ parent of a current student?
  - ☐ current student?
  - ☐ staff member?
  - ☐ former staff member?
  - ☐ graduate?
  - ☐ colleague?

Do you have news you would like to share with the college community?



### The official 2005 graduation farewell

**Date:**  
Friday 11 November 2005  
Pharmacy Library and  
parties room, Melbourne

**Location:**  
The Pharmacy  
Classroom  
251 Clayton Road  
Parkville

**Cost:**  
\$1000 (per head)

**Details:**  
After the event  
Dancing, drinks, food  
and a presentation to  
the graduates

**Tickets:**  
Tickets are \$10  
per head (includes  
drinks and food)

**Enquiries:**  
0902 6000

For more information visit:  
[www.vcp.monash.edu.au/graduation05](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/graduation05)



## 2005 Graduation Dinner

Held on 5 May at the International of Brighton, immediately after the official ceremony at Clayton, the Graduation Dinner was a night for graduates to celebrate their achievements with their families, partners and friends.

Dean of the college Professor Colin Chapman addressed the guests and highlighted many of the year's successes and academic achievements. Alistair Lloyd AO (1956), Chair of the college's Foundation, welcomed the graduating year into their professions and wished them well with further study and work commitments. Both spoke of their pride in the accomplishments of the students and urged them to stay in touch and use the college as a resource as they advance through their careers.

Guest speaker was Adam Elliot, who wrote and directed the animated short film *Harvie Krumpet*, for which he won an Oscar for the best animated short at the Academy Awards.

Adam's presentation on his career from unemployed cartoonist to Oscar winner was a highlight of the evening. His infectious good humour and amazing 'rags to riches' story was a great example to all to follow your dreams and to live and work with passion. Adam was a willing participant in many photos after his talk and stayed long into the night to swap stories and sell DVDs of *Harvie Krumpet* to a whole new group of fans.

This graduation dinner, the second held by the college, was organised by the Alumni Office.

We wish the graduating year of 2005 bon voyage and every success in the future.