

Victorian College  
of Pharmacy  
Monash University

# News



## In this issue:

- > 30th anniversary of the Manning building
- > New building – a vision for our future
- > New course – Bachelor of Formulation Science
- > Research updates
- > Practical Experiences Program
- > Alumni news
- > Inaugural international reception in Singapore



Professor Colin Chapman with first year students Jack Sia Kee Thai, Adeline Yap Ai Hui and Wang Siew Ling.



## Name the Newsletter competition

Our newsletter needs a name. Suggestions so far include *ad libitum*, *The Apothecaries' Ounce* and *The Solution*.

Can you do better? Fill in the update form at the back of the newsletter and send us your ideas. The best entry will win a beautiful antique apothecary jar.

## From the Dean

Welcome to the first edition of the Victorian College of Pharmacy newsletter for our friends, colleagues and alumni. Editions of the newsletter will be published in May and November each year.

We encourage all of you to stay in touch with us. We are especially keen to hear from alumni who graduated from the College before the 1960s, when the College relocated to Parkville.

Staying in touch will mean that we can keep the wider pharmacy community involved in the life and future of the College. We can also keep you up to date with activities and events that may be of interest to you. Our first international alumni function was held in Singapore in September – a great success – and we have more events, reunions and seminars to come.

Exciting developments at the College continue as we move into our 120th year. The new formulation science course is in its second year (see page 4), the four-year pharmacy course

celebrated its first graduation in 2000 and there are plans for a new six-storey building (see page 3). The College has also recently established a Foundation to help attract additional funding for teaching and research programs.

And for our longer-standing alumni who may wonder why they have been receiving the Monash University magazine recently – we amalgamated with Monash in 1992, making the Victorian College of Pharmacy the first faculty of pharmacy in Australia. Being part of the largest university in Australia, with campuses throughout the world, gives the College a significant advantage in the current global education market.

Enjoy the newsletter, and remember to send us your feedback and alumni news. We look forward to hearing from you.

Professor Colin Chapman  
Dean, Victorian College of Pharmacy

## Cricket anyone?

The College and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch) have been officially challenged by the Pharmacy Alumni Association of the University of Sydney to play for the Chemists' Interstate Cricket Shield held at the PSA (Victorian Branch) since 1934 (see page 7 for details).





# 30th anniversary of the opening of the Manning building

In November 1971, the (then) Premier of Victoria, Sir Henry Bolte, officially opened the Manning building at the Victorian College of Pharmacy. The building gave the College much needed extra teaching and research laboratories, and also included a large student common room on the ground floor.

The opening was a prestigious affair made notable by Lady Bolte, wife of the Premier, and Sir Willis Connolly, chairman of the Victoria Institutes of Colleges, falling off their chairs when the stage partially collapsed. Luckily it was only a 150mm drop off the dais, and no permanent injuries were suffered.

Sir Henry spoke of his fondness for the College and the high esteem in which it was held by his government. He noted that Victoria had matched the Federal Government's \$880,000 dollar for dollar to fund the construction. On top of this the Federal Government added \$350,000 and Victoria \$650,000 for ongoing costs. A large furniture and fittings appeal raised further funds with generous support from the pharmacy community.

"You have a College which would be the envy of any pharmaceutical circle or body in the world – and that's as it should be. In 1971 there is no room for second best," he said.

Sir Henry was thanked by Dr Geoff Vaughan, the Acting Dean of the College, and Society President Cr. R. B. Grinlington presented Sir Henry with an exact replica of a 16th century mortar and pestle.



The Manning building under construction and after completion in 1971 (right).



Sir Henry Bolte at the opening of the Manning building in 1971.



# The fourth building

Planning is now underway for a new building that will alleviate space shortages and provide state of the art facilities for the College's growing number of students and researchers.

A planning permit has been issued by the Melbourne City Council for a six-storey building that will provide 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space on the vacant block of land at the Parkville campus.

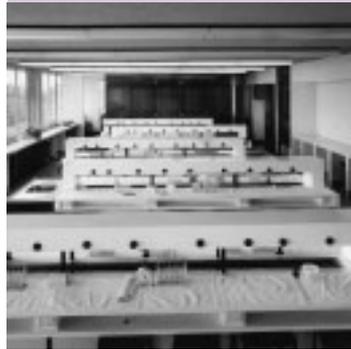
As a result of the pharmacy course being extended to four years and the introduction of a new course in formulation science, the College student population has dramatically increased in recent times. Lecture theatres, tutorial rooms and teaching laboratories are often overcrowded. Office and laboratory accommodation for existing staff and graduate students is also under severe pressure.

Moves are underway to closely examine the feasibility of constructing the building over the next two or three years, relying in part on the leasing of space in the building to organisations highly compatible to the research and teaching activities undertaken at the College.

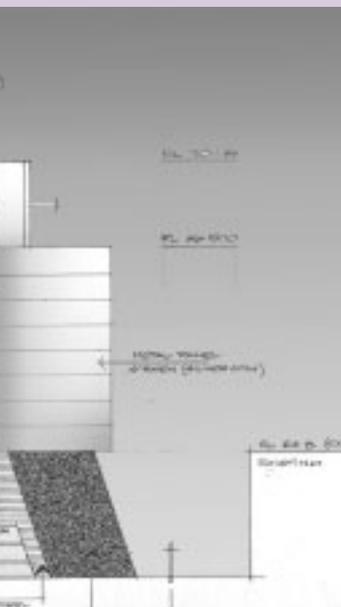
- For further information, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au) to see the full plans and for updates about the new building project.



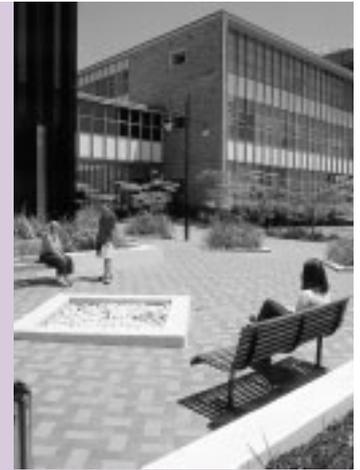
Architect's plans for the new building.



Manning building laboratory 1971 and Medicinal Chemistry laboratory 2001.



## Parkville campus refurbishment program



Recent refurbishments across the entire campus have upgraded teaching areas and improved facilities for staff and students.

The three lecture theatres in the Sissons building have been enhanced with air-conditioning and high-tech multimedia equipment. Cossar Hall has had a coat of paint, new carpet and new chairs, with a sophisticated system of dividers that will allow best use of space.

In the Scott building, office and teaching areas have been renovated in the Department of Pharmaceutics. The Department of Pharmacy Practice is now in new offices and teaching areas on the first level, space formerly occupied by Medicinal Chemistry laboratories. These laboratories are now on the fourth level of the Manning building. Renovations and building work are currently being undertaken on levels three and four of the Manning building to upgrade teaching and office areas in the Department of Pharmaceutical Biology.

Built 30 years ago, the teaching and research laboratories in the Manning building were seriously in need of upgrading to comply with fire and health requirements and to relieve overcrowding. Renovations have included new ceilings, better lighting, state of the art ventilation and new benches.

The cafeteria and student facilities have also been upgraded, with showers provided for students.

The most noticeable difference to greet visitors on their arrival at the College is the new landscaping along Royal Parade and in the walkway between the Scott and Sissons buildings. These areas are no longer reserved for car parking or consist of concrete. They have been made green and inviting, with trees, brick paving, seating and many shrubs.

- For more information about the renovations or to arrange a tour, email: [sarah.vincent@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:sarah.vincent@vcp.monash.edu.au)



## College entices award-winning international researcher and teacher

Professor Colin Pouton, recipient of the Pfizer Award for Pharmaceutical Science in 1995, recently joined the College as Chair of Pharmaceutical Biology and Head, Department of Pharmaceutical Biology.

Professor Pouton comes to Monash from the UK where he was Reader in Pharmaceutical Biology, and Head of the Pharmaceutics Group, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology at the University of Bath from 1999. He trained as a pharmacist and has since had a distinguished career in teaching and research.

This appointment brings a larger emphasis on toxicology and biotechnology to the College. His investigation into DNA vaccine delivery is world class and he will add greatly to the faculty's successful record of new drug discoveries and delivery method breakthroughs.

The arrival of Professor Pouton also heralds changes to pharmacy teaching methods. He is a leader in the development of new approaches to learning, including the use of multimedia. A past Chairman of the UK Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, he has been the European Editor-in-Chief of *Advanced Drug Delivery Reviews* since 1995, and has published over 200 papers and communications.

Professor Pouton directed a research group at Bath in gene delivery and recently spent a year developing this interest in an industrial environment as a visiting scientist at GeneMedicine Inc (now Valentis), The Woodlands, Texas.



Professor Colin Pouton.



Dr Jalal Jazayeri, Associate Lecturer in Formulation Science, using the new biological safety cabinet.

## New course – Bachelor of Formulation Science

Building on its research strength in the field of formulation science, and with strong support from industry, the College offered the first Bachelor of Formulation Science in Australia in 2000.

Common to a number of different industries – including the pharmaceutical, consumer product, food, agricultural and consumer chemical industries – is the development of products that require a knowledge of formulation science and the relevant regulatory controls on consumer products.

The first intake of students into the course brought to fruition two years of intensive planning and curriculum design. The course is the first of its type in Australia and, at the undergraduate level at least, possibly the world. It draws on the research strength in formulation science and the longstanding collaborative links with industry enjoyed by the College's Department of Pharmaceutics.

Employers in a broad range of manufacturing industries are excited about the prospect of having 'job ready' graduates in areas where on-the-job training has been the norm by default. Graduates will now have the necessary skills and knowledge to step directly into product development, with no further general training necessary, so that on-the-job training can focus on the particular area of expertise required.

- For further information on the Bachelor of Formulation Science, email: [karen.finnin@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:karen.finnin@vcp.monash.edu.au), or visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/bfformsc](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/bfformsc)



**Research Fellow Karen Dean in the Acrux laboratory located at the College.**

# At the Acrux

**Australian pharmaceutical scientists are renowned for making drug discoveries. *Relenza*, for example, was developed at the Victorian College of Pharmacy. Now a start-up company, based on pioneering research at the College, is gaining fame for an exciting development in drug delivery.**

Acrux Limited is researching, developing and commercialising a unique device that delivers drugs through the skin. The breakthrough is a hand held transdermal spray combined with a non-irritant compound to facilitate absorption across the skin, so providing better administration of a wide range of drugs than oral preparations or patches attached to the skin.

Taking drugs orally can be difficult for young children or the elderly, disabled or extremely sick. Drugs given orally are subject to metabolism in the intestine and liver before entering the bloodstream and on the way can irritate the gastro-intestinal tract and cause side effects such as nausea. The absorption of orally administered drugs can be affected by what a person has eaten that day.

Skin patch technology is an effective method of drug delivery in some situations, but has its limitations. Patches are highly visible, expensive to produce and can cause a range of skin irritations.

The Acrux spray technology overcomes these problems using a metered dose device that is similar to the common asthma pump. It has been adapted and utilises an enhancer in the formulation that is also a common sunscreen. The enhancer safely alters the structure of the skin's surface to allow certain substances to penetrate the skin's protective barrier.

Apart from assisting certain sections of the community to take prescribed drugs, this administration method has a wide range of applications for conditions including female hormone replacement therapy, male testosterone replacement therapy, pain control, erectile dysfunction, urinary incontinence, anxiety states and other CNS disorders.

Dr Timothy Morgan developed the spray device while he was a doctoral student in the Department of Pharmaceutics, and the company's research laboratories are still based at the College.

Acrux Limited has licensed the patented technology from Monash University. The company has been granted a patent in Australia and New Zealand, a Notice of Allowance has been issued in the USA and patents are pending in 20 other countries.

Professor William Charman and Dr Barrie Finin are both directors of the company, which has just completed an \$11.3 million private equity capital raising program.

- For further information, visit the Acrux Limited website at [www.acrux.com.au](http://www.acrux.com.au)

## Drug addiction ... junkie rats help addicts say NO

Dr David Taylor, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Pharmaceutical Biology, is undertaking revolutionary research that investigates the neurological differences responsible for making some people more susceptible to opiate addiction than others.

The research involves exposing laboratory rats to a sucrose solution containing morphine over a period of time, then allowing them to choose between a plain sucrose or a solution

containing morphine. Early results show that a surprising 25–45% of animals went straight for the drug. Since rats will not normally voluntarily consume morphine solution, it appears that the exposure to morphine had actually triggered some change in them.

If a drug that can suppress the neurochemical craving for some opiates can be identified or developed, the war against illegal drugs may become easier to win.

- For further information, consult your copy of the Monash magazine – or view the magazine online at [www.monash.edu.au/pubs/monmag/](http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/monmag/) (If you are a graduate of the College and don't currently receive the Monash magazine, make sure you update your details on the update form at the back of this newsletter.)





# Alumni making a difference – the Practical Experiences Program

The Victorian College of Pharmacy continues to lead the way in pharmacy education, most notably in the area of clinical training. This is evident through the introduction of the innovative Practical Experiences Program. Through this program, students learn invaluable professional skills while assisting in community and hospital pharmacies. This allows students to gain a better understanding of the skills and knowledge required to become a professional pharmacist in a variety of occupational settings.



Final year student Anne Morton at Monaghan's Pharmacy in Warnambool (photo by Angela Milne, courtesy Warnambool Standard).

## A Brief History

In 1997 the four-year pharmacy course was introduced, superseding the three-year course, which had been in place for over 35 years. One of the changes associated with the new course was the development of introductory and advanced practical experiences. In their third and fourth years, students undertake a number of practical placements similar to the clinical training provided in medical, dental and veterinary courses.

Placements include community and hospital pharmacies in rural and city locations, community health centres and the pharmaceutical industry. The preceptor (usually a pharmacist) for each placement is expected to be both a role model and a facilitator, involving the students in the day-to-day aspects of contemporary practice.

This assists the development of exceptional pharmacy graduates with a strong awareness of the healthcare and pharmaceutical needs of the community. Through these placements, the students gain a real understanding of the health needs of Australia's aging and multicultural population, and of the particular issues facing rural Australia.

This program has been a successful part of the pharmacy degree since 1999, when our first group of third year students ventured out into a wide range of pharmacy-based locations. The support from those involved was fantastic, and although this has been a completely new venture for pharmacists, it was undertaken with a great deal of enthusiasm. Since this time, we have improved a number of the practices involved in the program and followed through with many of the suggestions for improvement made by students and preceptors.

## A preceptor's view

*"This excellent program – with structured workbooks – is a self-directed learning exercise for these undergraduates, so the placement pharmacy becomes involved with these learning exercises as well.*

*Our pharmacy has been so impressed with the students' work ethic, that it has led to permanent employment for some of these students. Hence, the program is a 'win-win' situation for all who want to get involved."*

*Jonathan Hicks (BPharm 87), Manager, Peter Smith Fulllife Pharmacy.*

For further information on the program, contact Mary-Louise Brien, Deputy Registrar, on tel: 03 9903 9000, email: [pep@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:pep@vcp.monash.edu.au), or visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/placements](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/placements)

# Alumni in the news

## Dr Sandra Webb, new CEO of Amrad



Dr Sandra Webb, a clinical trial and drug development executive with significant international experience, has been appointed as the new Managing Director of AMRAD Corporation Limited.

Dr Webb was previously Executive Vice President of Global Development Services for CroMedica Global Inc., a global medicines development company based in North America. She took up her appointment at AMRAD in August 2001.

Melbourne-born and educated, Dr Webb graduated in pharmacy at the Victorian College of Pharmacy in 1969 and gained her PhD in pharmacology from the University of Strathclyde, UK. Alongside her pharmacy qualifications she has a Diploma of Law from the University of Sydney. From this broad educational base, Dr Webb has developed a distinguished international career in both academia and the commercial world of drug development.

With extensive international experience in pharmaceutical research and development, Dr Webb will lead AMRAD as it moves to commercialise its strong portfolio of development compounds.

We look forward to her return to Melbourne and the sharing of her global expertise with the Victorian biotechnology community.

## Mrs Nanette Green OAM

Congratulations to Nanette Green who received an OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Nanette undertook her apprenticeship at the College, graduating in 1955, and returned in 1981 to complete a Graduate Diploma in Clinical Pharmacy.

Nanette was Director of Pharmacy at Wangaratta Hospital from 1972–1987 and was extremely active in the advancement of rural hospital pharmacy and continuing education for pharmacists.

Her award recognised her contribution to health, education, history and women's issues. In her broad career she was President of the Wangaratta Institute of TAFE from 1985–1993. In 1993 she served on the Ministerial Committee for TAFE Amalgamations. From 1996–2000 she was President of the Wangaratta Hospital Board. She is an avid historian and has also served on the Board of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.



## Dr Tracie Ramsdale

Dr Tracie Ramsdale, who completed her Master of Pharmacy at the College in 1987, was recently nominated as a state finalist in the Ernst and Young National Entrepreneur

of the Year Awards. Dr Ramsdale is the Chief Executive Officer of Alchemia Pty Ltd, a drug start-up company based in Queensland.



## Sir Weary Dunlop AC CMG OBE (1907–1993)

Did you know that you graduated from the Victorian College of Pharmacy along with a very famous Australian?

Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop completed a pharmacy apprenticeship at the Victorian College of Pharmacy in the 1920s before he studied medicine and became a surgeon. His nickname 'Weary' came from his unflagging energy – and the claim by Dunlop Rubber that their tyres never wore out. He joined the Australian Army Medical Corps in 1939 and served in Palestine, Greece and Egypt before being posted to Java in 1942. He was captured by the Japanese and was sent to the infamous Burma–Siam railway.

Weary was hailed for his courage and loyalty to his men as a prisoner of war. On his return to Australia he practised as a cancer specialist in Melbourne, concentrating on throat cancer and pioneering radiation treatment. In 1969 he was knighted in recognition of his services to medicine. He was instrumental in improving relations with Japan and was President of the Victorian Branch of the Australian–Asian Association. In 1976 he was named Australian of the Year.

## Interstate Cricket Challenge – NSW vs Victoria Sat 27 and Sun 28 April 2002

The College is joining forces with the PSA (Victorian Branch) for the right to keep the Chemists' Interstate Cricket Shield in Victoria. The shield was last played for in 1934 and has been contested 19 times since 1908.

The match is scheduled for Sunday, 28 April 2002.

The venue is the historic Bradman Oval at Bowral in NSW, with a pre-match dinner the night before.

For further information, interested players (and diners!) should contact Roger James at the PSA (Victorian Branch) on tel: 03 9903 9592.



Sir Donald Bradman and Bill Ponsford, England 1934 (relevance? Bill Ponsford's son Geoff is a pharmacist!)

## Competition

**This is your newsletter – so why not help us name it?**

Write your entry on the update form and send it in.

The best one will win this beautiful antique apothecary jar. (Many thanks to The Junk Shop for providing the jar – 583 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, tel: 03 9328 8121).

And don't forget to fill in your name and address details so we know who you are!

Send completed form to:  
Alumni Newsletter  
Victorian College of  
Pharmacy  
Monash University  
381 Royal Parade  
Parkville Vic 3052  
Australia



# PharmaCE – log on to an e-educational experience

[www.pharmaCe.vic.edu.au](http://www.pharmaCe.vic.edu.au)

An increasing number of pharmacists and health professionals are using the internet to keep pace with changes in the health care sector. In recognition of this trend, the College has set the pace in continuing education through the development of its PharmaCE website.

The website was recently launched by the Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Alan Griffin MP, with 90-plus guests representing pharmacists, health professionals, the PSA, the pharmaceutical industry and peak professional associations. The website offers pharmacists and health professionals an alternative way to meet their continuing professional education needs as well as a flexible pathway towards a postgraduate qualification.

Following the launch of the PharmaCE website, over 300 pharmacists and health professionals have registered for the first program to be hosted by the site – 'Recent Developments in Drug Therapy'. This program has been developed in partnership with the PSA (Victorian Branch) to provide pharmacists and health professionals with updated information on drugs.

Over the coming months, additional online programs in oral health, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and methadone training will be launched by State and Federal Government ministers. These programs are currently being developed in partnership with peak professional organisations, including Dental Health Services of Victoria, the Health Insurance Commission and the Australian Nursing Homes and Extended Care Association.



In order to continue to provide greater choice and flexibility for pharmacists and health professionals in the area of continuing education, the College is looking for one or more corporate partners to invest in the development of three key programs: wound care, pharmacotherapy and clinical pharmacy.

Collectively, these programs will provide a smorgasbord of opportunities to meet continuing professional education needs and a flexible pathway towards postgraduate qualifications.

- For further information, contact Carolyn Fox, Program Coordinator at the Centre for Continuing Education, Victorian College of Pharmacy on tel: 03 9903 9017 or email: [cce.coord@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:cce.coord@vcp.monash.edu.au)



Victorian College of Pharmacy  
Monash University (Parkville Campus)  
381 Royal Parade Parkville  
Victoria 3052 Australia

# The inaugural international reception in Singapore, September 2001

A recent alumni and friends event in Singapore brought together an international network of professionals keen to maintain contact with the College and with each other.

The reception, at the Carlton Hotel, was held to coincide with the International Pharmaceutical Federation Congress.

Guest speaker Professor Colin Chapman spoke about the past, present and future of the College with a presentation of archival photos of our 120-year history, plus plans for the new building.

Among the guests were alumni representatives from the international pharmacy industry based in Singapore and staff from the Pharmacy Department of the National University of Singapore. Council members from the Pharmaceutical Societies of Singapore, Malaysia and Australia also attended.



Dr Jennifer Marriott with Lau Min-Hui (BPharm [Hons] 98) and Yee Ming Tan (BPharm 98).

## Alumni news

# News

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

# Update Form

Please help to keep us – and your fellow alumni – up to date with your latest news. Fill in the update form, tear it off and send it to:

**Alumni Newsletter  
Victorian College of Pharmacy  
Monash University  
381 Royal Parade  
Parkville Vic 3052 Australia  
or fax to: 61 3 9903 9581  
(confidential fax).**

Name

Home address

Postcode

Country

Business address

Postcode

Country

Telephone (H/B)

Email (H/B)

Fax (H/B)

## News about yourself

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

What year did you graduate from the Victorian College of Pharmacy?

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

- Becoming involved in the Practical Experiences Program?
- PharmaCE (Professional Continuing Education Online)?
- Postgraduate study at the Victorian College of Pharmacy?

## Name the Newsletter competition

Your entry