



New study examines health of our Gulf War vets

By JOSIE GIBSON

Ten years ago this month, the international community was pushed to the brink of war when Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait.

The tiny oil-rich sheikhdom – devastated by Saddam Hussein's forces – was eventually liberated by a Western

military alliance that included Australia.

Now the health of Australians who served in the Persian Gulf is being examined in a landmark study by Monash University's Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine in collaboration with Health Services Australia.

Funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the study will examine and compare two groups: about 1800 Gulf War veterans and a similar-sized control group of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel not deployed to the Persian Gulf during the war.

According to the department, more than 200 Australian Gulf War veterans

have applied for medical discharges and claimed compensation under the Veterans' Entitlement Act.

However, opinions about so-called Gulf War Syndrome, a cluster of symptoms ranging from chronic fatigue to memory loss and depression, are divided.

Study leader Associate Professor Malcolm Sim, of Monash, said the investigators' main aim was to identify physical and psychological impacts of the deployment.

"The Gulf War veterans will receive very comprehensive medical examinations," Dr Sim said. "We want to establish, among other things, if they have more psychological problems than other veterans. Are there higher rates of respiratory, skin and immunological problems? What was the impact, for example, of working in an environment thick with contaminated air from constant oil well fires?"

Most of the Australians were Navy personnel who served aboard ships supporting the Western blockade of the

Gulf. Other ADF personnel were involved in the safe haven operation to protect Iraqi Kurds from persecution. Over much of the scene hung the thick fumes of oil wells set alight by Iraqi soldiers.

Dr Sim said overseas studies had suggested certain symptoms that might be related to military service in the Gulf, "but we need to supplement these findings with more objective data from medical examinations and other health testing".

One of the areas to be investigated will be troop immunisations. As well as being immunised for a number of illnesses over a short period, some ADF troops also received the potent anti-chemical warfare agent pyridostigmine bromide, the first time the orally-administered drug had been used on troops on a large scale. The jury is still out on its effectiveness and long-term effects.

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Maurizio Bottarelli at work at Monash. Photo by Andrew Barcham.

Finding art in the heart of decay

By JOSIE GIBSON

In contemporary society, rust denotes negativity, decay and collapse, neglect and a certain sadness.

In the hands of painter Maurizio Bottarelli, however, *la ruggine* becomes an oxidised emblem for warmth and

growth, as well as a more ruminative metaphor for the passage of time.

Bottarelli's obsession with rust has produced works of stunning depth and complexity, mostly abstract in form, yet strongly evocative of the candlelit salons of Europe's Romantic masters.

The acclaimed Bologna-based painter and art lecturer is artist-in-residence at Monash University's Faculty of Art and Design at Caulfield until September.

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Monash expands to Italy

An 18th century palace in Prato, Italy, will provide the basis for Monash University's latest European Centre.

The Prato centre, located in the Palazzo Vaj, will provide opportunities for international conferences, study and cultural tours, short courses, summer schools, research, workshops, studio work, exhibitions and performances.

Vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson said Monash's presence in Prato complemented the university's centre at King's College London, strengthened its European presence and furthered the university's global strategy.

"Monash Prato will be the ideal entry point into Europe for Australian academics, students, business people and governments seeking to forge and consolidate contacts with European policy-makers and institutions," he said.

Professor Robinson said that while Monash's latest venture had strong support from the Australian Government, it could not have happened without active encouragement from the Commune of Prato and the generous financial support of an anonymous Australian benefactor.

Professor Robinson has appointed Professor Bill Kent as the centre's inaugural director.

Professor Kent is an internationally distinguished specialist in the cultural

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Software developed by Monash researchers will help ensure the design and construction of safer ships.

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Media distorts child abuse

Media reporting of the problem of child abuse is sensationalist and has a hidden agenda, contends a Monash social work lecturer.

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Gearing up for the day of all days



It's that-a-way! Monash Open Day student guides were put through their paces in the lead-up to Monash Open Day by student guide coordinators Ms Renee Cuttriss (front, left) and Mr Edward Wallis. Held on Saturday 5 August at the Gippsland, Parkville and Peninsula campuses and on Sunday 6 August at the Berwick, Caulfield and Clayton campuses, Monash Open Day gave prospective university students a taste of university life, and the opportunity to obtain course information and advice from staff and current students. Highlights included performances by an Aboriginal dance troupe, bush tucker food tastings, a Japanese tea ceremony, tours of a wind tunnel, crash test displays, and free relaxation massages.

Photo by Christine Mole.

BRIEFS

Professor of rural health research appointed

Dr John Humphreys has been appointed to the new position of professor of rural health research at Monash University's Centre for Rural Health.

Professor Humphreys comes to the position with a distinguished career in rural health, and is renowned for his academic research on health service provision in rural and remote areas of Australia.

He is a member of several advisory committees for the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, and is currently undertaking a review of the rural undergraduate program in Australian medical schools.

Professor Humphreys will be based at the centre's Bendigo office. The centre's other offices are located in Traralgon and Clayton, with an office planned for Mildura.

Monash and Westpac work together on new index

Monash University and Westpac Investment Management have joined to create the nation's first eco index.

The Westpac-Monash Eco Index will provide a barometer of the share-market performance of environmentally conscious Australian listed companies in each sector.

Monash's Centre for Environmental Management will rate companies based on a number of criteria, including their environmental strategy, management, operations/product and stakeholder relations.

A Westpac spokesman said the index should encourage investor participation in environmental and share price performance.

Researchers test morning-before pill

Monash researchers have devised a morning-before pill, which could block conception for up to 24 hours.

Preliminary in vitro studies conducted on the progestogen-only pill suggest it may be effective as a 'morning-before pill', according to a research paper released on the study.

The research, directed by Professor Gab Kovacs, recommends that further in vitro and in vivo studies be carried out to assess the efficacy of the pill.

"Such a method of contraception would add to the options for couples where the woman did not wish to take hormones on a continuous daily basis," the paper said.

National award for civics pioneer

A Monash Education lecturer who has been a driving force behind a civics and citizenship program in Victorian schools has been honoured with a national achievement award.

Ms Libby Tudball has won the 'Discovering Democracy' award for academic achievement for her outstanding contribution to the development of understanding by teachers of civics and citizenship education.

The Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, recently presented Ms Tudball with the award at a ceremony in Canberra.

Apart from her work with teachers, Ms Tudball was also a member of the steering committee for the professional development strategy of the program in Victoria. The program has recently received a \$13.4 million boost in funding from the Federal Government.

Injection for pain management research

BY DAVID BRUCE

Research into pain management and the development of anaesthetic and analgesic drugs has been given a boost with \$300,000 from Tattersall's to support the work of anaesthesia specialists at Monash University.

The Department of Anaesthesia is the only full university department of this speciality in Victoria and is a prime training and research ground into the understanding of the mechanisms of pain.

The head of the department, Professor Colin Goodchild, is a world leader in the emerging field of pain medicine, which combines a range of medical disciplines to achieve pain relief.

"This is a big innovation in pain management and it is beginning to be introduced into hospitals around the world. We are looking at patients to see beyond what is happening in their central nervous system," said Professor Goodchild.

"We treat that person as a whole by using the appropriate anaesthetics and drawing on the expertise of other fields such as psychology, neuroscience or other types of counselling. For the anaesthetist and the patient, the physical pain takes on less significance if the total pain is looked after."

The Department of Anaesthesia, based at the Monash Medical Centre in Clayton, is also developing drugs that better target the sources of pain. These new drugs will be most effective in serious surgical procedures where the side-effects produced by the current range of drugs are often severe and disabling for the patient.

Tattersall's is providing the department with \$100,000 each year for three years as part of the company's on-going commitment to providing community support.

Monash expands to Italy

Continued from page 1

and social history of late medieval and Renaissance Italy, with a 20-year association with the Harvard University Centre for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence.

He was a driving force behind the establishment of an Australian Study Centre in Italy, and the Australian Foundation for Studies in Italy.

The Prato centre is 20 minutes by train from central Florence and is close

to the European University Institute at Fiesole, and other distinguished European and North American universities which run undergraduate and research programs in and around Florence.

Monash will occupy the first floor of the Palazzo Vaj. The building includes an open air terrazzo, surrounded by medieval towers. The university will also have access to nearby student accommodation.



Monash's new centre in Italy is located in the Palazzo Vaj (left), in Prato.

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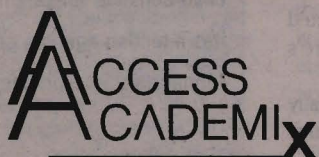
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Data collected on passenger movement on vessels has aided the development of a new Monash software package that will help ensure the construction of safer ships. Photo by John de la Roche.

New evacuation software uses world-first data to save lives

BY COREY NASSAU

A new software tool to aid the building of safer maritime vessels has been developed based on world-first passenger mobility data developed through engineering research at Monash University.

The software, called *Evacuship*, makes it possible to optimise the design of a ship so that it meets evacuation requirements prior to the commencement of building.

According to principal maritime evacuation researcher and mechanical engineering PhD student Mr Adam Brumley, the innovation comes at a time when vessel safety is under increasing scrutiny – particularly with the emergence of the new super-liners.

"The sinking of the Estonia ferry off the Finnish coast in 1994, where more than 850 people lost their lives, was really the catalyst for a review of

safety standards on vessels and evacuation methods," Mr Brumley said.

"It gave rise to an industry-wide realisation of the need for a new technology allowing evacuation analysis to be performed at the design stage of a vessel, rather than once the vessel has been constructed."

Following the introduction of new compliance regulations in 1995, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority approached Associate Professor Len Koss and Mr Brumley with an offer to sponsor the evacuation research.

Dr Koss and Mr Brumley are undertaking the research within the Australian Maritime Engineering CRC, in conjunction with the Australian Marine and Offshore Group.

Mr Brumley said the team wanted to develop a software tool that met maritime requirements for design stage evacuation analysis but first needed to gather data on the move-

ment of passengers on vessels, as well as other behavioural data.

"To achieve this, we built a moving facility that could simulate the rolling motion of a ship. We used this facility to study the movements of 985 volunteer passengers – in particular their stability and their walking speed.

"Using this information, we can alter the design of the ship – anything from widening the exits to the provision of extra handrails – so that total passenger evacuation can occur within the 60 minutes allowed, from the sounding of the signal."

Dr Koss said the research was important because it could help save lives. In June this year alone, more than 700 people were killed in maritime-related accidents in Southeast Asia.

"Common mariner philosophy says the safest lifeboat is the vessel itself. We're trying to bring as much credence to that idea as possible."

Monash Business dean teaches the giant to dance

BY DAVID BRUCE

Success in a similar role may have been the best preparation, but at Monash the title of dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics comes with added weight – the largest faculty in the southern hemisphere has a formidable reputation for growth and diversity, both in Australia and internationally.

Professor Gill Palmer began her new role as dean at Monash last month. She was formerly dean of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Wollongong.

Professor Palmer has signalled that she intends to shake things up. She has quickly identified a range of early challenges – to break down the barriers between other study disciplines, dissolve the dated concept of the detached business school, reinvent postgraduate business courses and open the doors to the corporate world.

The concept of 'teaching giants to dance' has been around in business circles for some time. Under Professor Palmer's guidance, the giant that is the Faculty of Business and Economics is learning to move with the dexterity and innovation of a break-dancer.

It's a challenge that is well within the faculty's reach, she says.

"We have read a lot about corporate empires that have to learn to be more flexible. That's our challenge, too. A lot of those huge corporates have been successful in doing that and there is no reason why we cannot learn how to do things differently."

The first move for Professor Palmer is to relaunch the Monash MBA after the forthcoming separation from the Mt



Professor Gill Palmer.

Eliza Business School. The partnership that has been a dominant player in business schools over two decades ends with the start of the stand-alone Monash MBA at the beginning of next year.

In a market flooded with MBA programs from home and abroad, a new product must find its niche, and Professor Palmer believes it lies in the diversity of Monash's 10 faculties.

"We have to be thinking very carefully about imaginative alternatives to what is already on offer elsewhere. We have a wonderful opportunity to rethink the basic principles and build from there," she said.

"The MBA is quite an old product. What people now need are postgraduate programs that are linked to other more specialised courses from across Monash. People are looking for double masters programs, an MBA-plus, with specialised components from law, IT, arts, medicine, science, or engineering, and flexibility in delivery and design."

In pursuit of buried treasure at the old Fox and Hounds



On the hunt: Monash archaeology students Mr Mark Eccleston (left) and Mr Brian Neate braved mud and dirt to go in search of lost relics at the former Fox and Hounds Hotel site on the corner of Flinders Street and Queens Street in Melbourne recently. The site, which dates from circa 1839, became an archaeological excavation site for a week before builders moved in. Excavations yielded porcelain, pottery, glass bottles, clay pipes and other objects, revealing important information about the earliest occupation of Melbourne's CBD. Some early building foundations and part of a brick and cobble floor were also revealed. The excavation was sponsored by Heritage Victoria and directed by Dr Vincent Clark, honorary research associate with Monash's Centre for Archaeology. The excavations were carried out by archaeology students from Monash, Melbourne and La Trobe universities.

Study examines veterans' health

Continued from page 1

"We'll also be asking participants about any other deployments, such as service in United Nations peace-keeping and enforcement missions," Dr Sim said. "In Somalia, for example, some of the Australian experiences were quite stressful. How did troops deal with these stressful experiences during and after such deployments?"

"While this is a study about the health effects of the Gulf War, there are a lot of features about deployment generally that could provide useful guidance in the future."

Gulf War health study leader Associate Professor Malcolm Sim.

Photo by Christopher Alexander.



Schools



Engineering course information evening

The Faculty of Engineering is holding a course and careers information evening for prospective students and their parents on 23 August at 7.30 pm in Central One lecture theatre, Clayton campus.

For more information and bookings, contact (03) 9905 3404 or email info@eng.monash.edu.au

Year 10 and Beyond

All schools have been sent multiple copies of *Year 10 and Beyond*, a publication which helps Year 10 students choose VCE subjects based on their academic aspirations and interest areas.

For additional copies, contact the Prospective Students Office on (03) 9905 1320.

VTAC applications

Students wishing to browse the online Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC) guide and make an online course application can use the VTAC Access Points located at Monash.

VTAC Access Points can be found at the Prospective Students Office, Clayton campus, and in the main libraries at the Peninsula, Gippsland and Caulfield campuses.

For more information, contact the Prospective Students Office on (03) 9905 1320.

Multimedia courses at Gippsland and Berwick

The Gippsland School of Computing and Information Technology (GSCIT) will next year offer two new three-year courses focusing on multimedia computing and associated technologies.

The Bachelor of Computing (with a multimedia technology major) will be offered at the Gippsland campus and the Bachelor of Multimedia Computing will be available at Berwick.

Both courses, which will also be available through distance education, will cover subjects including multimedia and computer technology, multimedia programming, multimedia development and advanced multimedia technology.

For more information, contact Ms Stephanie Cohen on (03) 9902 6962.

New supercritical treatment could hold key to waste

BY JOSIE GIBSON

As the world's population continues to swell, so does the amount of toxic organic waste people generate and stockpile.

The race to develop safe and effective treatment technology is becoming even more urgent as desperate nations awaiting a solution resort to illegal dumping in someone else's backyard.

Monash doctoral scholar Mr Graeme Short, based in the Chemical Engineering department, is among a small number of Australian researchers experimenting with emerging technology that shows great promise for treating such wastes.

The technology could eventually be applied to human waste, sludge, by-products from pharmaceutical and textile processes, and chemical and biological warfare agents.

Mr Short is focusing on a process called supercritical water oxidation, technology that emerged from NASA's efforts to treat wastewater in space stations for reuse as drinking water.

In the process, water containing the waste is heated to above 374 degrees Celsius and pressurised to above 220 atmospheres before oxygen is added.

"Under these conditions, water behaves very differently, in a way that allows rapid destruction of toxic organic compounds," he said.

Mr Short spent a year building a reactor able to withstand the extreme conditions required to treat wastewater. The project required the importation of exotic nickel chromium alloys from Germany and the US.



Monash researcher Mr Graeme Short.

"For this technology to develop, there has to be greater understanding of reaction mechanisms and rates," he said. "There are still many gaps in knowledge, such as what by-products are formed."

During the project, Mr Short will visit the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US, regarded as home to the leading researchers in the field.

A former environmental consultant, he well recognises the urgent need for researchers to find a solution.

"Environmental degradation is a very important global issue," he said. "Humans are continually producing more wastes, caused by growing industry and population. Many people are concerned about the sustainability of the environment if this trend continues."

Educating across borders

BY KAY ANSELL

Dr Chris Ziguras calls it "the digital divide". Online education can be delivered to students anywhere on the globe - if they can afford it.

The Monash research fellow has found that while information and communications technologies are connecting some students and teachers across international borders, the gap between the haves and have-nots is widening.

The wedge splitting this online world is money - or lack of it.

Dr Ziguras, of the Monash Centre for Research in International Education, encountered the IT education rift while visiting Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam last year with colleague Mr Lucas Walsh. The trip was part of the Telstra-funded FTP project.

FTP stands for New Frontiers New Technologies New Pedagogies. The project is investigating the ways in

which new technologies are internationalising higher education in our region.

Dr Ziguras found that while access to IT in Singapore's educational institutions is similar to Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam presented a different story.

In these countries, he was surprised by the growing gap between public and private educational institutions. It was visibly obvious: "As soon as you walked into an office or lecture theatre, you could see it in the computer hardware. The old patterns of inclusion and exclusion are still there."

However, private institutions in Malaysia and Vietnam that could afford online access were operating at a similar level to tertiary institutions in the West, with access to the same software, hardware and content.

Access to the Internet has allowed some institutions to internationalise their curriculum by connecting lecturers and students to global information networks.

"This means that educational information from one part of the world is being used more broadly than the producers intended," Dr Ziguras says.

Online content producers now need to think about how relevant their materials are to people outside their city, state or country, he says. This is a particular challenge for lecturers teaching students in other countries. Lecturers also have to be prepared for differences in online learning styles if they are to respond effectively.

Such variations between countries can include the degree of face-to-face contact students require as part of the distance learning course, Dr Ziguras says.



Dr Chris Ziguras.

BRIEFS

National award for transition website

Monash University has won an award in *The Australian Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing*, announced recently by the Australian Publishers Association.

The Monash Transition Program website, which features information on the transition from school to university for students, researchers, schools and parents, won the Best Tertiary Education Website category.

Monash transition spokesperson Ms Tanya Kantanis said she was delighted with the award. "The Monash transition website is unique in Australia, and there are plans to expand the site to encompass all beginning students, and to tackle the transition from university to the workplace."

For more information, visit www.adm.monash.edu.au/transition/

New MBA office opened at Caulfield campus

The new MBA office at Monash's Caulfield campus was opened recently by the new dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics, Professor Gill Palmer.

Professor Palmer said the launch of the new office marked the start of a broad

review of postgraduate and post-experience business courses which would build a program for the 21st century.

The emphasis of the new Monash MBA programs is on global business, innovation, the information economy and the interface with the new world of e-business.

As part of this focus, the Monash MBA.com degree will be introduced in January 2001 and will feature a specialist strand of electronic commerce subjects

Nursing to help develop Japanese curriculum

Monash University's School of Nursing will play a major role in the development of the nursing curriculum in Japan through an extended staff exchange program.

Peninsula campus nursing lecturer Ms Robyn Fairhall will spend the next year at the Japanese Red Cross Junior College in Akita, a rural region 400 km north-west of Tokyo.

Ms Fairhall said Japan was facing a shortage of nurses, and colleges were looking at developing degree programs in nursing in order to raise the appeal of the profession.

She said the college in Akita was keen to work with Monash staff on curriculum development, as Australia had already undergone a transition in nursing education and training.

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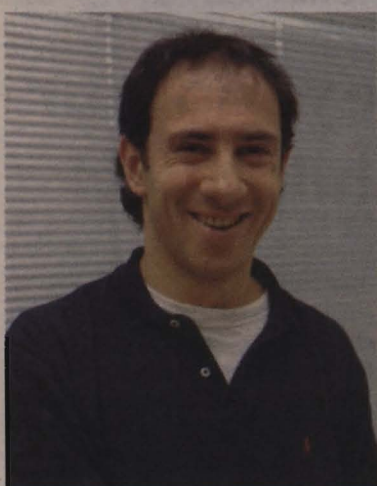
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Media coverage of child abuse: in defence of the family

While bringing about greater public awareness of the problem, much media coverage of child abuse is sensationalist and pursues a conservative social agenda, defending the traditional family from state intervention rather than championing the protection of children from abuse, argues Monash social work lecturer Dr Philip Mendes.

OPINION



Over the past two decades, the media appears to have played a central role in the child abuse and child protection debate. It could even be suggested that the media has been principally responsible for establishing child abuse as a new area of public policy.

Media coverage of child abuse has had both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, media campaigns have almost certainly helped to produce more equitable and more effective child protection policies and practices.

In general, media coverage of child abuse has increased community awareness and intolerance of all forms of cruelty to children – whether in the family home or in state-run institutions.

More specifically in Victoria, media coverage has arguably contributed, in combination with pressure group campaigns, to a number of key resourcing and program reforms.

For example, in the late 1980s, the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (VICSPAN) combined with a number of other influential non-government child welfare groups to push for reforms to protective services. The campaign, which included public forums, reports and press releases, attracted considerable media attention, including front page headlines in daily newspapers, and a full report by the highly regarded ABC 'Four Corners' program.

Government initiatives which followed included a \$7.2 million increase in the child protection budget, the abolition of the inadequate dual track system, and an inquiry into the child protection system, headed by Mr Justice Fogarty.

Five years later, pressure groups including VICSPAN, the Royal Children's Hospital, the Victorian Police and the ALP utilised public outrage concerning the murder of toddler

Daniel Valerio by his stepfather to successfully press for the introduction of mandatory reporting in Victoria. While the Liberal Government was initially opposed to mandatory reporting, an unprecedented campaign by the populist *Herald Sun* forced the government to change its mind.

On the other hand, much media coverage, particularly in the tabloid media, has tended to be sensationalist, to advocate simplistic solutions to complex and long-term problems, to divert attention from the overall child abuse system to a few individual and not necessarily representative cases, and to prioritise the identification of scapegoats.

Such coverage arguably has a broader social conservative political agenda not dissimilar to that advocated by lobby groups such as the Liberal Party Ginger Group, the Lyons Forum, the Centre for Independent Studies, and the Australian Family Association. The principal concern is to defend traditional institutions and values such as the nuclear family, rather than identifying necessary reforms to child protection policies and legislation.

Research by Dr Ania Wilczynski from the University of Sydney confirms that familial categories of abuse – such as abuse perpetrated by parents or guardians, step-parents and other relatives – are consistently under-

The principal concern is to defend traditional institutions and values such as the nuclear family, rather than identifying necessary reforms to child protection policies and legislation.

reported, whilst non-familial abuse perpetrated by strangers and professionals working with children is markedly over-reported. In addition, structural disadvantages contributing to child abuse and neglect such as poverty, unemployment, and gender or race-based discrimination are rendered invisible.

Media reporting of child abuse reflects what has been described as a 'moral panic'. According to this notion, societies are exposed every now and then to threats to traditional institutions and values. The media attributes these threats to allegedly deviant or subversive groups, which British sociologist Stanley Cohen calls 'folk devils'.



Artwork by Elizabeth Dia

The 'folk devils' are then isolated and censured by the media in order to restate and reaffirm the traditional social values the group was judged to transgress.

In the case of child abuse, both individual social workers who failed to protect children from violent deaths, and individually abusive parents, have been designated as 'folk devils'. Social workers are labelled as "bungling and incompetent wimps" when they do not act decisively enough to protect children from abusive caregivers, and alternatively as "zealots" or "child-stealing bullies" when they remove children too hastily.

What is most important here is that so often social workers are labelled as the principal 'wrong-doers' whose professional failure to protect children is presented as far worse than the actual deeds of the criminally convicted abuser.

As already noted, this is because the principal agenda of social conservatives is the defence of the traditional family from state intervention, rather than the protection of children from abuse.

Certainly, there has been some debate about the applicability of 'moral panic' theory to child protection. For example, some authors have suggested that the theory remains "suggestive rather than substantive" in that it does not explain why social workers, rather than child abusers, become the principal source of media and public vilification.

In addition, the theory implies that the media independently orchestrates public opinion, and does not adequately explain or question the economic and ideological interests who are responsible for orchestrating the media.

Nevertheless, whatever the particular limitations of 'moral panic' theory, there is little doubt that much of the prevailing media reporting distorts the public's understanding of the causes of, and possible solutions to, child abuse.

Concern about possible irresponsible media coverage and criticism can and does provoke poor child protection policies and legislation, and defensive, often inadequate, practice.

For example, the media has helped to place an over-emphasis on acts of commission such as physical abuse and sexual abuse at the expense of supposedly less serious acts of omission such as neglect. Yet, acts of omission may in fact contribute to a greater number of deaths.

Perhaps more significantly, concern about possible irresponsible media coverage and criticism can and does provoke poor child protection policies and legislation, and defensive often inadequate, practice. For example, it has been alleged that sensationalist media campaigns leave protective workers feeling under attack and demoralised, and can provoke a disproportionate number of 'false positives' whereby children are unnecessarily removed from parental care at considerable cost to the welfare of the child and their family, or alternatively 'false negatives' whereby family maintenance rather than child protection is emphasised, and the degree of risk to children is fatally underestimated.

Nevertheless, whatever its ideological bias or diversions, the media is likely to continue to play a key role in bringing the deficits of child protection systems and the importance of children's rights to public attention. It is incumbent upon human service professionals to actively engage the media in an attempt to channel its energies into constructive and realistic problem diagnosis and outcomes.

Dr Philip Mendes is a lecturer in the Department of Social Work and Human Services at Monash University. This is an edited version of his article, 'Social Conservatism vs Social Justice: The Portrayal of Child Abuse in the Press in Victoria', first published this year in Child Abuse Review.

New tapestry exhibition shakes off fusty image



'It's Different for Girls', by Tass Mavrogordato.

A vibrant exhibition at Monash University this month will turn some people's idea of tapestry on its head.

The ancient craft will be showcased at Monash's Caulfield campus in full colour and breadth – with a few stunning surprises.

Decade celebrates 10 years since Monash took the plunge into formal studies of tapestry, now recognised as a valuable contemporary art.

According to Tapestry Studio coordinator Kate Derum, Monash's move into tapestry was a "revolutionary" decision. "We had a lot to overcome, especially the popular images of little old ladies embroidering flowers," she said. "We've really made our mark and contributed to the Department of Fine Art."

Decade features the work of 20 exhibitors, whose creations range from small to large scale. Derum's own work will be on show along with

that of two distinguished tapestry artists and former Monash lecturers, Canadian Ann Newdigate and Tass Mavrogordato of the UK.

"Part of what we wanted to do with the exhibition was to trace what graduates had done since leaving Monash," Ms Derum said. "Many have continued to work in tapestry. Some have gone on to become weavers at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, with which we have quite strong links."

While tapestry is taught at some other Australian tertiary institutions, Ms Derum said Monash was the only university to treat it as a specialty. "You can study it from undergraduate right through masters to PhD level," she said.

"Melbourne is something of a centre for tapestry. There's a steady interest in it. What people are doing with contemporary forms is very interesting."

What people are doing varies widely. Tapestry is loosely defined as something woven on a warp. After that, the field is open to non-conventional materials such as plastic and torn canvas and challenging imagery that blows away any fuddy-duddy misconceptions.

"*Decade* is a good opportunity for members of the public to have their perceptions about tapestry reshaped," Ms Derum said.

What: *Decade: Celebrating Ten Years of Monash Tapestry*
When: 11 August to 2 September
Where: The Faculty Gallery, Monash University's Caulfield campus
Who: For details of opening times, contact gallery manager Malcom Bywaters on (03) 9903 2882.

Young musicians show depth of Asian talent

The highly acclaimed Asian Youth Orchestra will make its Australian debut in Melbourne this month in a free family concert presented by Monash University's School of Business Systems.

Described by reviewers as "outstanding" and "astounding", the orchestra will give its only Melbourne performance at the Melbourne Concert Hall on 21 August. The program includes Beethoven's 'Triple Concerto' and Berlioz's 'Symphonie Fantastique'.

The talented young men and women of the AYO represent some of Asia's finest musicians. Aged between 15 and 25, they are selected from more than 1500 students in 11 Asian countries.

The students are together for six weeks each summer, initially for a three-week rehearsal camp, then on tour for three weeks as young professionals with major international solo artists. They perform under the direction of renowned international conductor Sergiu Comissiona, who succeeded Sir Yehudi Menuhin as AYO musical director in 1997.



Asian Youth Orchestra members take time out in Malaysia.

Since 1990, AYO students have played 157 concerts in 110 cities to nearly half a million people.

Following its Melbourne performance, the orchestra will travel to Sydney to perform at the Opera House as part of the Olympic Arts Festival.

What: Asian Youth Orchestra
When: 21 August
Where: Melbourne Concert Hall
Who: For tickets, contact the Monash Box Office on (03) 9905 1111 or Ticketmaster on 13 6166.



Deborah Paauwe's 'Playtime' (1999). Courtesy of the artist and Greenaway Art Gallery.

Exploring beyond our notions of childhood

When it comes to children and childhood, reality is in the eye of the beholder – and two beholders seldom share the same notions or history.

A new photography exhibition at Monash University Gallery, *Telling Tales: The Child in Contemporary Photography*, explores different representations of children and childhood by 11 contemporary artists.

Telling Tales is the first time a photographic exhibition on this theme has been developed for a national tour.

The exhibition features the work of Di Barrett, Pat Brassington, Kate Butler, Anne Ferran, Bill Henson, Nicola Loder, Mark McDeane, Tracey Moffatt, Deborah Paauwe, Polixeni Papapetrou and Ronnie van Hout.

As well as exploring notions of the child, the show highlights artists who have melded photography's traditional properties with new imaging tech-

niques. For example, images have been enlarged from domestic to oversized scale or digitally manipulated to enable new readings of the intimate family snapshot or children's portraits.

Telling Tales also examines idealised notions of children and childhood and the tensions that arise when contrary, darker views – child sexuality, dysfunction, isolation or despair – are broached.

For some artists, too, focusing on children through art is a way of re-examining their own past and approaching the parenting experience.

What: *Telling Tales: The Child in Contemporary Photography*
When: Until 9 September
Where: Monash University Gallery, Clayton campus
Who: For opening times, call the gallery on (03) 9905 4217.

Finding art in the heart of decay

Continued from page 1

He says he is drawn to *la ruggine's* warmth and expressiveness and its usefulness in exploring inner and actual urban landscapes.

"Rust is the idea of time," he says. "Rust is progressive. It changes the texture of iron. I can't really say why I like the colour."

Bottarelli started as a painter at 15 and three years later staged his first one-man show. "When I went to the academy in Bologna, it was during the 1960s," he recalls. "I had teachers who are now some of Italy's most well-known painters."

Although he has changed artistic direction over the years, his painting career has been a "work in progress".

"Lots of friends, critics, say I'm very coherent as an artist," he explains, "maybe too much so, because today it's quite fashionable to change. My way of working is a type of development. It is

the work, the painting, that changes me, not vice-versa."

Over the last decade, Bottarelli has moved away from the 'cul de sac' of the highly abstract to works containing the merest hints of form. In his palm tree series, started during a sojourn in California, he explores the dilemma of how to represent a tree without outlining an actual tree.

Bottarelli is a painstaking artist, creating texture with the use of rugs and other materials, building layer upon layer of rich colour on canvasses sometimes metres high. "I disagree with those artists who think painting is only the figure," he says. "For me, painting is also the texture, the size, even the smell of turpentine."

It is also a process of sacrifice. "On a computer, you can create an image and go back and change it," he says. "Painting is not like that. You think, 'If I do that, I lose something else'. You can't go back. You must decide to do something, then something else is lost."

Korean migrants tell of health experiences

BY JOSIE GIBSON

Like other migrant groups in Australia, Koreans enjoy the advantages of a comprehensive government-supported health care system.

However, many also resort to *hanbang*, or traditional Korean medicine, on a regular basis.

Why they make the health choices they do is explored in a new book, *Health and Medicine Under Capitalism: Korean Immigrants in Australia*, by Monash University sociologist Dr Gil Soo Han, a senior lecturer at the Centre for Rural Health in Traralgon.

"In their easy access to and frequent use of biomedicine (conventional medicine), Koreans are similar to other migrant groups in Australia," according to Dr Han. "However, to write off *hanbang's* popularity as purely a cultural phenomenon is misleading. Socio-economic factors are also important."

In Korea, *hanbang* has been used for many centuries and is still popular among those who can afford it. However, its revival and popularity among Koreans in Australia, he says, is better explained by migrants' social and work patterns.

For his study, Dr Han interviewed about 120 Korean migrants from a range of different backgrounds in the Sydney area.

'Amnesty migrants', illegal immigrants such as those who overstay their visas and who eventually became legal, arrived in Australia during the 1970s, leaving behind their relatively poor country for the promise of jobs in the booming Australian economy. They worked hard and accumulated enough funds to buy a small house or



Dr Gil Soo Han's book examines the health care choices of Korean migrants. Photo by Delwyn Hewitt.

business, but the achievement was often at the cost of their health.

The next wave of migrants to Australia in the 1980s were skilled and often tertiary-educated, although many struggled with English. Their arrival coincided with a worsening economic recession in Australia that impacted adversely on their job prospects, often forcing them into unskilled labour.

The strong Korean economy of the 1990s brought affluence to many Koreans. Many headed overseas as business migrants, bringing important investment dollars for the Australian economy.

Dr Han found that amnesty and skilled migrant groups had suffered from ill-health because of their heavy involvement in manual work. Business migrants, on the other hand, enjoy rela-

tively good physical health because they spend large amounts of time on sporting activities.

Dr Han found that high proportions of amnesty and skilled migrants turned to *hanbang* or relevant remedies such as ginseng and deer antlers. Although expensive, *hanbang* is regarded by many Koreans as a way of improving or maintaining their health, whether or not they are ill.

An important factor with these migrants, he said, was the need to stay healthy so they could continue to work.

Health and Medicine Under Capitalism: Korean Immigrants in Australia is published by Associated University Presses (London) and Fairleigh Dickinson University Press (Cranbury, USA).

ARTS SCENE

Light-hearted night of theatrical dance

A whole new style of show is coming to the MSA Student Theatre.

Something in August, a warm, light-hearted night of theatrical dance, has been choreographed by co-artistic director Hilary Elliott in collaboration with eight Monash performers. Characters and stories emerge through a wide variety of dance styles and techniques – up-to-the-minute scenarios explode through wild rhythms, fantastic acrobatics and beautifully defined footwork.

Something in August is on until 12 August at Monash's Clayton campus. For bookings, call (03) 9905 3108.

Cooma will never be the same again

The NSW town of Cooma came alive with echoes of its heritage recently when Monash performing arts students descended on the town for a performance of *Martin and Gina*.

Written by Darryl Emmerson, the epic story of the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme had already enjoyed a successful Melbourne season.

Director Peter Fitzpatrick said the event was a moving experience for performers and audience members, many of whom had direct links with the landmark project that brought together migrants from many backgrounds for a common purpose.

Noted Fitzpatrick: "One particularly taciturn gent, silent in the foyer amid the euphoria that followed opening

night, accompanied his bonecrushing handshake with his first and only words: "I come here in 1962. Thanks. You got it right."

Postgraduates meet at symposium

About 40 postgraduate students from around Australia and the US converged on Monash University's Gippsland campus last month as part of a compulsory residential symposium.

The program included a series of critiques and workshops and an annual public lecture, 'Art on My Mind', by installation artist Annette Douglass.

A recipient of international residencies and grants, Ms Douglass's ideas about art as a cultural practice have been influenced by the experience of living and working in other countries.



The Australian Legend and its Discontents

Edited by Richard Nile

Published by University of Queensland Press
RRP: \$19.95

From the bush to the backyard barbecue, *The Australian Legend and its Discontents* explores the way Australians have described themselves and their nation in literature, film, television, the visual arts, and daily conversation.

Featuring some of Australia's most prominent intellectuals, the book explores the use of familiar folk figures such as the Anzacs, beachgoers, suburbanites and the noble savage in popular culture.

In 'Lovable Larrikins and Awful Ockers', contributor Professor John Rickard takes a look at one of these figures, the Australian larrikin. Using historical examples, Professor Rickard charts the way the term larrikin has been used throughout Australian history to describe people ranging from juvenile delinquents to cultural heroes.

Professor Rickard is an honorary professorial fellow in the Australian Studies department at Monash University.

A History of European Housing in Australia

Edited by Patrick Troy

Published by Cambridge University Press
RRP: \$38.40

Over the last two centuries of white settlement in Australia, colonists and immigrants have manipulated and adapted European building concepts to develop a distinctively Australian style of housing.

Through a series of essays, including three written by Monash academics, *A History of European Housing in Australia* attempts to explain the development of this Australian style by looking at the social, administrative, technical and cultural history of housing in our nation.

In his essay, Monash historian Professor Graeme Davison shows that from the very beginnings of colonial Australia, owning a home has been a sign of independence and individuality.

Monash economist Associate Professor Tony Dingle describes the method and motive behind early settlers' building techniques, and Monash historian Dr Mark Peel looks at the dynamics of Australian neighbourhood communities.

Rethinking Australian Citizenship

Edited by Wayne Hudson and John Kane

Published by Cambridge University Press
RRP: \$38.40

Inextricably linked to issues such as social and political justice and vital to social cohesion, the concept of citizenship and what it means has, in recent times, been placed under close scrutiny by the international community.

Rethinking Australian Citizenship includes a selection of chapters examining the different facets of the citizenship debate and what it means to Australian society. In 'Social Citizenship', Monash academic Dr Gaby Ramia delves into the philosophical differences surrounding the idea of citizenship and how this could impact on future policies in Australia.

Dr Gaby Ramia is a lecturer in the Department of Management at Monash University.

POSTscript

Monash graduate and writer Hazel Edwards has produced a cartoon-style book, *Just in Case...*, designed to reassure and inform children visiting the Children's Court.

Dr John Pearson, a senior lecturer in Education at Monash University, and English academic Michelle Selinger, have edited *Telematics in Education: Trends and Issues*, which examines the use of computer communications in education.

Henry Handel Richardson: The Letters, edited by Monash's Professor Clive Probyn and Associate Professor Bruce Steele, which includes more than 1500 unpublished letters from one of Australia's best known authors, will be launched on 2 August at the Robert Blackwood Concert Hall at Monash's Clayton campus.

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

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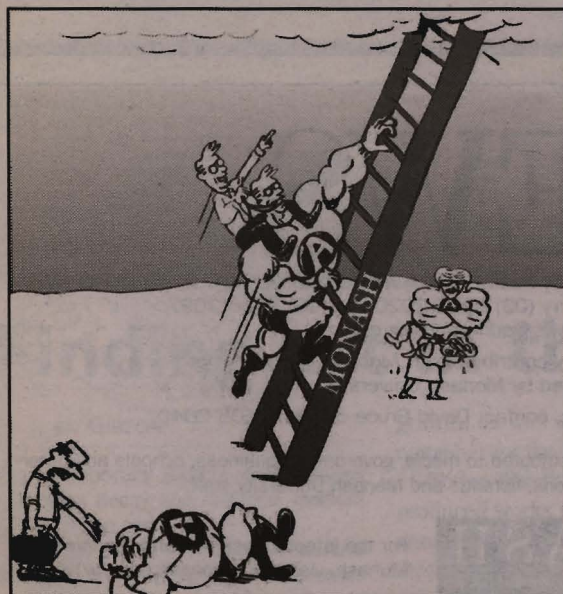
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Study digs deeper into benefits of soy

By STUART HEATHER

The search for substances that can help reduce heart disease is turning to a familiar natural product – soy.

Soybeans have been cultivated in Asia for thousands of years and have long been lauded for having nutritious and healthy properties. Recently the US Food and Drug Administration approved the labelling of soy products as “reducing the risk of coronary heart disease” after accepting that soy protein lowers blood cholesterol levels.

A clinical trial program being conducted by Monash University's Department of Vascular Sciences and Medicine aims to dig deeper into soy's effect on the human cardiovascular system.

Department head Professor Barry McGrath says the study has two approaches. Researchers will investigate specific components called isoflavones (substances of the phytoestrogen class) which are abundant in soy. As well, the study will test if the

whole chemical complexity of soy, and not just its individual components, is required to have an effect.

“We want to see if soy has benefits for specific groups of people – those with cardiovascular diseases – and secondly to come from underneath and try to tease out which components are important,” says Professor McGrath.

“Is it the phytoestrogens or other components, or do you have to have the whole thing, the combination of complex substances that make up soy?” Two substances under scrutiny are called daidzein and genistein, the most commonly occurring phytoestrogens in soybeans.

The action of phytoestrogens may be particularly important to post-menopausal women, a group which typically suffers cardiovascular problems.

Hormone replacement therapy (raising oestrogen levels) is often prescribed, but oestrogen can have unwanted side effects such as thrombosis, a localised coagulation of the blood.



The effect of soy on the human cardiovascular system is the subject of research by Professor Barry McGrath and Dr Helena Teede. Results may be particularly important to those with cardiovascular diseases and to post-menopausal women. Photo by Greg Ford.

It is hoped that phytoestrogens from plants such as soy will have the desired beneficial effects on arteries without the harm of clotting or other side effects.

“Animal and human cross-sectional or population studies have indicated that soy lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease,” says Professor McGrath. “Soy was a natural choice to focus on.”

Professor McGrath's team recently presented the results of research on more than 200 subjects which confirmed that soy intake lowers blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides in both men and women.

In collaboration with the Baker Medical Research Institute, the Monash team is now setting out to find out more. The clinical trial will be directed by a recent Monash PhD graduate, Dr Helena Teede, and is supported by Novogen Limited.

For further information, contact Dr Barry McGrath on (03) 9554 8025 or email barry.mcgrath@med.monash.edu.au

Parents misguided in fears over 'South Park'

By DEREK BROWN

The animated American television series 'South Park' has been called racist, sexist and homophobic. It has created a moral panic both in the US and Australia, encouraging many parents, concerned with the program's content, to shield their children from the show.

But according to a Monash academic, attempting to protect children from the adult themes contained in 'South Park' is not only difficult, it is also misguided.

Dr Marian Quigley, a lecturer in communications at Monash's Berwick campus, said the availability of new communication technologies made it almost impossible to stop children from watching shows like 'South Park', and that it was undesirable to do so.

Rather than shielding their children from shows like 'South Park', responsible parents would sit down and watch the shows with them.

“Adults are often too concerned with controlling what young people watch on television rather than encouraging them to deal with issues that surround them every day,” she said. “Although 'South Park' is not 'nice', its critics often forget that it deals with real moral issues.”

According to Dr Quigley, who presented a paper on 'South Park' at a conference in New Orleans this year, 'South Park' along with 'The Simpsons' and 'Beavis and Butthead', is one of a new breed of animated programs created primarily for adults, but which are attracting a young audience.

She believes these animations, in moving away from the traditional concept of the cartoon as a form of light entertainment for children, have become valuable satirical commentaries on contemporary society.

“While the show includes overtly racist, sexist and homophobic comments, it is these confronting and



Dr Marian Quigley. Photo by Greg Ford.

revolting aspects of it that make us question our own stance on a variety of social and moral issues, such as the status of women in society and the politics of race,” she said.

Dr Quigley said it was more important that shows like 'South Park' made an attempt to address these issues rather than keeping people happy with politically correct content. She encouraged parents to take an active approach to the program rather than a defensive one.

“Rather than shielding their children from shows like 'South Park', responsible parents would sit down and watch the shows with them,” she said.

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