

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

# Bulletin

MAY 2002



## LIFT-OFF!

La Trobe  
launches space  
tourism research

# Bulletin

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Cover: A new field of research into space tourism, the ultimate in adventure travel, has been established at La Trobe University. See story page 3.

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## Mobile again

Enya nearly ended her career as a valuable breeding emu at a Macedon emu farm when she crashed into a fence.

The result was such a nasty wound that one of her legs had to be amputated just below the knee, leaving her with what doctors describe as a 'medium length transtibial stump'.

Her owner contacted the clinic at La Trobe University's National Centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics which quickly designed and fitted Enya with an artificial leg.

'Enya was an unusual prosthetic client,' said Centre Head, Mr Rod Cooper who examined Enya personally and designed and fitted the prosthesis

'The main problem was keeping her still while we made the appropriate measurements and fitted what she required. Although a bird, emus rely solely on bipedal locomotion, they walk on two legs, and the loss of one limb was major functional loss,' he said.

'She was restricted to crouching on the ground prior to our fitting the prosthesis which was improvised from a length of PCV pipe, an "energy-storing" tennis ball terminal device and a self suspending socket.

'Enya is now used to her new leg and is able to walk and run. She is one of our most unusual patients to date although in the past we have also provided devices for a racing greyhound, a racehorse and domestic dogs,' Mr Cooper said. ■



Fitting Enya's artificial leg.



## Apollo astronaut to visit La Trobe

Apollo 17 astronaut, Dr Harrison Schmitt, will visit La Trobe University as a guest of the Physics Department in July. His visit will coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Apollo 17 mission, the last time humans walked on the Moon.

Dr Schmitt will deliver the 2002 La Trobe University Science Lecture, a public lecture on the Bundoora campus on Thursday 18 July and will meet with other members of the University the following day.

A US Republican Party Senator from New Mexico between 1977-83, Dr Schmitt will be in Australia as keynote speaker at the Australian Mars Exploration Conference, as guest of Mars Society Australia.

He will also speak at the National Press Club in Canberra and will visit Strathmore Secondary College in Victoria, where a Space Education Centre is being established, with the help of La Trobe University physicists.

Further details from Tel. 03 9479 2059. ■

# LIFT-OFF!

## *The ultimate in adventure travel*

A new field of research into space tourism – the ultimate in adventure travel – has been established at La Trobe University, Melbourne, with the help of a start-up grant of \$A27,000 from a UK company, Starchaser Industries.

Starchaser Industries is developing and testing a sub-orbital vehicle for space travel and plans to operate space flights from Woomera.

The research funding was announced on the eve of the departure of the world's second orbital space tourist, Mr Mark Shuttleworth, a South African internet millionaire, who was launched into space by Russia late in April.

Professor Geoffrey Crouch, Chair of Tourism Marketing in La Trobe University's School of Tourism and Hospitality, says Shuttleworth's trip took place a year after the first space tourist, Dennis Tito, made world headlines on 28 April last year.

The University also recently admitted its first postgraduate research candidate to this field of study. Ms Jennifer Laing is researching space tourism consumer behaviour in order to better understand the evolving market for this emerging industry.

Although space tourism is a thing of the future for most people, for others, like Mark Shuttleworth, the 'future' has arrived. Others at the head of the space tourists' queue include Mr Lance Bass from the pop group, \*NSYNC; Ms Lori Garver, a former NASA employee; and Mr Leszek Czamecki, a

wealthy Polish businessman. All are vying to fly with the Russians later in the year.

Professor Crouch says many stakeholders are interested in the potential and growth of a space tourism industry. While some are 'visionary, grandiose, and fanciful schemes', many 'well-qualified individuals, organisations, and entrepreneurs' are now also involved.

'Their work encompasses a wide range of space tourism concepts and includes assessments of technological, financial, medical, legal, regulatory and commercial issues. But a significant barrier to progress is the lack of reliable and credible estimates or forecasts of market demand for space tourism to form the basis for investment decisions.

Public, as well as commercial interests, will be served by developing a valid and reliable way to understand and predict such demand,' says Professor Crouch.

'Developing such an industry could significantly reduce space transportation costs and allow space science and exploration to be less constrained by government funding.'

Professor Crouch says that a number of simple market research studies to date have concluded there is promising potential. For example, in a recent NASA study, 34 per cent of respondents indicated they would be

*Continued page 4*

Professor Crouch, right, with research student, Ms Laing.



# LESS SNEEZING – AND BETTER MILK

## World-first for plant gene research



Sufferers from hay fever will benefit from a new ryegrass that reduces the sneezing and itching effects of existing grasses.

Agriculture Victoria's Plant Biotechnology Centre at La Trobe University has conducted the work as a core participant of the Co-operative Research Centre for Molecular Plant Breeding.

Led by Professor German Spangenberg, this world-first research has produced perennial ryegrass plants which have 'switched off' the gene causing hay fever.

Perennial ryegrass is common in lawns and recreational areas as well as pasture for grazing and therefore is a major contributor to the symptoms of hay fever for many Australians.

Hay fever and seasonal allergic asthma due to grass pollen afflict up to twenty per cent of the population in cool temperate climates, with 1.8 million sufferers in Australia.

Professor Spangenberg said: 'Perennial ryegrass is responsible for a major portion of grass pollen allergies worldwide. We have been able to alter the expression of the genes encoding the main ryegrass pollen allergen in perennial ryegrass towards the development of low-allergen ryegrass cultivars.'

The new grasses being developed by Professor Spangenberg's research team will also help the dairy industry, with the improvement of milk production as a result of enhanced herbage quality for grazing dairy cows.

Stringent trials of the plants will take place under glasshouse and field conditions over the next five years before these new grass cultivars will become available. ■

## The ultimate in adventure travel

- from page 3

'interested in taking a two-week vacation' in the Space Shuttle. 'But', he adds, 'more sophisticated, valid studies are needed to estimate actual consumer demand rather than merely levels of interest.'

Professor Crouch and a colleague, Professor Jordan Louviere, from the University of Technology, Sydney, have put forward a proposal to stimulate debate which they hope will lead to a more widely-based, theoretically sound and reliable research approach.

Professor Louviere is a specialist in consumer choice modelling and has worked as a consultant with private and public sector organisations in Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, Southeast Asia and the United States.

Professor Crouch, Professor Louviere and Ms Laing plan to estimate and predict the demand for space tourism using choice modelling techniques – a method based upon theoretical developments for which Professor

Dan McFadden (University of California, Berkeley) was awarded the 2000 Nobel Prize in economics. Currently Professors Crouch and Louviere are using this same method in a different field of tourism research.

One of the few people in the world specialising in this emerging field, Professor Crouch last year organised and chaired a panel on the future of space tourism at the Travel and Tourism Research Association conference in the US. The panel included pioneering astronaut, Buzz Aldrin, a strong proponent of the space tourism industry.

Professor Crouch spoke on space tourism marketing at the 3rd Space Tourism Conference of the US Space Transportation Association in Washington last June, and at the 10th Space Frontier Conference in Los Angeles in October 2001.

He also attended a public Congressional hearing on space tourism held by the US House Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics.

Late last year, he was invited to speak on 'Market Opportunities in Space: The Near-Term Roadmap' at a workshop held by the Office of Space Commercialisation in the US

Department of Commerce, the Space Enterprise Council of the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Space Transportation Association.

The public and media interest in the prospects for space tourism is escalating as news of the world's first group of actual and would-be space tourists, representing the tip of the market iceberg, emerges. The extent of the rest of the iceberg is something this group of researchers hopes to find out. ■

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, left, and Professor Crouch at the Tourism Research Association Conference in the U.S.





# *New biotech joint venture for plant industry*

A new joint venture in agricultural biology has been launched by eminent Australian scientist, Sir Gustav Nossal, on La Trobe University's Bundoora, Melbourne campus.

Genetic Technologies Limited and Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd have created a new company, AgGenomics Pty Ltd, to enhance conventional plant breeding through the application of genomics – the study of genes and their function.

Initially, the new company will provide plant genomics services in collaboration with the Plant Biotechnology Centre, an Institute of

the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment, based at La Trobe University.

Sir Gustav said: 'Agriculture Victoria Services has a long and successful track record in working closely with industry to bring cutting-edge agricultural technology to the market – with an outstanding capability in plant genomics at its Plant Biotechnology Centre right here at La Trobe University.'

While much has been made of the medical aspects of genomics, Sir Gustav noted less has been said about agricultural genomics. 'In the long term, I believe the benefits will be just as significant for humanity.'

Director of Agriculture Victoria's Plant Biotechnology Centre at La Trobe University, Professor German Spangenberg, has been appointed Managing Director (Research and

Professor Spangenberg: improving quality and efficiency of plant production.

Development) of the new company. Dr Glenn Tong of Genetic Technologies, is Managing Director (Commercial).

Professor Spangenberg said AgGenomics will assist plant breeders identify genetic markers linked to commercially important traits so that they can improve production efficiencies and quality.

The Chairman of Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd, Dr Bruce Kefford, said: 'Last year, plant industries contributed \$18 billion in gross value to the Australian economy. It is important that we continue to grow that value by applying new technologies.'

Dr Mervyn Jacobson, Executive Chairman of Genetic Technologies said: 'One of Genetic Technologies' priorities has always been to use our ten years of success in human genotyping as a platform to expand into agricultural genomics.'

'Our partnership with the Plant Biotechnology Centre – which has an established international reputation for developing and applying innovative technologies – will enable us to do this.' AgGenomics, he said, already had work in hand worth some half a million dollars with industry and government. ■



Sir Gustav Nossal: significant benefits for humanity.

# DRAKE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

## *Support for top students to achieve their goals*

Drake International has funded scholarships and awards worth \$12,000 for outstanding students of La Trobe University.

Five Drake Faculty Scholarships have been presented to commencing students in each of the University's five faculties, based on VCE results and Faculty recommendation. Three outstanding students were awarded Drake International final year scholarships in Nursing, Accounting and Business (Human Resource Management) and are also made on Faculty recommendation.

Drake International also made two new awards in 2002, for excellence in Advanced and International Human Resource Management to students of the University's Graduate School of Management.

The Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University, Professor Michael Osborne, said the awards reflect the mutually beneficial arrangement which had been forged between Drake International and the University for the provision of temporary and, in some cases, permanent staff. Drake is also assisting University graduates to find employment.

Professor Osborne said the awards demonstrate the goodwill that exists between Drake International and the University. He praised Drake International for its demonstration of faith in the higher education system at a time when universities are experiencing considerable financial pressures.

'I can only say that our relationship has been wonderful and should be an example to many other organisations.'

National Manager, Drake Executive, Mr Darrell Hewton, said Drake International, one of the world's largest privately owned Human resources relations companies, was pleased to recognise and encourage academic excellence.

Mr Hewton said Drake International regarded the scholarship scheme as an investment in the community and the continuing education of future generations. It was a privilege to be able to recognise the achievements of the students and to play a small part in helping them achieve their goals. 'Everything we do is designed to contribute to the success of the economy, the markets and those individuals



Commencing scholarship winners, Matthew Salter and Lachlan Fooks, at the presentation ceremony flanked by Drake International's Mr Hewton and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Osborne, right.

who, over time, will make us successful as an organization.'

### **And the winners were...**

Scholarships for Commencing Students were won by: Lachlan Fooks, Physiotherapy; Matthew Salter, Media Studies; Andrea Castle, Law /Arts; Rhea Psereckis Arts/Science; and Benjamin Mitchell, Business/ Engineering, Bendigo campus.

The Final Year Scholarships went to:

Sean Sullivan, Nursing. Mr Sullivan hopes to work at the Peter McCallum Cancer Institute on graduation. He says his aunts were the role models on whom he based his decision to embark upon a nursing career.

Nadia Guglielmi Commerce. Ms Guglielmi has been employed part-time with tax agents

McGregor West since her second year and plans to remain with them after graduation.

Helena Dwyer, Business (Honours). Ms Dwyer wants to work overseas in the field of human resources after she graduates and is currently doing work experience with the St Vincent's and Mercy Private Hospital, Melbourne.

The Award for Excellence in Human Resource Management went to Bill Kio, and Margaret Thoneman, both from the Graduate School of Management,

Mr Kio runs his own information technology company, specialising in the implementation of SAP business programs and Ms Thoneman is Head of Development for Interlink, a national executive recruitment and management development firm.

From left, Mr Hewton congratulates commencing student scholarship winner Andrea Castle, and two final year scholarship winners, Nadia Guglielmi and Helen Dwyer.



# The Queen really was amused with Motherhood

Mid 19th century royal family photographs show Queen Victoria looking decidedly uncomfortable, if not downright unhappy, surrounded by her multitude of offspring.

Her adoring subjects at the time – and subsequently academics and biographers who studied her life – concluded from this and some of her own writings and utterances, that Victoria was unhappy in her role as wife and mother.

More than 50 biographies have been produced about her in the past century and most state frankly, or intimate in some way, that she was an unhappy mother, even in the first few years of her marriage.

But they were wrong. Recent research by La Trobe University historian Ms Yvonne Ward, indicates strongly that the young Queen, who bore four children in the first five years of her marriage, and five more subsequently, was largely a happy and contented mother in her early married years.

Ms Ward's conclusion comes from study of Victoria's writing – much of it in her journals and in letters not sought by researchers – that Queen Victoria exchanged with other young European royal women.

In April Ms Ward spoke about these conclusions at a seminar at the Biographical Research Center, University of Hawaii. The seminar dealt with the editing of Queen Victoria's letters and the impact of their publication on biographies of the Queen and her family.

Initially Ms Ward also held the view that Victoria was an unhappy mother, based on her later correspondence when she described pregnancy as 'animalistic and unecstatic'.

But a re-reading of Victoria's journals – which her daughter Beatrice transcribed and substantially edited after her mother's death – gave Ms Ward an inkling that the monarch's feelings about her family may have been misinterpreted.

Ms Ward, who is studying Victoria for her PhD thesis, is one of few researchers provided



A 'masculinist perspective' by those who edited Queen Victoria's correspondence comes in for criticism in a new La Trobe University study.

with access to the journals housed in the Royal Archives at Windsor.

She subsequently searched archives in Europe, from Brussels to Coburg and Lisbon, seeking correspondence written during the 1840s between the royal women of a number of countries and Queen Victoria.

In those days, many European royal families, most related by blood or marriage, were under threat of revolution. Their young women felt starved of close friendships due to their social rank. They became firm friends, says Ms Ward, using letters to exchange intimate feelings and views.

Strong evidence in a number of letters, and particularly those to Queen Louise of the Belgians and Queen Dona-Maria of Portugal, show Victoria to have been a warm, loving

mother who showed delight in her brood of children. Written in rather quaint and idiosyncratic French, the letters between Victoria and Dona Maria, who herself had 13 children, are particularly significant.

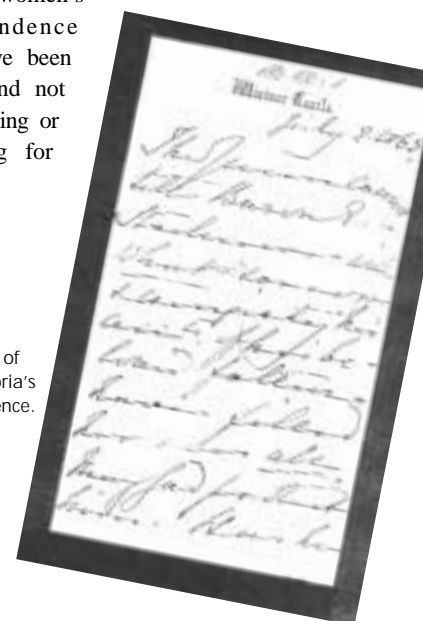
Awarded a Gulbenkian Research Fellowship, Ms Ward searched various Lisbon archives and found only five original letters from Victoria to Dona Maria. Scores were exchanged during the 18 years from 1836.

The Royal Archives in Windsor have more than 120 letters written by Dona Maria to Victoria containing a mixture of political news and advice, family news and social gossip. The correspondence covers the period from Dona Maria's second marriage in 1836 until her death in childbirth in 1853. Victoria became Queen in 1837.

'This correspondence furnishes evidence of a very special bond of recognition between the two young female sovereigns of the challenges they faced in their patriarchal societies,' says Ms Ward.

'This bond has not been obvious in the published volumes of letters of Queen Victoria because their male editors stated that the women's correspondence would have been "trivial" and not worth reading or considering for inclusion.'

An example of Queen Victoria's correspondence.



Continued page 10

# Signs of progress in Bali



As literacy spread, language determined hierarchy. Because the deaf are not literate, they became to be regarded as 'deaf and dumb' and their social status fell.



La Trobe University research in a remote village in northern Bali is providing valuable insights into how sign languages develop and their grammatical structure.

The isolated village of 2000 subsistence farmers and labourers is unusual in that 50 inhabitants suffer genetic deafness – and every person in the village, deaf or hearing, can communicate by sign language.

The village is the only one of 149 in northern Bali with such a high incidence of genetic deafness.

For the past five years, world expert on sign languages, Professor Jan Branson, has headed a detailed study of sign language used in the village. For three of those years, an Australian Research Council grant has financed much of the work.

Professor Branson is Director of the National Institute for Deaf Studies and Sign Language Research, based on the University's main Melbourne campus at Bundoora.

Studying sign languages of the genetically deaf is a specific field, Professor Branson said. Genetically deaf people comprise only ten per cent of deaf people in the world. They inherit their sign language while those deaf for other reasons usually learn from someone other than their parents.

Professor Branson said there are between five and ten times more sign languages on earth than oral languages. Usually geographically based, they develop in isolation, are not written down and, therefore, don't spread like other languages

Those in the study village in Bali, which have not been influenced either by written

language or outside sign languages, are a treasure trove of information about the development, grammar, history and social status implications of sign languages.

'We have evidence that the sign language in this village dates back at least 800 years. There are local legends as to why there is such a high proportion of deaf people.'

In one, a childless couple prayed in a cemetery for a child. The only god who responded was the god of the deaf, and the baby was born deaf. Another blames an immoral monk travelling from village to village, leaving deaf offspring.

Professor Branson's long association with the Hindu villagers, and much hard work, means she can communicate with locals in both their spoken dialect and sign language.

These skills make her welcome as a regular visitor. They also provide an invaluable research tool for studying not only the sign language, but also the sociological implications of accepting deaf people as total equals in a community.

With all villagers fluent in sign language, Professor Branson faced a problem on her early visits. A lot of the conversation was in sign language, and she was unable to tell who was deaf and who was hearing.

'The place was a linguist's dream. Isolation had meant that the local sign language of great antiquity was quite unaffected by education. It had never been written, its users had little schooling, and it was unaffected by other outside influences.'

'In economically-advanced societies outside influences affect sign language. For example, Auslan, brought from Britain and developed in Australia, is heavily affected by the educational policies applied to deaf people.'

'The situation in the village also allows us to study a traditional relationship between the deaf and the hearing. Before our societies became literate through universal education, language, including sign language, was used solely for face-to-face communication.'

Prior to the spread of literacy, Professor Branson said, many hearing people in Western society were skilled at sign language. It was regarded as a normal tool of communication as deafness was relatively common.

But as literacy spread, language determined hierarchy. 'Because the deaf are not literate, they became to be regarded as "deaf and dumb" and their social status fell.'

'The pre-literacy situation exists today in our Balinese village. Deafness is so common that it is not regarded as unusual and deaf people are not excluded from mainstream life



Professor Branson with a group of Balinese village children.

because everybody can communicate with them and vice versa.'

A La Trobe Indonesian PhD student, Mr I Gede Marsaja, who comes from a neighbouring village, is involved with the study. His thesis covers relationships between sign and spoken languages.

For part of his research, to determine the initiative of sign language users, three adults from the village were brought to Melbourne.

'They saw for the first time things like self-opening doors, lifts, even multi-storey buildings. We found that although they had not seen such things before, they readily devised signs to describe them,' Professor Branson said.

In Melbourne they stayed at Professor Branson's home and, like many of the villagers with whom she has worked, they have become close friends.

Research in Bali has contributed to the global reputation of the National Institute for Deaf Studies and Sign Language Research. Funded by Federal Government, the Institute was

established in 1993 as a joint venture between La Trobe University and Monash University. It provides a national focus for research into the Australian Deaf community and its language, Auslan.

The Institute is keeping the location of its Balinese study village a secret to protect the villagers and the integrity of the research. ■





# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

## Seeking markers for early intervention

Dissanayake, children with autism, the majority of whom have associated intellectual disability, were usually diagnosed around three years of age. Those with Asperger's Disorder were frequently not detected until they went to school at five or six, sometimes even later.

Dr Dissanayake said doubts had existed as to whether the two disorders were the same.

In an effort to determine this, research has been carried out on the children's social skills both at La Trobe's Child Development Unit in the School of Psychological Science, and at the children's schools.

The initial three year research program – examining three groups of children aged between five and 11 years – has been completed. The research team comprised Dr Dissanayake, Dr Kathy Macintosh, who was at the time a PhD student, and research assistant, Ms Melanie Taylor.

'We found that children with Asperger Syndrome had better social-cognitive skills than the children with autism, and that their social understanding was more equivalent to those of the typically developing children, Dr Dissanayake said

'However, this increased social knowledge did not translate to increased social responsiveness or social participation.'

Dr Dissanayake said the research was now in its second phase, seeking early markers for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

'If children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder can be diagnosed at an earlier age, we can begin work in the early most critical years when their young brains have increased plasticity, and hopefully be able to devise and to implement programs to help them.' ■

Pioneering research work at La Trobe University aims to improve the diagnosis and management of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

One in 500 children in Australia are diagnosed with ASD, an umbrella term encompassing Autistic Disorder and Asperger's Disorder.

According to La Trobe University developmental psychologist, Dr Cheryl

## The Queen really was amused with motherhood – from page 7

Ms Ward claims that in researching the way three significant volumes of Queen Victoria's correspondence were prepared for publication, she has identified a 'masculinist perspective' of the editors which had an impact on the selection processes.

Because of the difficulty in accessing the original letters, biographers and historians have tended to rely on this published material. Ms Ward believes this goes some way towards accounting for the 'serial misrepresentation of Victoria as an unhappy mother'.

Ms Ward found that the good Queen wrote to her royal contemporaries about such mundane motherly concerns as teething, convulsions and rashes, and undertook pursuits such as knitting bootees, an indication that she took an active interest in

her babies' welfare and comfort. Other writings and her drawings indicated her warmth and tender love for her babies and young children.

In the painstaking picking over of the royal correspondence and other material during seven trips to Europe over five years, Ms Ward has pieced together evidence of what could be called a 'Royal Women's Network'.

'What emerges is a complex picture of a woman happy in her role as wife and mother, conscious of her position as Queen and not so reliant on men – quite a different picture from that traditionally painted of Victoria,' says Ms Ward. ■

Ms Ward in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle with some volumes of Queen Victoria's diaries.



# Bridging Melbourne's Cyprus divide

An initiative known as 'The La Trobe Project' is making significant progress in building trust – even friendship – between Melbourne's Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Now into its third year, the project is a shining example of how people from opposite sides of ethnic divisions in their homeland can look to building bridges in their new country.

There are about 27,000 people in Melbourne of Greek Cypriot origin, first, second and third generation, and 6000 to 7000 people of Turkish Cypriot origin.

Until two years ago they remained apart, not actively hostile, but content to keep their distance. There had been relationships on an individual basis and between families but little contact between organised groups.

Dr Michalis Michael, from La Trobe University's School of Social Science, decided something practical needed to be done. He had recently completed his PhD thesis in the Department of Politics on the Cyprus problem.

Of Greek Cypriot origin, Dr Michael launched the initiative with an academic colleague, Mr Tumer Mimi, who is of Turkish Cypriot origin and a post-graduate student at RMIT.

Dr Michael and Mr Mimi inaugurated The La Trobe Project, their first activity being to convene a Cyprus Conflict Resolution Workshop held at the La Trobe Bundoora campus in April 2000.

That was the start of a series of activities seeking rapprochement between the two communities that have been noticed with increasing interest, not only in Cyprus but in other countries where people from both communities have settled.

Professor Joseph Camilleri of La Trobe's Department of Politics and Professor Desmond Gill of RMIT's Department of Language and International Studies co-sponsored the workshop during which 30 representatives of both communities probed avenues towards rapprochement.

'During the closed workshop, we examined



Europe's only partitioned city, Nicosia in Cyprus. Children play near the 'green line' that divides the Greek and Cypriot communities.

the possibility of there being some common reference points between the two communities to enable continuing contact and dialogue,' Dr Michael said.

'We identified a number and this resulted in the first public event, an open forum discussion in August 2000.'

Again convened by Dr Michael and Mr Mimi, it was organised with the assistance of Professor Cahill and Dr Gabriella Etmektsogou, then a lecturer in La Trobe's Department of European Studies.

In a key speech to this forum, Dr Michael said that coverage of the Workshop in the local Greek and Turkish media had been most productive.

'Even heated debates and criticism from certain quarters proved valuable in the sense that they put rapprochement and bi-communal happenings on their respective agendas,' he said.

He told the gathering that the process was more important than the outcome. 'By process we mean communication, the dialogue between the two communities, to navigate through the emotions and scars of decades of suspicion, hate, anger, bitterness and personal loss and suffering.'

He emphasised that the La Trobe Project did not aim to produce a political solution to the Cyprus problem but to work through a

number of common values that were the building blocks on which rapprochement, and possibly peace, in Cyprus would have to be constructed.

The process moved forward with a 'Bi-communal Concert' being held in May 2001. Among those who attended was Mr Jim Short, the former Senator who was for a time Australia's Special Envoy in Cyprus. He had shortly before returned from a fact-finding mission to the island.

In February 2002 several people from both groups met Turkish and Greek Cypriot trade union leaders in Melbourne at the invitation of the ACTU. Bi-communal dinners, film nights and other cultural activities have also been held.

'It is easier for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to make such contacts in Melbourne than on Cyprus itself because the island is physically divided and social contact and dialogue between the two groups are at a minimum,' Dr Michael said.

'We hope that what we are attempting in the La Trobe Project may have an increasing influence on attitudes on Cyprus itself,' he added. ■

## VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS GREEK AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH DATABASE

The detailed story of Melbourne's Greek heritage – Australia's 'Most Hellenised City' – will soon be more widely accessible, thanks to a new Community Jobs Program at La Trobe University helping unemployed job seekers.

The program was launched recently on the University's main Melbourne campus at Bundoora, by the Minister for Employment and Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, John Pandazopoulos.

Twelve young people, most of Greek background, are being employed for 16 weeks by La Trobe University's National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research (NCHSR). They are creating 30,000 new entries for an international digital database, the Greek Australian Research Archives, being compiled by the Centre.

Sponsored by the State Government, the job seekers are also receiving 110 hours of training and assessment provided by the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE.

Director of the NCHSR, Professor Tasos Tamis, said the University, in association with NMIT and the State Government, was pleased to be able to offer critical work experience and skills development for local



Mr Pandazopoulos, left, with Dr Dardalis and program participants, from left, Katherine Dukas, Stathis Tsangalidis, George Eleftheriadis, Marina Christou, and Toula Andreakos.

jobseekers. He said both the Australian and Greek communities will greatly benefit from the project, safeguarding an important aspect of history.

La Trobe University's Greek Australian Research Archives, also known as the Dardalis Archives, were launched last November by Greece's Deputy Minister for National Economy and Finance, Dr Christos Pahtas.

The archives are named after businessman and benefactor, Dr Zissis Dardalis, founder of Marathon Foods and well-known supporter of academic and cultural activities at La Trobe University and in Melbourne generally. ■

## Greek Studies conference in August

La Trobe University will host the sixth biennial conference of the Modern Greek Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand from 2-4 August 2002.

The keynote speaker will be distinguished Greek scholar from Oxford University, Professor Peter Mackridge. More than forty scholars from Australia, Greece, Cyprus, England, France, Russia and Canada are scheduled to participate.

Organised by the Greek Studies Program in La Trobe's School of Historical and European Studies, the conference will be held on the University's main Melbourne campus at Bundoora and on its City campus in Franklin Street.

Further details from the convenor Ms Helen Nickas, Tel. 03 9479 2993 or Professor Stathis Gauntlett, Tel. 03 9479 2993. ■

## GRADUATION AT SHEPPARTON

A Tatura student at La Trobe University Shepparton campus, Anna-Maree de Leeuw, has won three prizes for outstanding academic performance. The awards were announced at a recent graduation ceremony at La Trobe University, Shepparton.

A third-year Bachelor of Commerce student majoring in accounting, Ms de Leeuw, 20, won the Certified Practising Accountants Australia Prize for the best performance in accountancy in her year, the Carrington Award for the best performance in a business subject in her year, and the Stubbs, Wallace & Partners Award for the best overall performance in an accountancy subject.

Ms de Leeuw lives at her family's dairy farm at Tatura and commutes to La Trobe campus at Shepparton daily. She was among graduates and diplomates from arts, business, commerce, tourism and hospitality, and

education who received their awards in a ceremony conducted by the University's Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Nancy Millis.

The occasional address at the ceremony was delivered by Mr Peter Bicknell, a partner with the local accounting firm Maxwell, Brown and Mountjoy.

Director of the Shepparton campus, Dr Brian Graetz, said La Trobe graduation ceremonies have become significant events for the Shepparton community.

'Another cohort of students has now completed their university studies in Shepparton, adding substantially to the pool of highly qualified people in the region.

'Graduation provides tangible evidence of the University's commitment to regional Victoria, and is a fitting way to celebrate student achievement.' ■

# Whole school development

## Can education reform help South Africa's fragile democracy?

How do you help integrate, heal and transform education in a racially diverse school system in post-apartheid South Africa?

That's a question being explored by Rejoice Ngcongco who recently spent six weeks as an Associate Distinguished Visiting Fellow at La Trobe University's Institute for Advanced Study.

An educationist from the University of Zululand, South Africa, Professor Ngcongco was in Australia to prepare two research papers on a concept known as 'Whole School Development'.

One paper dealt with the lessons and challenges of this concept for all of South Africa, and the other was a case study of a project in Durban South.

She says the goals of 'Whole School Development' include sharing experience and expertise by educators from different races and cultures, empowering schools to undertake 'action research' to help improve teaching and learning outcomes.

'The project is also a way in which my University can help the surrounding community.'

Professor Ngcongco's research is based in the Durban South region. Here five primary

schools from diverse population groups and circumstances were selected to work together on 'holistic development'. Each caters predominantly for a specific racial group, a remnant from the apartheid system.

'We explored the developmental needs of each school and then formulated an integrated training program that reflected the joint needs of the five schools.'

This was followed by a second phase in which the five schools were helped to undertake 'action research' – putting into practice and evaluating programs based on the results of the first research phase.

'The most striking issue to emerge was how enriching the experience of working across cultural and language divides had been for all concerned, from principals to pupils. Each group found strengths and weaknesses that helped them to see themselves in different ways.'

However, Professor Ngcongco warns that despite such early positive aspects of post-apartheid education reform, recent research has highlighted the urgent need to overcome a new 'separateness' in schools, including predominantly African schools, related to gender or class.



Professor Ngcongco: warning about a new 'separateness'.

'In these racially mixed schools, it is common to observe learners who are in the minority, playing and socialising in their own small racial groups.'

'These manifestations of separateness, although they are not racism, provide a breeding ground for racism to develop as a simmering undercurrent to the apparent calm of the school environment.' ■

## The road to peace in Ireland

Had those seeking peace in Ireland over the past century taken more notice of journalist and politician William O'Brien, lasting peace might have come much sooner.

Only now that those involved with the peace process have embraced O'Brien's principles, has the prospect of lasting peace become a reality.

O'Brien believed that peace and harmony were possible only if the antagonists moved away from the concept of majorities and minorities. Peace was achievable only if the totality of the interests of all involved – Catholics, Protestants, tenants, landlords, the Province of Ulster, the rest of predominantly Catholic Ireland, and Britain – were implemented in any peace accord.

And that, says La Trobe University historian, Dr Philip Bull, is precisely what has

happened in the first ever agreement between the opposing factions to bring the promise of enduring peace to the troubled island.

A world authority on William O'Brien and his role in Ireland's struggle for independence, Dr Bull's work is unique in the extent to which it recognises O'Brien as the figure who held the key to peace, but whose ideas were ignored for the best part of a century.

The Historical Association of Ireland has commissioned Dr Bull to write the volume on William O'Brien in the Association's Life and Times series on the leading figures in Irish history. It is now nearing completion.

Dr Bull says that O'Brien was heavily involved with the Irish nationalist movement from early youth and reached the zenith of his influence between 1898 and 1905.

He was elected to the House of Commons in 1883 and remained a Member almost continuously until 1918.

Although O'Brien stuck to his ideas until his death, he was marginalised and ignored. He campaigned against fellow nationalists, arguing that an independence for Ireland, which left the country partitioned on confessional lines, was not worth having.

'While he was ignored in his day,' says Dr Bull, 'O'Brien certainly looks good now, as the principles of National Reconciliation for which he argued so strongly are in broad terms the basis on which the contemporary Irish peace process has been based.'

Therefore knowledge of what O'Brien tried to bring about at the beginning of the century may give a deeper context to what is being achieved at its end.

# Thesis Eleven centre spreads the word on social theory



In conversation after the launch of the new centre, from left, Professor Markus, Professor Beilharz and Bernard Smith.

Has science become inaccessible expert knowledge – and the arts a sterile pastime?

Does the general aesthetic of everyday modern life render meaningless concepts such as ‘high’, ‘low’ or ‘mass’ culture?

Is there still place for the ‘traditional agent of cultural critique’, the public intellectual? Or has this role become a pretentious anachronism?

These were some of the provocative questions raised at the inaugural Annual Lecture and Seminar held over two days in April to launch La Trobe University’s new Thesis Eleven Centre for Critical Theory.

The lecture was delivered by Emeritus Professor George Markus, from the University of Sydney. He spoke on the ‘Paradoxical Unity of Culture’. Professor Markus is a specialist in the history of modern

and contemporary European philosophy and philosophy of culture.

His lecture was followed the next day by a three-hour seminar, led by eminent Australian cultural historian, Bernard Smith, which explored further many of the issues raised by the lecture.

La Trobe’s Professor Peter Beilharz is Director of the new Thesis Eleven Centre for Critical Theory. He says the Centre is named after an international, interdisciplinary journal launched 21 years ago to encourage the development of a broadly-based stream of social theory.

A former occupant of the prestigious Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard University, Professor Beilharz is a founding editor of *Thesis Eleven* and continues as a co-ordinating editor and review editor.

He says the Thesis Eleven centre will focus on theories of society, culture, and politics and the understanding of modernity. It aims to build bridges between leading thinkers and students, the arts and sciences, as well as to help the careers of graduates, especially at post-doctoral level.

Professor Beilharz is the author of seven books, ranging from fabianism, feminism, socialism and totalitarianism to the welfare state, utopias and postmodernity.

Deputy Director of the new Centre is Dr Trevor Hogan, a senior lecturer in social theory, who specialises in comparative, historical, urban and welfare sociology and the sociology of religion.

## Forthcoming events

Other *Thesis Eleven* centre events this year will feature Jeffrey Alexander, Yale University, on civil society and the Holocaust in America (4-5 July); and Craig Calhoun, Director Social Science Research Council, New York University, on the University system in America (17-18 July).

Further details from Tel: 03 9479 2753. ■

## A student to add value to your business ?

La Trobe University School of Business has expanded its Industry Practicum Program to make the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm of its final year Bachelor of Business students available to industry.

Students can be placed in private businesses or government organisations for about 15 working days, starting 15 July.

Marketing students could help with such things as competitor analysis, external communications review, publicity materials, marketing information systems, sales analysis, web page review and customer research and analysis. Human Resource Management students could be involved with areas including recruitment and selection, skills auditing, initiatives in leadership and performance analysis, training programs and career planning.

All students are supervised and supported by La Trobe academic staff and the University meets Workcover and professional indemnity insurance. There is no cost to employers, and a confidentiality agreement ensures company information is secure.

Enquiries to Manda O’Donnell, tel 9479 1620, or email [m.o'donnell@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:m.o'donnell@latrobe.edu.au).

## Global Business Law at La Trobe University

Two leading USA law professors will teach subjects in La Trobe Law’s Postgraduate Programs in Global Business Law during July. They are Professor James Cox from Duke University, and Professor Maureen O’Rourke, co-author of *Copyright in a Global Information Economy*, from Boston University.

From July 1 to 5 Professor Cox will teach ‘US Securities Regulation’ and from July 8-12 Professor O’Rourke will teach ‘US Intellectual Property Law’. Both courses will be taught at the Stamford Plaza Hotel in Collins St, Melbourne.

La Trobe Law offers individual subjects, a postgraduate Masters by coursework degree and a postgraduate certificate by coursework in Global Business Law. Program Director, Professor Gordon Walker, says the practice of law is increasingly a ‘global’ business and the La Trobe program enables Australian Law graduates to study law without the expense of going to the USA.

## La Trobe pioneers vital tool for student advocacy

La Trobe University's Institute for Education is making a major contribution to helping hundreds of Victorian secondary students achieve their maximum potential.

A team of La Trobe education researchers – led by Dr Bernie Neville, an Associate Professor at the Institute – created one of the vital elements of the Advocacy Project, a new initiative to help students.

Supported by the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training, the Advocacy Project was introduced into 160 Victorian State secondary schools in 2001. This followed a successful trial of a pilot program involving three schools in 1999 and a further 15 schools in 2000.

So successful was the introduction of the major thrust of the project last year that in 2002 it is being piloted as a middle schools program.

The Advocacy Project grew out of an idea developed in 1998 by Mr Brendan Schmidt of the Geelong Science and Technology Centre, Mr Jon Arthur, Principal of Corio Bay Senior College, and Dr Neville.

The basic concept of advocacy is that selected students meet regularly with one teacher who takes on the role of the advocate. The meetings are timed when students and advocates can share concerns and the student

experiences being listened to by a trusted adult.

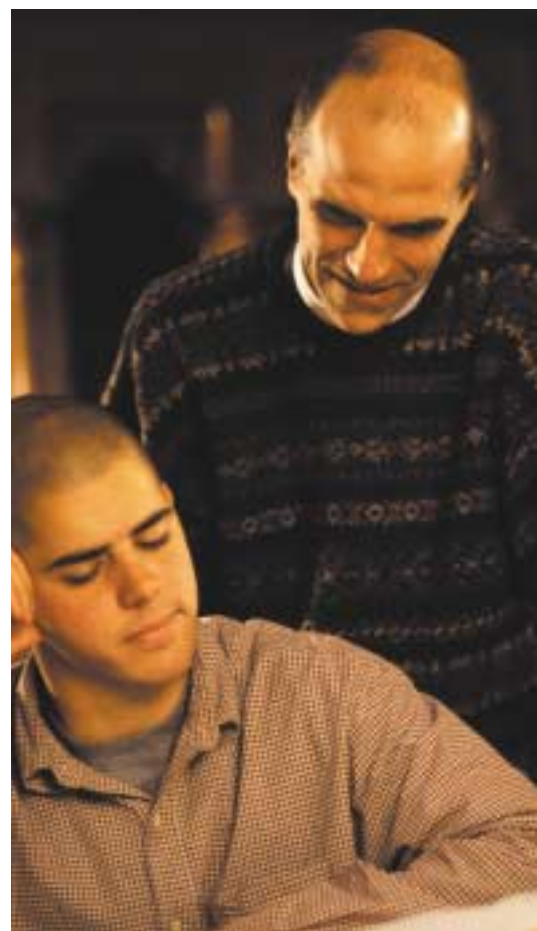
In some schools teachers nominate students for whom they believe advocacy would be beneficial and in other schools the students are selected randomly. The advocate supports students with issues relating to their well-being and learning and also helps with goal setting and life planning.

A evaluation program in 1999 and 2000 revealed that both advocates and students felt the project was making a major difference to both the personal and academic achievements of the student.

La Trobe Advocacy Project team member, Ms Tricia McCann, says the project reduced the student exit rate from schools to about one half to one third of what it would otherwise have been.

The La Trobe Institute for Education team developed the Archemeter, a major project tool. Available on the Net and accessible by a password, this is a series of 25 computer questionnaires to guide both advocates and students. Questions cover a wide range of fields including student learning styles, coping with discipline and responsibility, numeracy and literacy.

Advocates use the Archemeter to plan and guide their work with individual pupils and



Advocacy: making a major difference.

use different parts of it depending on individual student needs. Students in registered schools can access the questionnaires and plans from any computer. ■

## KEEPING CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

A La Trobe University student has played a key part in developing and documenting an innovative resource tool aimed at increasing students' school attendance.

Ms Anne-Maree Bucci, a fourth year student from the School of Social Work and Social Policy, undertook her final placement in 2001 helping to research and to compile the resource package for schools in the City of Whitehorse.

The resource tool aims to assist schools and parents in supporting young people to maintain their attendance and connectedness to the school community.

Working as an assistant to Ms Yvette Shaw, Coordinator of the Victorian Government-

financed School Focused Youth Service in the City of Whitehorse, Ms Bucci worked to overcome what Ms Shaw describes as the unacceptable level of absence from school by students in Year-9 and above.

Ms Shaw inaugurated the program through her interest in the problem of youth suicide and any relationship it might have with what she calls 'connectedness and resilience'. She says there is evidence that students who are resilient are less liable to attempt suicide. A major factor that builds resilience is 'connectedness' to their school largely shown by their attendance.

On any given school day in 2002, 20 per cent of Year-9 students will be absent from Victorian schools. On average, Year-9

students miss 20 days of schooling per year. Year-9 is crucial for students to display 'connectedness' because this is the year when schools must have relevance. Ms Shaw said the absence rate therefore had a huge bearing on the retention rate, triggering the project's early aim of identifying the reasons for absence.

The resource kit that Ms Shaw and Ms Bucci compiled offers definitions and strategies for dealing with school phobia and refusal, truancy, resilience and includes a checklist covering areas of influence, student referral form, material for parents and the involvement of community agencies and other material. The project will be presented at an education conference on 13 June. ■

# Holding it all together



Award-winning Australian children's Author, John Marsden, left, who has written twenty novels and sold three million books world-wide, invited participants at a recent La Trobe University conference to view mental health issues from outside their usual professional and research perspective. He is shown here with Dr Colin Riess, Director of the Bouverie Centre - Victoria's Family Institute. Dr Riess is a consultant psychiatrist specialising in family therapy, child and adolescent psychiatry.

Mental illness can shatter families. Unlike other health problems, it does not attract the same level of community recognition and sympathy. This makes it hard for families to reach out for support and leads to increased suffering for all involved.

Recognising this need, La Trobe University's Bouverie Centre recently organised a three-day conference titled 'Holding it all Together', opened by Victorian Health Minister, John Thwaites.

'Holding it all Together' was the first national conference to help children, families, service providers and decision makers in this complex area, by improving community response to the needs of the mentally ill.

Keynote speakers included John Marsden, award-winning Australian children's author; Dr Joanne Nicholson, from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and Associate Director of the Centre for Mental Health Services Research in the USA; Dr Adrian Falkov, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist from the UK; Dr Rob Moodie, Chief Executive Officer of VicHealth; and three members of the Edan-Armitage family who shared their experiences of mental illness.

Chairperson of the organising committee, Mr Brendan O'Hanlon said the conference highlighted how families often struggle heroically with the challenges of having a parent with a mental illness.

'These families try to stay together despite the incredible tensions created by a serious health condition.

'Parents have to cope with caring for children and dealing with mental health problems at the same time. Children have to deal with mum or dad having to go into hospital, changes in a parent's behaviour – as well as the stigma of having a mum or dad with a mental illness.'

Part of La Trobe University's Faculty of Health Sciences, 'The Bouverie Centre – Victoria's Family Institute', provides state-wide clinical, community and academic services from its base in Flemington.

Funded largely by the Mental Health Branch of the Department of Human Services, it helps individuals, family members, service providers and agencies in areas ranging from mental health and acquired brain injury to sexual abuse.



Health Minister Thwaites opening the conference.

The Bouverie Centre can be contacted on  
Tel: 03 9376 9844 or  
email: [bouverie.centre@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:bouverie.centre@latrobe.edu.au) ■

**La Trobe University**  
Sundays in August  
Bendigo :4 August  
Mildura & Shepparton :11 August  
Albury-Wodonga & Mt Buller :18 August  
Melbourne (Bundoora) :25 August

**2007 open day**

The right course for you