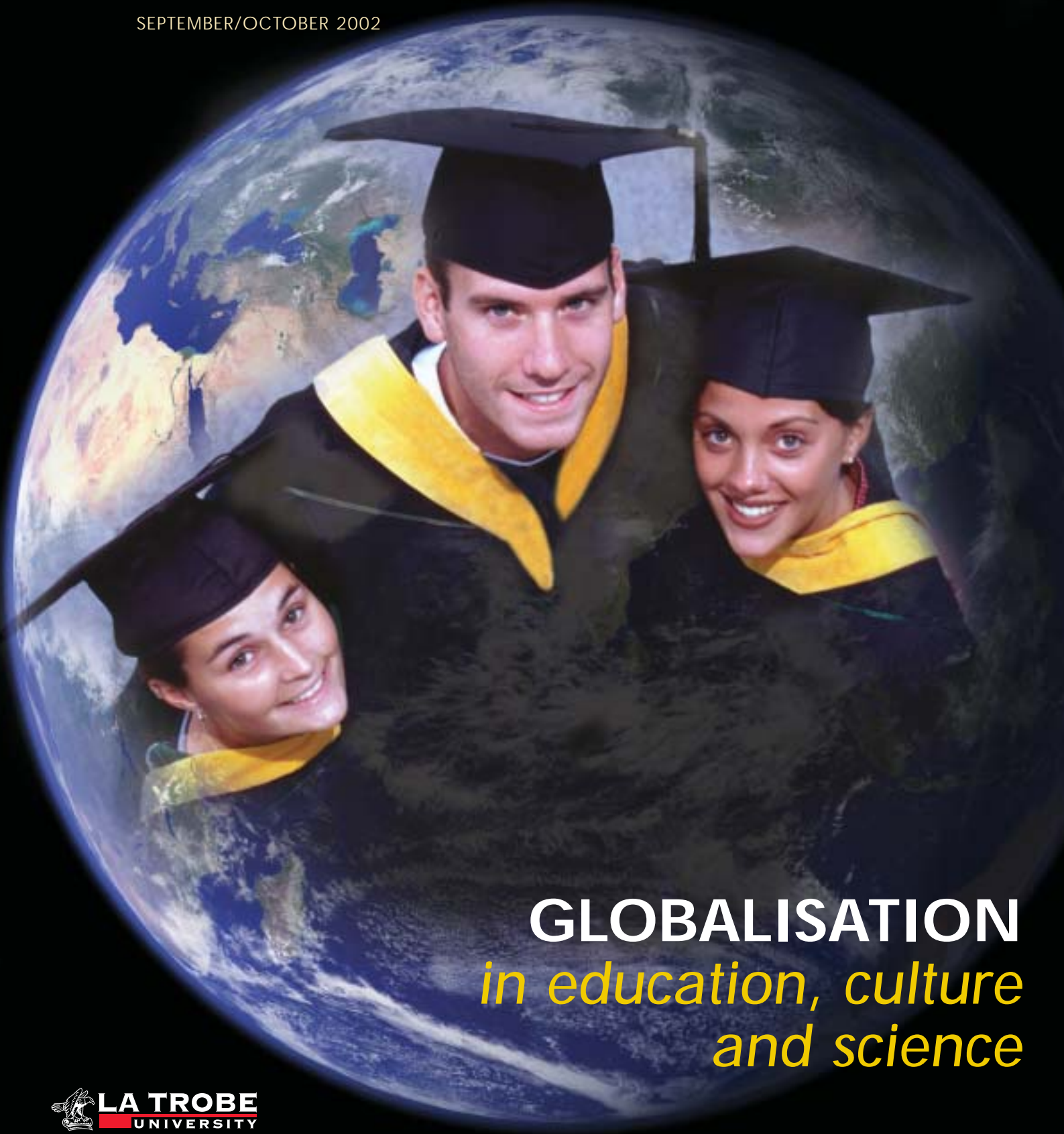


LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Bulletin

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2002



GLOBALISATION
*in education, culture
and science*

Bulletin

IN THIS ISSUE



Globalisation – its impact on education, culture and science – is the key theme of this issue.

La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne, looks at *The impact of globalisation on the role of universities*, see centre

pages, while celebrated Peruvian writer, Mario Vargas Llosa, a guest of the University during October, examined *Culture and the new international order*, page 7.

Internationally acclaimed Australian-born poet, Peter Porter, visited Australia to deliver the inaugural La Trobe University – *Australian Book Review* Annual Lecture on September 11. Titled *The survival of poetry*, a report appears on page 11. And this year's Nancy Millis lecture, by distinguished scientist, Professor Adrienne Clarke, highlighted *The real risk of GM foods – Global dominance of the market*, page 4.

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Enquiries and submissions to the editor, Ernest Raetz, La Trobe University, Victoria, 3086 Australia
Tel (03) 9479 2315, Fax (03) 9479 1387

Email: bulletin@latrobe.edu.au

Website: www.latrobe.edu.au/bulletin/

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Honorary Doctorate for MARIO VARGAS LLOSA



Mario Vargas Llosa, left, receives his Honorary Doctorate from Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne.

Celebrated Peruvian writer and political thinker, Mario Vargas Llosa, has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by La Trobe University in recognition of his 'distinguished contributions to literature, unswerving support for democratic institutions, and stimulating influence on academic activities at La Trobe University'.

Vargas Llosa, who also ran for the Presidency of Peru in 1990, was presented with the award at a special ceremony held on the University's Mildura campus.

Unlike many of his fellow Latin American 'magical realist' writers, Vargas Llosa's fiction has been described as 'hyper realism'.

Author of 13 novels, Mario Vargas Llosa previously visited La Trobe in 1993 when he spoke at an international symposium dealing with his work.

Since then, the author has maintained a close interest in the academic activities of the University, supporting the work of Hispanic and Latin American scholars.

His week's visit to Melbourne was sponsored by the University. He delivered a free public lecture at the Mildura Arts Centre (see report, page 7) and spoke to about 300 people at an interview forum with La Trobe Professor of Spanish, Roy Boland, at Readings in Carlton.

Humanities and Social Sciences' Associate Dean (Regions), Professor Alan Frost, says

the visit to Mildura highlighted the University's commitment to expanding arts and education in the Sunraysia district.

Mario Vargas Llosa has been Visiting Professor in numerous universities, including Cambridge, Columbia, Washington, Puerto Rico, Jerusalem and Georgetown, and Writer-in-Residence of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.

He has won numerous prestigious literary awards including Spain's Cervantes Prize in 1994, the Ritz Paris Hemingway Prize in France in 1985, the Castiglione de Sicilia Prize in Italy in 1990, and a National Book Critics Circle award in the United States in 1998.

A defender of democratic freedom and civil liberties, as President of PEN International in 1977 he campaigned for the civil rights of writers and intellectuals in Latin America and the developing world.

He left Peru after his unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1990 as candidate for Fredemo (Democratic Front). He now lives in London and Madrid. Since the restoration of democracy in Peru, he pays regular visits to his homeland. ■

See *Culture and the new international order*, page 7

La Trobe in top nine for ARC Research Discovery grants

La Trobe University researchers have been successful in securing 24 new ARC Discovery Research Grants worth a total of \$4.8 million over the next five years. This ranks La Trobe among the top nine universities in terms of the number of grants received, and third in Victoria after Melbourne and Monash.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Fred Smith, says 14 of these Discovery grants are in the Humanities and Social Sciences, testimony to the research strength of La Trobe University in this area. Projects receiving support cover a broad spectrum of social and historical issues.

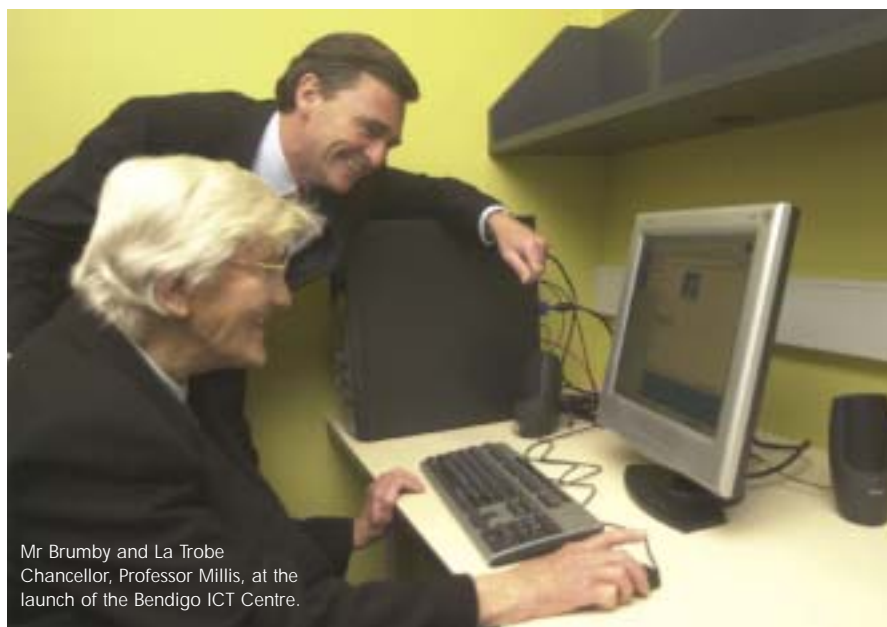
'These include the study of the threat to international security posed by HIV/AIDS, how Australians have responded to the social and political changes of the past two decades, the "Islamic threat" and its impact on the politics of Central Asia, the British colonization of New South Wales and the politics of friendship.

'Research into muscle function, the impact of clearing of Australian native forests on log-dependent invertebrates, the response of mitochondria to stress and advanced mathematics are examples of the nine new projects receiving support in the Sciences and Mathematics.'

Professor Smith says research into the disposal of biosolids from wastewater treatment plants is being supported through a ARC Linkage grant.

'Linkage - Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities grants will support the development of electronic access to seminal documents at La Trobe and participation of La Trobe researchers in the development of a National Electronic Performing Arts database and access to high performance computing.' ■

\$3m 'high-tech hub' provides new prospects for regional businesses



Mr Brumby and La Trobe Chancellor, Professor Millis, at the launch of the Bendigo ICT Centre.

Central Victoria's new \$3.2 million state-of-the-art technology hub – operated by La Trobe University to provide world class training, research and development – has been opened by Treasurer and Minister for State and Regional Development, John Brumby. The Bendigo Information, Communication & Technology (ICT) Centre, funded by a State Government Regional Infrastructure Development Grant, boasts

leading-edge technology equipment, supplied by Ericsson Australia. Ericsson has been working with La Trobe University to establish the new Centre.

Mr Brumby said Victoria was taking a leading role in turning smart ideas into good businesses, generating hundreds of new high-tech jobs for people throughout the State. The new centre would put Bendigo in the forefront of ICT in regional Australia. It

would provide rural and regional Victorians with the infrastructure needed to secure more investment and jobs for their communities, boosting the competitive capacity and confidence of country Victoria, he added.

Chancellor of La Trobe University, Emeritus Professor Nancy Millis, said the Centre was the first State Government funded, University endorsed facility established in regional Victoria to contribute to regional economic development. It would also enhance La Trobe's regional role across the State, helping the University to work closely with business, industry and the community.

Tony Mallegeorgos, Director of Marketing and Business Development for Ericsson Australia, said his company was working with more than 3,000 organisations locally, and over 100,000 globally, to transfer creative ideas into commercial reality.

La Trobe University has appointed Ms Jennifer Jones as Manager of the Bendigo Centre. She has 30 years experience in the IT industry, having worked in business development and management roles for IBM Australia and the Queensland Government. ■

THE ANNUAL NANCY MILLIS LECTURE

THE REAL RISK OF GM FOOD

Global dominance of the market



Professor Clarke, right, and Professor Millis before this year's lecture.

Those who own the intellectual property rights over genetically modified (GM) plants and foods can dictate the terms of trade and dominate the global market place.

This – rather than possible adverse health effects of GM crops – was the critical issue, said Professor Adrienne Clarke, when she delivered the Annual Nancy Millis Lecture at La Trobe University recently.

Professor Clarke said genetically modified plants and foods marketed to date have shown no risks to health beyond those of conventional plant breeding. Around 300 million people world-wide had eaten GM foods for more than six years, with no reported adverse effects.

However, too often, Australia has sold off the rights to publicly-funded research at a very early stage to get paltry returns, she said, in her lecture titled *Genetically*

Modified crops and the changing face of agriculture.

'This is an issue which we must focus on if we are to retain a position in agriculture, and indeed in the biotechnology industry in general. We must own at least some of our genes and germplasm.'

Professor Clarke said the owners of intellectual property would 'call the shots', setting the licence fee at what the market will stand. They would dictate where production would occur and which nations would have access to products and services.

On safety, she said there was no evidence that food from GM crops posed any more risk than traditional foods. Safety depended on the quality of food handling and manufacturing.

Professor Clarke said there had been a 'base' of more than 30 years of research

into genetic engineering and 16 years of research into GM foods.

Humans ate DNA every day, she added. It was degraded in the gut and there had been no evidence of 'foreign' DNA invading the human genome.

Some 30,000 crop field trials had been carried out, and 5.5 million farmers in 13 industrial and developing nations had already planted 60 species of GM crops. Fifty-two million hectares of GM crops were planted 2001.

Professor Clarke said the environmental benefits of GM crops included no toxic residues in soil and less tillage and spraying of crops. This translated into economic benefits.

Citing GM cotton crop figures for the year 2000, she said the benefits included cost savings of \$72-91 a hectare for chemical pesticides and \$60-80/ha for herbicides.

An eminent plant cell biologist and Laureate Professor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Clarke is a former Chairman of CSIRO and Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria.

Contributions by Professor Millis

The Annual Nancy Millis lecture is held in honour of Emeritus Professor Nancy Millis AC, Chancellor of La Trobe University. A leading biological scientist, she has also been a key figure in government policy relating to water use, trade waste, sewage, conservation and agriculture and gene regulation.

One of Professor Millis' most important contributions has been the regulatory system for gene technology in Australia. She chaired the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee between 1985 and 2000, leading to 'The Gene Technology Act' 2000. ■

See also Robyn Williams, page 12

FRAGILE X

New study may tell us more about autism

The National Institutes of Health in the USA have awarded La Trobe University scientists another major grant for research on Fragile X Syndrome, a common form of intellectual disability, and autism.

The grant of \$170,000 per year for five years, is a sequel to an earlier collaborative Institutes research grant to Dr Danuta Loesch, a Senior Research Fellow in La Trobe's Department of Psychological Science, who leads the study.

Dr Loesch says Fragile X Syndrome (FXS), relatively unknown and largely undiagnosed, has a significant impact on society, and may be a key to understanding other neuro-developmental disorders such as autism.

She will continue the research with two main collaborators, Dr Richard Huggins of La Trobe's Department of Statistics, and Professor Randi Hagerman, from the University of California Medical School.

The new study adopts a multidisciplinary approach to behavioural and molecular issues related to both FXS and autism. It has already attracted a number of other collaborations amongst scientists from La Trobe, University of Melbourne and Monash Medical Centre.

FXS is caused by an unstable mutation in the X-linked (FMR1) gene. Large-sized ('full') mutations are usually associated with 'silencing' the FMR1 gene, which stops the production of this gene's protein product essential for normal brain development.

Dr Loesch says a major topic of the new study concerns autistic-like behaviours in individuals affected with the fragile X full mutation.

'Our earlier findings revealed many similarities between these behaviours in fragile X, and in non-fragile X individuals diagnosed with autism.'



Photo courtesy of the National Fragile X Foundation, USA.

She says the cause of autism is unknown. It is also not known whether the same genetic 'make up' predisposes children to either autistic behaviours in fragile X syndrome, or to non-fragile X autism.

'Our new study will use cutting-edge methodologies to investigate these problems. We expect it will reveal a great deal more about the nature and origin of autistic-like behaviours.'

Another major area of the new study is concerned with brain-behaviour effects of small fragile X mutations ('premutation').

'Our data has revealed that, although the FMR1 gene is active in carriers of these small mutations, the level of genetic information in the form of messenger RNA (mRNA) is elevated,' she says.

'Messenger RNA is vital as it transmits genetic information from DNA to the protein-making system. An increased amount of mRNA may lead these carriers to experience some psychological and learning problems.'

'Indeed, parallel with these findings, we obtained, by applying powerful analysis of family data (developed by Drs Huggins and Loesch) the strongest evidence so far of the presence of such problems in individuals carrying a fragile X premutation.'

'What makes these revelations even more important is that the carriers of these small-size mutations are not uncommon in the general population. A conservative estimate of prevalence ranges from one in 300 females to one in less than 800 males.'

'The finding that a limited number of older males carrying the premutation develop tremor and other neurological changes is of greatest concern.'

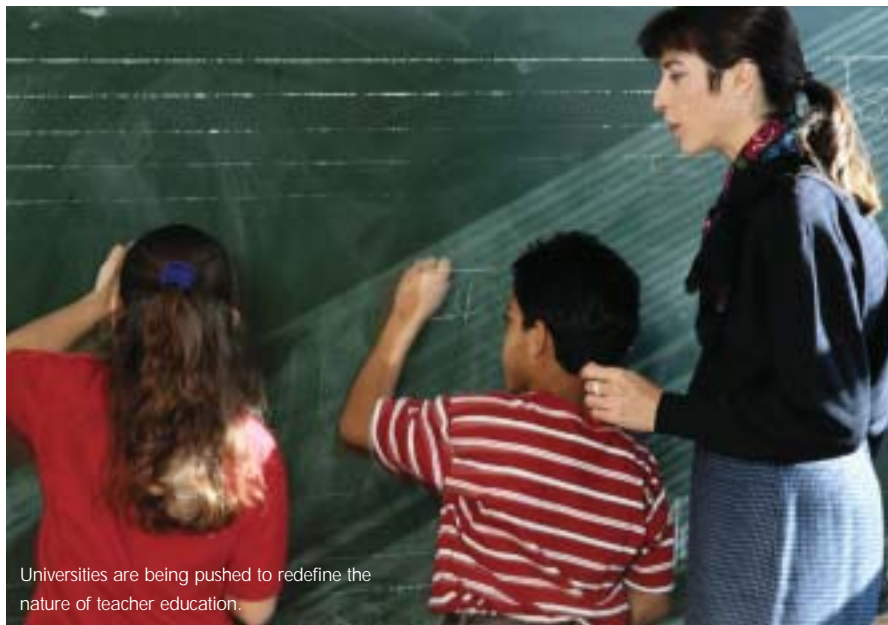
'The purpose of the new study is to approach this problem in greater depth, firstly, by establishing how common these clinical manifestations are in male premutation carriers of different ages.'

'Secondly, we shall investigate the relationship of clinical and psychological changes in these carriers with molecular changes, especially with the levels of FMR1mRNA.'

Findings from the study, says Dr Loesch, are likely to change research and clinical approaches to Fragile X, and provide information to guide future treatment. ■

People before blackboards

La Trobe initiatives redefine teacher education



Universities are being pushed to redefine the nature of teacher education.

While Australia, like most countries around the world, faces a critical shortage of teachers, Dr Lorraine Ling says the teacher shortage in Victoria is starting to bite now – and should reach its peak in 2004 and 2005.

Dr Ling, an Associate Professor in La Trobe University's Institute for Education, says La Trobe is making a distinctive contribution in addressing this increasing shortage.

'Innovative teacher training courses from the Institute for Education, introduced up to five years ago, are now cutting in, providing additional specialised teachers.

'Other initiatives started more recently will result in more teachers in schools from 2003.'

Dr Ling says the Australian Council of Deans of Education has been concerned for some time about the impending teacher shortage: 'Universities were not training enough people to fill the gap. Both Federal and State governments, which previously appeared unaware of the situation, now recognise the problem'.

And there is no shortage of people wanting to become teachers. This year La Trobe had 914 applications for fewer than 50 graduate primary teacher-training places.

Dr Howard Nicholas, Head of the Institute for Education at La Trobe's Melbourne (Bundoora) campus, says Australia's teacher

shortage is exacerbated by shortages in the USA, UK and Canada, countries from which Australia traditionally recruits teachers when its own numbers fall.

With high wages and attractive conditions, these countries are recruiting qualified Australian teachers as well as those still in training programs.

Dr Ling says Australian universities have been required to look at new ways to re-allocate facilities for teacher education that were diverted to training for other professions several years ago.

Universities are being pushed to redefine the nature of teacher education, Dr Nicholas adds: 'We have to re-conceptualise teacher training. It is a complex and intellectual challenge that can be solved only in universities'.

La Trobe's Institute for Education began this redefinition process several years ago and came up with a number of new teacher training programs.

In consultation with the Victorian Department of Education and Training, the Institute designed and implemented a Graduate Diploma in Technology Education to re-train people with trade qualifications to teach design and technology studies in secondary schools, especially in VET in VCE programs.

The Victorian Government provides scholarships for students in the second year

of this course and the Opposition has also suggested this type of training. 'It is fortunate and unusual that we now have both sides of politics recognising the problem and offering solutions,' says Dr Nicholas.

La Trobe is the only university so far offering the graduate level course for technology education in Victoria.

The University introduced the program – a two-year Graduate Diploma – in 2001. It is now taught on three campuses, at Melbourne (Bundoora), Albury-Wodonga and Bendigo and is also available at Shepparton and Mildura. The first cohort of about 50 will graduate at the end of this year.

Other La Trobe initiatives are in adult education. One was the introduction five years ago of a Graduate Diploma in Vocational Education and Training for teachers and trainers in adult learning, such as TAFE and industry training programs.

Students do part of the course at a TAFE institution and then articulate to La Trobe where they are given credit for their TAFE subjects. A good example of cross-sector co-operation, the La Trobe Institute for Education has also inaugurated co-operative programs within the University to increase teacher numbers.

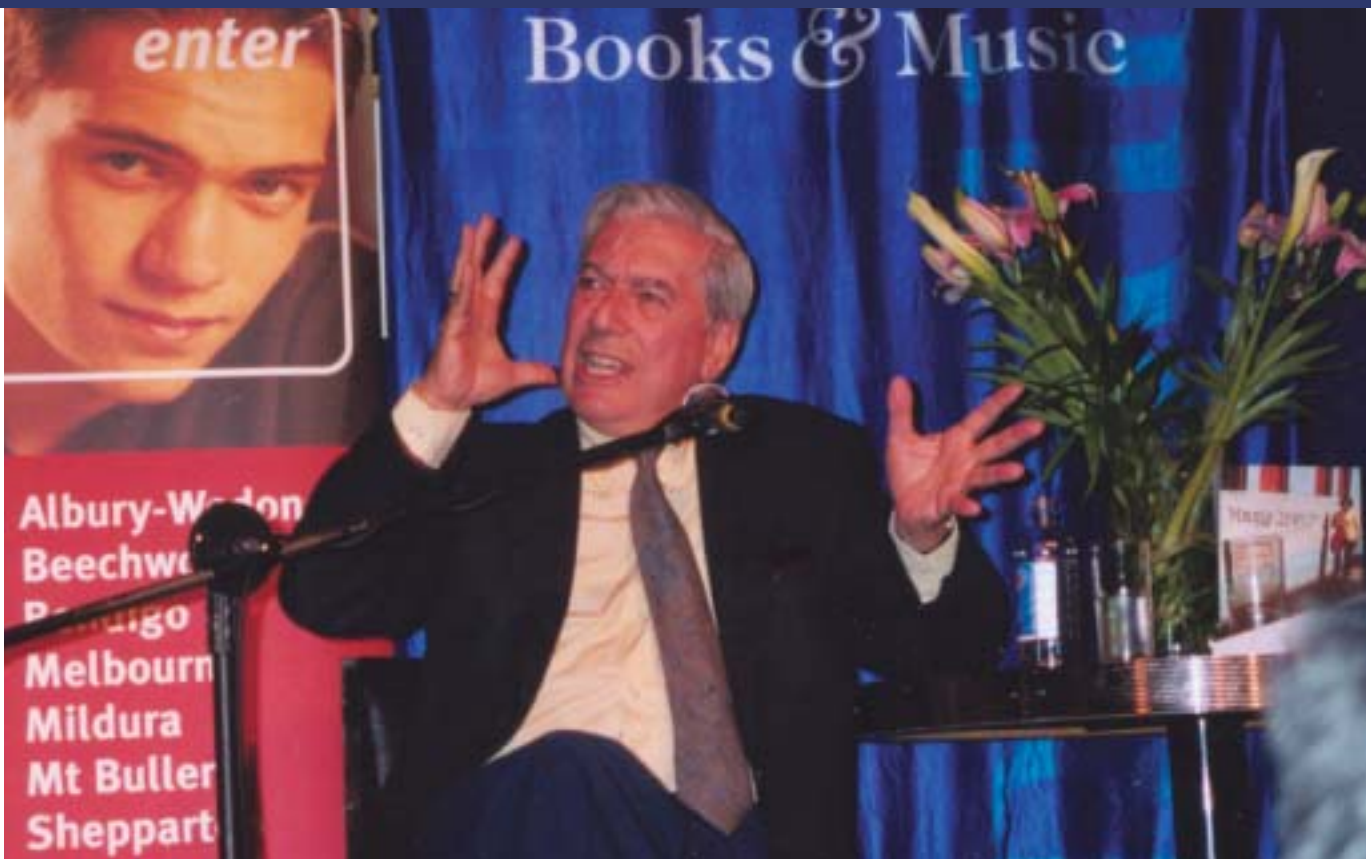
This year, the Institute introduced a double degree, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Science Education, with the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering.

Next year, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science will introduce a double degree, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Arts Education.

'Both initiatives provide La Trobe graduates with a way into teaching,' says Dr Nicholas.

La Trobe is one of few universities to receive funds for education programs under the Federal Government's Backing Australia's Ability scheme. The scheme provides subsidies for extra places in targeted areas.

Academic Programs Officer in the Institute for Education, Ms Marion Sargeant, says La Trobe pre-service teacher education courses are very popular and attract many overseas students – including 18 Canadians this year. ■



'The argument in favour of "cultural identity" and against globalisation betrays a fixed, stagnant conception of culture, one that has no historical basis. How many cultures have remained unchanged, identical, throughout the ages?'

Vargas Llosa on culture and the new international order

How will the growing interdependence among nations – 'in a world profoundly unsettled by the advances of globalisation' – affect cultural life?

Delivering a keynote public lecture at the University in October, the prominent Latin American author and thinker, Mario Vargas Llosa, above, said there were 'tenaciously held prejudices' opposed to globalisation. The argument was that globalisation could mean the 'disappearance of all the cultures of the world under the steamroller of the powerful Anglo-Saxon culture'.

This vision was not the exclusive preserve of political minorities of the extreme left, he added. 'It is a view shared by political sectors of the left, the centre and the right. Perhaps the most notorious example is that of France, where governments undertake periodic campaigns in defence of French "cultural identity".'

However, he said this process was not the product of globalisation, but rather of modernisation. Globalisation was the effect, not the cause, of modernisation. While it was true that modernisation caused many traditional ways of life to disappear, it also opened up opportunities. He defined 'culture' as the knowledge, beliefs, ideas and myths

that help us comprehend the world. And culture was 'inextricably intertwined' with economics and politics.

'The argument in favour of "cultural identity" and against globalisation betrays a fixed, stagnant conception of culture, one that has no historical basis.' How many cultures have remained unchanged, identical, throughout the ages?

'The notion of "cultural identity" is a dangerous one because, from a social point of view, it represents an artificial construct of doubtful conceptual depth. From a political viewpoint, it poses a danger for the most precious of human conquests: liberty.'

When the concept of identity 'is not used in an exclusively individual sense and aspires, instead, to represent a social conglomerate, it becomes reductionist and dehumanising. When individuals are examined on their own terms, and not as mere epigones of collectivity, then we find that individual differences prevail over collective features'.

In this regard, Vargas Llosa said, 'globalisation should be welcomed, because it expanded considerably the margin for individual liberty'.

'The disappearance of borders, and the prospect of an interdependent world, have become an incentive for new generations to try to learn and assimilate other cultures – which they will now be able to make their own if they so desire.'

He said cultures did not 'require the protection of bureaucrats or commissars'; they did not 'need to be confined within bars, or to be put in quarantine, in order to remain alive and robust. All this does is to turn them into folklore, and it makes them wither on the vine. Cultures need to live in freedom, exposed to continual give and take with other, different cultures, to become enriched and invigorated. In this way they can evolve and adapt to the constant flux of life.

'In antiquity, Latin did not kill Greek,' he concluded. 'On the contrary, the artistic originality and intellectual profundity of Hellenic culture left an indelible mark on Roman civilisation. It was through the Romans that the poetry of Homer, and the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, reached the whole world.'

The text of the lecture has been published by Antipodas, Journal of Hispanic Studies. Copies are available from the Department of Spanish, Tel: 03 9479 2577. ■

'To the horror of many, higher education has been drawn into the basket of trade items that are negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs in Services (GATS).'



THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

The following is an edited text of speeches delivered recently by La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne, at Hangzhou in China and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

For Australia, as for some other countries which are major exporters of higher education services, it might reasonably be assumed that the impact of globalisation can only be favourable.

This is certainly true to the extent that the universities now depend to a considerable degree on export earnings to ensure survival. But, despite its advantages, globalisation may bring with it a major downside in contributing over time to a radical change in the role and nature of the university itself. For it seems likely to accelerate a process, already evident domestically in student patterns of demand and stimulated further by export of education, whereby the focus of university activity is narrowed and an essentially vocational or professional orientation supervenes.

The arrest of this lurch into narrowly functional programs and of the obsession with teaching to the virtual exclusion of other scholarly activities in universities represents one of the great challenges of the day for universities.

It is in this context that I turn to the issue of globalisation and the prospect that it may well entrench utilitarian attitudes towards higher education. Globalisation is a broad term, capable of numerous subtleties of definition, but in the university sector it clearly cannot be

divorced from developments in internationalisation.

Universities in recent years have expanded their international activities enormously and it might seem reasonable to conclude that such expansion has undermined the supposedly introverted ivory towers of academia and endowed universities with much wider horizons. But I should like to suggest that there is a danger that the current emphasis on export of higher education may well have the unfortunate effect of leading to the entrenchment of a narrower functional view of university education.

Internationalisation in practice encompasses two distinctive approaches. Firstly, there is internationalisation in the sense of promoting academic links and developing joint programs, encouraging and facilitating student and staff mobility, and so on. This is well understood, and has been practiced by universities in varying degrees for many years; and sundry schemes now exist to encourage such internationalisation. Secondly, there is internationalisation in the sense of exporting higher education. This practice is now very common in most countries with well-established university sectors, and in some, including Australia, the earnings from this kind of export activity form a basic, if not indispensable, source of income to supplement a declining public investment.

In Australia, for example, the higher education industry is amongst the top nine export earners and nearly 15 percent of the student enrolment nationally comprises international students. In addition, such

export activity no longer encompasses just degrees and diplomas but it includes a massive array of customized programs, many taught in distance mode or offshore. Naturally, this kind of international activity is much encouraged by governments, which are unwilling or unable to provide full support for their greatly expanded university sectors. As this export industry has expanded and become a major source of income, higher education has lost its exclusive claim to being a public good and has, in substantial manner, become a service; and, as such, to the horror of many, it has been drawn into the basket of trade items that are negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs in Services (GATS).

This development holds out some advantages for the exporters in terms of facilitation of business, notably in such areas as issue of visas, recognition of qualifications, transfer of money and the capacity to operate competitively in other countries. For countries who are recipients, as opposed to providers, the disadvantages are potentially great, not the least in threatening to stunt the growth of local universities and education systems. But, more generally, there is a strong likelihood that the inclusion of higher education as a service in the GATS basket will accelerate the process, already apparent in the export of education services, whereby universities concentrate more and more on the vocational and the professional and whereby, contrary to UNESCO's explicit aspirations, higher education becomes assimilated to a commodity. For the available data indicate that the preponderance of programs offered



internationally are of a vocational and/or professional nature, notably in such fields as business, management, health, ICT and the like – and the GATS negotiations can only entrench this practical orientation for higher education services.

This is entirely understandable. But coupled on the one hand with the increasing predilection of domestic students for such practically useful programs and on the other hand with the propensity of governments to embrace funding schemes for universities which reflect student patterns of enrolment, it is reasonable to ask what the prospects are for universities to maintain a broader role as diversified centres for scholarship. This is an uncomfortable question. For, whereas many observers would doubtless be surprised, even shocked, to learn that universities can no longer sustain their customary broad role, few have any notion of the enormous cost in terms of infrastructure support that is needed for such a role.

Probably still fewer can produce any constructive ideas as to how such an aspect can continue to be funded. Indeed in many countries, Australia included, the government, despite sporadic protestations in favour of a knowledge-based society, appears to espouse the view that higher education, even in its most functional form, represents a cost, and it spends much time and effort in attempting to devise schemes to reduce that cost. In such a context, where a decreasing contribution to an increasingly training-oriented sector is

regarded as inappropriately expensive, the prospects of investment to maintain a presence in pure scholarship seem remarkably remote.

So, to put the issue paradoxically, I am suggesting that in contemplating the role of universities, a greater commitment is demanded to the supposedly irrelevant before they become the unequivocally moribund; or, less dramatically, that the promotion of the practically useful must not become an excuse to supplant traditional fields of scholarship – as is happening, for example, in the case of languages in English speaking countries.

I conclude with two related questions: Do we still believe in universities that transcend an entirely training role and, if so, can such a model survive the practical orientation that is likely to flow from current governmental attitudes and the globalisation of higher education? With regard to the latter, it is important to recognise that globalisation has the capacity surreptitiously but relentlessly to accelerate an already nascent transformation of universities to an essentially functional role with the consequence of decay, and probable death, for many fields of study.

Some would doubtless rejoice at such an outcome, and some might even expect La Trobe to do so, given its significant international profile, but I should like to express the hope that all will resist such a stance as likely to transform universities over time from multi-faceted centres of

Network for Innovation

The First General Assembly of the Global University Network for Innovation: Asia and the Pacific (GGUNI-AP) was held in late September in Hangzhou, China.

Delegates came from 11 nations throughout the region, as well as from Europe and the United Nations.

La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne, third from left, was the Australian representative.

The opening speaker was China's Vice-Minister for Education and Chairman of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, Dr Zhang Xinsheng, fifth from the right.

The Hangzhou assembly was followed by a UNESCO conference in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

An edited text of Professor Osborne's speeches to both these bodies is featured on these pages.

learning to mere training enterprises purveying commodities.

Globalisation cannot be avoided or ignored; but it can be massively beneficial provided that it is not permitted to become the instrument for the impoverishment of universities and thereby of the societies that they serve. ■

International education A key to economic prosperity



Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Osborne speaks with a group of La Trobe University exchange students.

La Trobe University this year, through its International Network of Universities (INU) scheme, inaugurated an extra 13 scholarships for students to live and study overseas, with credit towards their degrees. (See *La Trobe students go global* in the July issue of the *Bulletin* for a full report.)

At least twenty per cent of Australian students need to include an international component of study in their university degrees within the next two decades.

Opening the biennial University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) Conference in Canberra recently, La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne, said this ambitious target was part of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) comprehensive blueprint for reform of the higher education sector.

'In terms of internationalising student experience Australia has an acute imbalance,' Professor Osborne said. **'We receive the third highest proportion of international students in the OECD but very few Australian students are studying in overseas countries.'**

'A better balance is essential to an international approach to education that will reap benefits for Australia's students.'

Professor Osborne said the target could be achieved with help from the Federal Government – which has been asked by the AVCC to support selected students from all Australian universities to undertake international study – and with the success of programs such as UMAP, which has a membership of 29 countries.

He said benefits for students included opportunities for 'ambassadorial' roles, and the internationalisation of academic qualifications, helping them to become more competitive in an increasingly globalised job market.

'For these programs to expand, the resource base of universities will need to be increased to cover the costs of supporting students' travel and living expenses.' ■

Benefits of advanced studies at La Trobe

Professor Efrain Kristal's visits to La Trobe University tend to have enduring effects on his life.

One result of his latest stay at La Trobe as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow in the University's Institute for Advanced Study will be articles – and perhaps a book – on a comparison of themes in Australian, US, and South American literature.

'As I become more familiar with Australian literature, I am noticing that some of its themes are common to those of other new world literature,' says Professor Kristal who chairs the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The first time he was at La Trobe, nine years ago, to participate in a seminar on the famous South American novelist and political thinker, Mario Vargas Llosa, he met

Romy Sutherland, an Australian postgraduate student of Spanish Literature, who later became his wife.

Another effect of his most recent visit, from July to mid-September, will be *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*, scheduled to appear at the end of next year.

Professor Kristal, who was born in Lima but went with his family to the USA at the age of 11, is editing and writing the introduction to the volume for Cambridge University Press. Living and working on campus enabled him to liaise personally with one of the 17 experts on South American literature from around the world contributing to the book's chapters, Professor Roy Boland, Head of La Trobe's Spanish Program.

'The ambience at the Institute for Advanced Study is very conducive to research and

writing. I have finished several scholarly articles and the first draft of my introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*', he said. In addition to research and writing, he also gave three lectures: on the political novels of Mario Vargas Llosa at the Institute for Advanced Study, on colonial Latin American literature at the Institute for Latin American Studies, and on his most recent book on Jorge Luis Borges at the University of Melbourne, as well as informal lectures to undergraduates.

Professor Kristal holds a PhD in Spanish Literature from Stanford University. He studied philosophy at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in Paris, and was a fellow of the von Humboldt Foundation in Berlin. He has written numerous articles on Latin American literature, philosophy and the arts, and the comparative study of North and South American literature. ■

Peter Porter launches NEW LITERARY LECTURE SERIES



Peter Porter, centre, with ABR's Peter Rose, left, and La Trobe's Robert Manne after the lecture.

Sweet dreams, my Master.
Dreams may lie. But dream,
for when you wake you die.

- From *The Rake's Progress* by Stravinsky and Auden.

Poetry is the world's most 'unquenchable commentator', according to internationally acclaimed, Australian-born poet, Peter Porter.

'It does us the signal service of miniaturising our pain while intensifying our feelings,' he said, delivering the inaugural La Trobe University /*Australian Book Review* (ABR) Annual Lecture.

Winner of the Queen's Medal for Poetry and one of the world's finest poets writing in English, Porter launched the series with a lecture on *The Survival of Poetry*.

Resident in London since 1951, Porter has published more than twenty volumes of poems, translations and collaborations with artists.

He is a regular contributor to ABR, of which La Trobe University is now chief sponsor.

The lecture, held on September 11, dealt with the function of poetry and inspiration in an unsettled, secular twenty-first century.

'I will not employ the word "terrorism" tonight,' Porter told his audience, 'but outline how poetry, however desperate the

political reality, will help us cope with life in its normal as well as its extreme states'.

He said literature, 'an art that finds its apotheosis in poetry', made the world manageable.

It helped keep us sane in the face of Apocalypse and in the fight against 'the ever-fixed mark, the certainty of doom'. He likened poetry to 'that "internal exile" spoken of by citizens of tyrannical regimes'.

However, he said modern taste preferred literary talks to concern themselves with 'more up-to-the-minute matters, such as style wars, celebrity tables, and power games.

'I haven't mentioned the new formalism, language poetry, rap, the nationalist grid, lap-dancing with theory, and post-colonialism.

'The latest dogmatists in the universities, however, are guilty of a specially modern kind of "treason of the clerks" in abandoning the canon of seriousness in favour of detective stories and science fiction.' ■

The full text of the lecture appears in the October issue of the ABR. For subscriptions, telephone 03 9429 6700 or email abradmin@vicnet.net.au.

La Trobe is chief sponsor of ABR

La Trobe University has become the major sponsor of the *Australian Book Review* (ABR), one of the nations leading magazines of literary review and comment.

La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne, said the partnership was in the interest of La Trobe students and staff, as well as furthering the University's commitment to the humanities and social sciences in Australia.

La Trobe's links with ABR go back many years. The University previously sponsored the magazine's key essay. Associate Professor in Politics, Robert Manne, is chairperson of ABR and Reader in History, John Hirst, is a member of the Editorial Board.

Robert Manne said Australia needed a high-quality, questioning magazine aimed at scholars, students and serious readers: 'This strengthened partnership will contribute in significant ways to the intellectual health of Australia.'

ABR editor, Peter Rose, said the La Trobe sponsorship would ensure that ABR continued to publish significant essays on literary and cultural issues by leading writers.

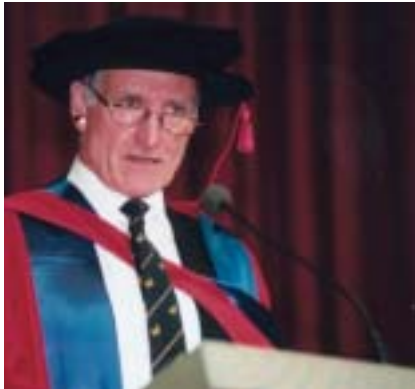
'The recent profusion of essays, anthologies of essays and high-profile lecture series is surely one of the most heartening features of political and cultural life in Australia. For many years, ABR's role in this renaissance has been considerable.

'Fittingly, the first essayist this year was La Trobe's Professor Richard Freadman, Director of the Unit for Studies in Biography and Autobiography, who provided an incisive essay on Susan Varga and life-writing.'



Address 'Frankenfears'

GE solutions need critical thinking



Forty years ago, said ABC science broadcaster Robyn Williams, Rachel Carson wrote the book *Silent Spring*, dealing with the impact of chemical pollution caused by pesticides and herbicides

Since then, the world has been hoping for a biological solution to these problems. Yet when the solution arrived, in the form of genetic engineering, the opposition – based on 'Frankenfears' about the transplantation of genes – was overwhelming.

To deal with these fears, he told graduates at a recent degree conferring ceremony on the Melbourne (Bundoora) campus, the problem had to be divided into two categories – the science and the politics.

'The science is on a level with mobile phones. I've never seen a reason for anyone sensible to have a mobile phone. On the other hand, it seems to me there is a fairly good case for genetically modified plants and crops, and maybe even animals in certain circumstances,' he said, citing a current problem with potato virus in Victoria as an example that might have

been solved by genetic engineering. 'We are living in an age of uncertainty, when nothing can absolutely be proved safe or useful.'

A changing world demanded a critical view, he added. 'And I am inspired by the leadership of people like Nancy Millis, the Chancellor of this University, who, with others, has looked very sternly at the changes involved in genetic sciences in this country. I'm sure she would not let anything even a slightly bit whiffy get past the front door.

'But it is for the citizens to make up their minds, not simply to look to the elite, the experts. I hope your background in science and humanities will enable you to be as critical as people like Nancy Millis and other people from this university have proved to be.' ■

Interstate travel for abortion compromises care

A new La Trobe University study has confirmed that many Australian women travel interstate to obtain pregnancy terminations.

The study of Medicare records examined access to abortion services in the 16 years to the year 2000. It was published in the October 2002 issue of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

It found major interstate movements are from Queensland to New South Wales,

from Tasmania to Victoria, and from the Australian Capital Territory to New South Wales.

Women who travel interstate for this procedure bear the costs of travel and time to compensate for the inadequacy or shortcomings of local services. They are also not ensured of continuity of care and other social support.

Researchers from La Trobe University's Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health

and Society said the situation highlights the consequences of the difficulties of access to pregnancy termination.

Ensuring equitable access to this health service remains a public health issue that must be understood at a national level in order to be managed through State-level mechanisms, the researchers said. ■

Helping Iraqis feel at home

La Trobe University is helping 500 Arabic-speaking Iraqi families in the Shepparton district, identifying educational, cultural, religious and other factors that influence how they learn English and settle in to the area.

As well as assisting English language teachers, the project will provide information on the effects of cultural

traditions of the mainly Shiite Moslem community in relation to the provision of medical and social services.

The project team, from the University's Institute for Education, comprises Dr Lynda Yates, Dr Michèle de Courcy and Dr Howard Nicholas. Team leader, Dr Yates, said the community was closely knit and keen to preserve its values.

'It has been quite a challenge for Shepparton to welcome a group of this kind, as some of their cultural and religious traditions are very different from those of the majority of the population,' Dr Yates said.

'For example, some families are not comfortable for girls above primary grades to attend co-educational classes, or for women to travel to classes by public transport or attend mixed-gender classes.'

Most came originally from Iraq, but some had lived for long periods in Iran before arriving in Australia.

Dr Yates said while there had been many studies in larger population centres into how new arrivals coped with learning English and other aspects of settlement, this was one of the first examining problems across generations in a rural area. ■

Australia's first Doctors of Social Work

Australia's first two recipients of a new practice-related Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degree – as opposed to a traditional PhD – graduated at a ceremony on the University's Bundoora campus during September.

They are Dr Nora Ruzzene and Dr David Nilsson, the first candidates to gain these professional doctorates from the University's Faculty of Health Sciences.

Director of Postgraduate Programs in the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Ms Margarita Frederico, said it was the first time in Australia that the degree of Doctor of Social Work (DSW) had been awarded.

The new degrees follow the introduction, three years ago, of a number of other professional doctorates in the Faculty of Health Sciences, in fields including occupational therapy, nursing, public health and physiotherapy.

Ms Frederico, a senior lecturer and Deputy Head of School, said the doctorates comprised a thesis and course-work that involved advanced studies in social work theory and social policy and focused on the development of practice.

'They enhance the quality of practice in an increasingly difficult social work environment. It is important to have practitioners with more depth working in this field,' Ms Frederico said.

Dr Nilsson, Manager (Patient and Family Services) at the Alfred Hospital, is in charge of the hospital's social work department. He is originally from New Zealand where he completed his first



Dr Ruzzene, left, and Dr Nilsson, after their graduation.

degree, a Bachelor of Arts, at the University of Wellington.

After coming to Australia he completed a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Work and a Doctorate of Social Work, all from La Trobe University.

'I deliberately chose to do a Doctorate in Social Work rather than a Doctor of Philosophy degree because it is practice related,' Dr Nilsson said. His thesis examines the consequences of health care practice in social work.

Dr Ruzzene's thesis was also closely related to her work. The co-ordinator of a multi-cultural counselling and welfare team at the Moreland Community Health Service, her thesis was on community health services in Melbourne's northern suburbs. She graduated initially from the Phillip Institute, but completed both her Master's degree and Doctorate at La Trobe University. ■

Patrick McCaughey to give Joseph Brown lecture

La Trobe University's second Joseph Brown Lecture will be presented by Dr Patrick McCaughey on Tuesday, 26 November 2002 at 7pm at the John Scott Meeting House, Bundoora Campus.

The title of the free public lecture is *Retreat and Engagement in Modern Australian and*

American Landscape Painting. The lecture honours Dr Joseph Brown's generosity and commitment to Australian art.

Dr McCaughey is a former Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. He is now Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University, Director of Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford in Connecticut, and Director of the Yale Centre for British Art.

Further details from Rhonda Noble, Curator of Art, tel: 03 9479 2111. ■

Qld literary award for Robert Manne

La Trobe Associate Professor of Politics Robert Manne, has won the Queensland Premier's Literary Award for the best work advancing public debate.

The book, *In denial: the Stolen Generations and the Right* was written to correct perceptions that the removal of Aboriginal children had been exaggerated. ■

FLORENCE ART POST

A first for Australia

La Trobe University art historian, Dr Alana O'Brien, is spending three years in Florence delving into the heart and soul of Renaissance art, politics, religion and commerce.

She went to Florence in early September, one of only four experts in Renaissance art chosen from around the world each year to carry out a fascinating but painstaking task.

With three colleagues from Russia, Spain and England, her task – officially called the Medici Archives Project – involves examining millions of letters sent to and from the Medici Court from the 16th to 18th centuries.

Housed in the Florentine State Archives, the letters, to and from many parts of the then known world, cover a wide variety of subjects.

Dr O'Brien is the first Australian to have been awarded a fellowship for the Medici Archives Project since its inception a decade ago.

She and her three research colleagues will join eight others, primarily from America and Italy, cataloguing the letters under such subject headings as works of art, tapestries, textiles, costumes, festivities,

music, medicine, religion and significant people.

'Our task is to translate relevant sections of letters and compile a database that will be an invaluable tool for researchers and art historians,' Dr O'Brien said.

Her undergraduate and postgraduate studies, all completed at La Trobe University, have equipped her well for the task.

Much of her PhD research took place in Florence. It delved into the life of a Florentine saint, San Filippo Benizi, a friar of the Servite order and the cult that grew up around him in the church of SS Annunziata between 1475 and 1671. She perfected her Italian while researching in Florence.

In the second and third year of the fellowship, she will be given time to undertake personal research. Her project will be to examine the 16th century patronage of the SS Annunziata church founded by the Servite friars in 1250.

Her interest is in the relationships between those using the church for various purposes and the Medici family that dominated Florentine art, trade and politics for three centuries.



Dr O'Brien in front of a copy of a fresco of the Annunciation by Pontormo in the Cappella Capponi in the Church of Santa Felicità, Florence.

One reason why people visited the church was devotion to an image of the virgin that since the 14th century has been attributed miraculous powers. The image is still there.

La Trobe University established a Centre at the Melbourne (Bundoora) campus in August to house the Italian Australian Institute that aims to encourage and support study and research into all areas of the Italian presence in Australia. ■

NEW COURSE LAUNCHED WITH BEST WESTERN HOTEL CHAIN

La Trobe University has joined forces with Best Western, one of the world's largest hotel chains, and Westpac, to develop the La Trobe University 'Best Western Australia Professional Certificate Program'.

The venue for the program will be the International Hotel School at La Trobe's Beechworth campus.

The course – to engage professionals and managers in life-long learning – was recently launched by the Head of the School of Tourism and Hospitality, Professor Peter Murphy, and the Director of the Beechworth Campus, Ian Burke, at the Best Western National Congress.

The program will feature training in accommodation and food services management, along with profit-focused financial management.

Further modules will be developed to assist transition to other La Trobe programs. The first intake expected in February 2003. ■

La Trobe student company wins awards

A company formed by ten La Trobe University students won the major award, and another important prize, at the annual Victorian Young Achievement Australia Trade Fair.

The company, Imagyan, received the highest accolade of the fair, the Best Overall Company as well as first place in the Best Merchandising category.

The accolades were for their work in conceiving, designing, manufacturing and marketing the No Fail Cocktail comprising a cocktail glass and a transparent wrapping. With the wrapping around the glass, listed ingredients are poured to the marked height, hence a fail-safe cocktail.

The La Trobe team, from the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Law and Management, beat 61 other entries from academic and secondary institutions at a fair held at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre.

The creation of Imagyan, which is sponsored by La Trobe University, 3M Automotive and Rio Tinto, is part of activities in the subject Learning and Doing.

While the University had participated in the Young Achievement event for the past five years, this was the first year that the two faculties involved had accredited the subject. La Trobe's Young Achievement



Smiles all round: from left, Mr Antinopolous, Mr Yiu, Ms Yen Ta and Mr Skoufis.

Australia co-ordinator, Professor Robin Jeffrey, said winning the awards was a worthwhile exercise in real-world commercial activity.

Students involved are Toby Yiu (managing director) George Skoufis (corporate affairs director), Nathan Graham (company

secretary), Yen Ta (finance director), Nick Antinopolous (human resources), Vy Hoang (IT director) Kathy Heba (manufacturing director), Alex O'Flaherty (assistant manufacturing), Peter Fiasco (marketing) and Trudy Leigh (sales director). ■

Study to improve travellers' rights

A report following an investigation by a student team from La Trobe University has brought into sharp focus the rights – and lack of rights – of users of Melbourne's public transport system and the City Link tollway.

Four students – Kirrily Graydon, Scott La Rocca, Ivan Hristovski and Sabrina Morlacci – supervised by Faculty of Law and Legal Studies lecturer, Ms Liz Curran, wrote the report while on placement at the West Heidelberg Community Legal Service.

The report evaluated the systems' fairness, discussed problems facing disadvantaged groups and the rights and legal defences of users. It also analysed the powers of transport officials and accountability measures used to prevent their abuse.

Focusing on City Link drivers and public transport passengers who intended to do the right thing but encountered difficulties in doing so, it offered a series of recommendations aimed at making the operation of the two systems fairer.

The exercise formed part of the students' subject Clinical Legal Education. They spoke to individual users, groups and associations of users, and others associated with the systems, including operators.

The report was sent to the Premier, the Minister for Public Transport, relevant government departments, as well as the Opposition and various non-government organisations.

Following several reports, the Victorian government has decided, among other measures, to introduce a transport

ombudsman to investigate complaints about services and ticket inspectors, a right commuters lost when the system was privatised.

Another group of students from the Clinical Legal Education program produced a report on the juvenile justice system in Victoria. ■



Ian Robinson in Umpires'

Team of the Century

Students in La Trobe University's Department of Computer Science and Computer Engineering have high regard for their dedicated and friendly Associate Professor, Dr Ian Robinson.

Few realise he has another claim for their admiration, as one of the four greatest field umpires in the last 100 years of VFL and AFL football.

His position as one of the greatest umpires is official. In mid August the Australian Football League Umpires Association named four field, four boundary and four goal umpires as its umpiring 'Team of the Century'.

Dr Robinson had charge of 353 VFL/AFL games, including nine grand finals, between 1971 and 1987. The other three greatest field umpires were Jack Elder (1906-22), Rowan Sawers (1977-97) and Bryan Sheehan (1986-).

Dr Robinson had been a VFL umpire for four years when he came to La Trobe University in 1975, joining the then Department of Applied Mathematics as a lecturer in computer science after gaining his PhD and teaching at the University of Melbourne.

In 1977 he was one of the pioneering staff of the newly created Department of Computer Science at Melbourne (Bundoora) campus. His academic and umpiring careers went in tandem until he retired as an umpire in 1987.

Inclusion in the Umpires' Team of the Century is the latest of many football and

academic accolades. He is also a life member of the AFL and a Member of the AFL Hall of Fame, as well as being Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering.

Dr Robinson still recalls the sensation of being on the MCG before 116,000 fans for the start of the 1973 Grand Final between Richmond and Carlton.

'When you hold the ball aloft and hear the roar of the crowd at the start of a grand final, you feel as if your whole body is rising off the ground,' he said.

'The ultimate triumph for a football team is to win the Grand Final. The umpire feels his triumph as the game starts, by being selected to control the most important match of the season,' he said.

Dr Robinson's moment of elation in 1973 was short lived. Within minutes of his bouncing the ball, Richmond's Laurie Fowler had thumped Carlton's John Nicholls with hip and shoulder, knocking him out cold.

When Nicholls regained consciousness several minutes later, Ian awarded him a free kick with a 15 metre penalty, and Nicholls kicked the first goal of a fiery game that took all of Ian's skill to control.

That was one of many memorable incidents. Another was the 1980 night Grand Final when in the final seconds, with Collingwood less than a goal in front, the siren sounded.

'But I did not hear it and Kerry Good of North Melbourne marked the ball. I awarded

him his kick, and he scored the winning goal'.

Dr Robinson learned later that officials had disconnected the siren from the public sound system seconds before, in preparation for the post match speeches. Neither players nor umpires on the field heard it.

He also umpired the match between Hawthorn and Geelong after which police charged Leigh Matthews with striking Neville Bruns of Geelong.

'The incident happened behind my back, so I was not even called as a witness during the subsequent court case,' said Ian. ■

Below: Dr Robinson, today. Top of page: in the heat of battle on the playing field in the mid 70s.

