

Bulletin



Tackling **DEMENTIA**

Health issue of the future



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Tackling dementia - Australia's major health issue of the future, see stories starting page 3

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Better company disclosure helps in the long term

Australian companies need to focus more carefully on how they report against their social and environmental performance to remain competitive in the global environment.

That is the message from La Trobe University Professor of Accounting, Carol Adams who, with Dr Geoff Frost from Sydney University, recently completed an in-depth comparative study into sustainability reporting issues.

The research compared how 100 United Kingdom companies and 100 Australian companies reported sustainability performance information – including environmental and social issues – and was funded by the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

Professor Adams says: 'It is time for Australian companies to take note that their long term survival and international competitiveness depends on their ability to limit social and environmental risks, attract and retain the best employees and build trust in their relationships with stakeholders.'

'To do this they need to be aware of their social and environmental impacts in order that they can act on them.'

Professor Adams says the research results were quite startling. 'Companies in the UK are, overall, far more effective at reporting against criteria in this area than are Australian companies. The results showed that more than three-quarters of the British companies surveyed reported at least one instance of quantified data on social and environmental sustainability, whereas more than two thirds of companies in Australia provided no quantified data on performance in these areas.'

Similarly, 83 per cent of Australian companies failed to identify specific targets, compared with 41 per cent in the UK, while 88 and 51 per cent respectively failed to identify performance against targets.

'And it does not bode well for the future,' says Professor Adams. 'At least 85 per cent of Australian companies failed to provide any information regarding future targets

and only 23 per cent reported that any performance measures were incorporated into their management systems.'

With the Commonwealth's Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services Inquiry into Corporate Responsibility, the findings from the Adams/Frost research are timely.

'The lack of insight into how companies incorporate information on social and environmental performance into their strategic decision making processes is most worrying. Given the increasing pressure on companies to report, this study raises the question as to how much social and environmental performance information is being collected and whether or not companies are using it when making strategic decisions,' Professor Adams concludes. ●

A copy of the report is available from c.adams@latrobe.edu.au



Professor Adams: lack of data is most worrying.

Some 200,000 Australians suffer from dementia. Estimated costs to the nation are \$5.6 billion and rising. La Trobe University has a key role in three new initiatives to tackle a condition that looks set to overtake depression as Australia's major health issue by 2016.

Major role in dementia care

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY is playing a major role in the Victorian and Tasmanian segments of an \$8.36 million Federal Government plan to increase the skills of health professionals working with people who have dementia and their families.

More than 7,500 health workers around Australia are expected to benefit from specialised tertiary dementia training and scholarships under the new scheme over the next three years.

Special Dementia Training Study Centres will enable health professionals to access dementia training and scholarships, with students having work placements involving dementia care.

Professor Rhonda Nay, Director of La Trobe's Australian Centre for Evidence Based Aged Care and Head of the Gerontic Nursing Clinical School, will coordinate the Victoria and Tasmania segment of the scheme.

Associate Professor Susan Koch, co-director of the centre, will lead the nursing stream, one of five in the project.

Professor Nay says the project aims to improve the experience of people living with dementia by providing the latest in research-based education for qualified and student nurses, as well as medical and allied health professionals.

It will bring together dementia experts from various disciplines to create innovative educational approaches and content.

'The collaboration will maximise the extent to which health professionals can draw on dementia expertise and research evidence in their daily practice and reduce duplication of effort. It will also provide the basis for much-needed interdisciplinary dementia research,' Professor Nay says.

The project's five streams deal with medical, nursing, allied health, community support and rural-regional issues.

Announcing the scheme in June, the Minister for Ageing, Senator Santo Santoro, said that by increasing the



skills and knowledge of tertiary-trained health professionals, the lives of many of the estimated 200,000 Australians who have some form of dementia would be improved.

Each lead organisation, in partnership with other tertiary institutions, health-care and service-industry providers, will establish a Dementia Training Study Centre covering one or more states or territories. They will develop and promote undergraduate and postgraduate dementia curricula and training resources, and offer a number of dementia-specific scholarships.

Other institutions in the Victoria-Tasmania collaboration include Monash University, the National Ageing Research Institute, University of Melbourne, University of Tasmania, the Victorian and Tasmanian divisions of Alzheimer's Australia, Bendigo Health, with support from Bundoora Extended Care Centre, St Vincent's Health and Bayside Health. ●

Evaluation a priority

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY psychologist, Dr Colleen Doyle, is Project Director of the \$1.3 million national evaluation of the Dementia Health Priority Initiative, an Australian Government initiative to help people with dementia.

Dr Doyle is a member of the Lincoln Centre for Ageing and Community Care Research in the University's Australian Institute of Primary Care.

Announced in the 2005 Federal Budget, the Dementia Initiative involves an outlay of \$320.6 million over five years to support people with dementia and their carers.

Dr Doyle will work with three team leaders in the evaluation consortium:

Continued page 4

New research role to diagnose and manage pain

La Trobe University is also part of a new \$2.2 million three-year project to establish and operate a Dementia Collaborative Centre for Consumers and Social Research.

Financed by the Federal Department of Health and Ageing, the new Centre links a number of research institutions, including La Trobe's Australian Centre for Evidence Based Aged Care.

The Centre, a joint initiative with the Bundoora Extended Care Centre, will conduct research into the diagnosis and management of pain – one of five 'themes' covered by the project.

Centre Director, Professor Rhonda Nay, who also heads La Trobe's Gerontic Nursing Clinical School, said she is delighted that the University's expertise in research into dementia and Alzheimer's disease has been recognised in this way.

Research financed under the new Dementia Collaborative Centre aims to improve the quality of life of people with dementia and their carers.

The Centre operates out of Queensland University of Technology's Kelvin Grove campus through the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, coordinating arrangements with collaborators and associates nationally and internationally.



Dementia research, training, and evaluation: Professor Nay, top, and Dr Doyle, below.



La Trobe in EU education link

La Trobe University is a major partner in two of four new projects creating educational links between Australia and the European Union.

The involvement with European higher education follows La Trobe's success, together with five other partners, in winning a European Union Centre earlier this year. This will further help build its European expertise over the next few years.

The four new projects have been jointly funded for \$1.7 million (AUD) by the Australian Government and the European Commission.

Studies covered by the projects will range from international relations and security to environmental sustainability programs.

Twelve Australian and 14 European universities will participate, enabling more than 160 Australian undergraduates to study in Europe for a semester.

The La Trobe Director of the Innovative Universities European Union Centre, Dr Philip Bull, said the University is involved in one project which links Macquarie, Flinders, Griffith, Murdoch and Newcastle Universities in Australia with the University of East Anglia (UK), Bodenkultur University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (Austria) and Linköping University (Sweden).

This project covers building an interdisciplinary collaborative program in business, environment, science and technology.

In the second project, La Trobe is grouped with Macquarie and Flinders Universities in Australia with Malmö University (Sweden), University of Cyprus, University of Rome (Italy) and Utrecht University (The Netherlands) on a project entitled 'Global Citizenship: European and Australian perspectives' ●

Evaluation a priority

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Associate Professor David Dunt, University of Melbourne, Dr Richard Rosewarne, Applied Aged Care Solutions, and Ms Lynne Pezzullo, Access Economics.

Trained in psychology and epidemiology, Dr Doyle's main interests in gerontology are in dementia care, quality assurance and residential care.

The team she heads will evaluate more than 17 projects, part of the three large measures contained in the Dementia Initiative: research to improve care initiatives and early intervention programs; creation of over 2,000 dementia specific Extended Aged Care at Home places; and additional dementia specific training for up to 17,000 aged care workers.

Dr Doyle says the objective of the

national evaluation is to describe what effect the initiative has had on people with dementia and their carers and to evaluate what added value has been given to dementia care in Australia as a result of the Initiative.

She says a major challenge of Australia's ageing population is the predicted increase in people affected by dementia, currently some 200,000. ●

Open wide!

New \$1 million Oral Health Lab at Bendigo

A NEW ORAL health teaching laboratory paving the way for a new generation of dental professionals to meet the needs of regional Victoria was opened on the La Trobe University Bendigo campus in June.

The \$1million facility, for regional students wishing to study oral health therapy, was opened by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mr Daniel Andrews.

La Trobe Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Hal Swerissen, said the new laboratory was only the second dental teaching facility opened in Australia in 60 years. Mr Andrews also launched the new Bachelor of Oral Health degree which is being delivered for the first time this year at Bendigo.

Professor Swerissen said the support of the Victorian Government, in partnership with Dental Health Services Victoria and Bendigo Health, was instrumental in setting up the new degree.

As well as the new 31 chair laboratory, existing nursing laboratories have been refurbished for the new course, providing a first-class environment for learning the techniques of oral health therapy.

Professor Swerissen said the innovative new course involves oral health students studying alongside allied health students,



Mr Andrews, right, and Professor Swerissen with first year oral health student, Casey Mitchell.

enabling graduates to be ‘active and knowledgeable professionals in the community’.

He said some 50 people applied for 12 places offered this year. Applicants came from a variety of backgrounds, mostly from regional Victoria. Twenty places will be available in 2007 and 30 in 2008.

‘In the next few years, the Bachelor of Oral Health has the potential to train 90

therapists over the six semesters.’

Professor Swerissen said an important feature of the course is the hands-on real-life experience provided by clinical placements, using both public and private dental settings across Victoria.

He said plans are progressing for the development of a new ten-chair dentistry teaching clinic and pre-clinical laboratory at Bendigo Health scheduled for completion next year. ●

Chaffey Building at Mildura

A NEW home for the Faculty of Law and Management in Mildura – the George and William Chaffey Building – was opened in late June by the Chancellor, Mrs Sylvia Walton.

The Faculty conducts Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Business undergraduate degree courses in Mildura for more than 70 students.

The new building, in Deakin Avenue, Mildura’s central business district, provides a lecture hall and seminar room, state of the art audio visual equipment as well as offices for lecturers and administrative staff.

Head of Business, Professor Malcolm Rimmer, says the University will also conduct postgraduate courses, short

courses and professional update courses at the new premises.

He says links have already been forged with local industry groups. The Sunraysia Branch of Certified Practising Accountants (Australia) was launched at the new building in May and the Victorian Law Institute conducted workshops there for Mildura members in April.

Head of the Mildura campus, Professor Alan Frost, said the new building reduces pressure on teaching facilities at the main campus where new Nursing and Social Work courses were introduced this year.

The building is named in honour of local pioneering industrialists, George and William Chaffey. ●



Outside the Chaffey Building, from left, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart; Council member and Chair of the University’s Mildura Regional Advisory Board, Mr Stefano de Pieri; Chancellor Walton and Mildura Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Frost.

Dig locally, think global

Archaeologists and historians combine to write the history of the modern world

Historical archaeology is a comparatively new field, introduced in the USA less than four decades ago.

Yet, according to Tim Murray, La Trobe University Professor of Archaeology and Head of the School of Historical and European Studies, it is particularly relevant to Australia because it relates largely to the transmission of cultures and ideas from the 'Old World' to the 'New'.

Such is its growing importance that Professor Murray was recently the first archaeologist invited by the University of Cambridge to present its 2006 Smuts Commonwealth Lecture Series.

He gave the four lectures on aspects of historical archaeology which he describes as 'a large and complex field that has grown swiftly in North America, South Africa and Australia'.

Professor Murray says the late Jim Deetz in his book, *In Small Things Forgotten*, defined historical archaeology as 'the spread of European culture throughout the world since the 15th century and its impact on indigenous peoples'.

Given its genesis as the archaeology of European colonisation of North America, historical archaeology has always sought to deal with two major concerns.

The first is how to contribute to disciplines such as history and anthropology – and to persuade their practitioners that the archaeology of the modern world has something significant to offer.

The second is how to articulate local, regional, national and global scales in interpretation and analysis.

Historical archaeology, says Professor Murray, has always been concerned with the transnational – the great flows of people, material culture, technology and capital that left Europe for the peripheries and have been washing back and forth ever since.



Relics of our colonial past: An aerial view of Victoria's largest archaeological excavation, Casselden Place, Lonsdale St, Melbourne, in 2002. The historic dig involved La Trobe University, Heritage Victoria, heritage consultants and the site owners.

His lectures focused on issues including settler-indigenous relations, establishment of colonies, transfer of agricultural, manufacturing and managerial technologies, movements of people and material culture, and development of cities in the modern world. They explored both national and transnational issues.

Professor Murray says over the past 40 years historical archaeologists have sought to contribute to a broader understanding of how new societies were created from old, either emigrant or indigenous societies, and how class, ethnicity and gender have played themselves out in the nations created out of imperialism and colonialism.

'The pace and intensity of interaction between people scattered all over the globe rapidly increased during that time, and the pace and intensity of social and cultural change matched this.

'These have been the centuries of mass production and mass consumption and of the increasing industrialisation of all aspects of life. They have been understood as having the potential to create a global social and cultural uniformity that might crush the identities of those societies and cultures which lose the capacity to generate and sustain distinctive identities.

'In the last decade or so, these have become highly sensitive matters as people contemplate the consequences of global markets and their local impacts.

'Equally sensitive are the challenges societies face from movements of people – be they economic refugees, asylum seekers, or 'illegals' – and from flows of culture, both to and from the countries of the West and within the West itself.'

The lectures will be published under the title of *Transnational Archaeologies*.

Quest for improved anti-cancer drugs

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY is helping to develop more effective drugs for the treatment of a range of cancers.

Professor of Biochemistry, Don Phillips, and Australian Research Council Fellow, Dr Suzanne Cutts, recently received a \$208,000 National Health and Medical Research Council Development Grant to improve the performance of the commonly used anti-cancer drug doxorubicin – also known by the trade name Adriamycin.

The grant was one of only nine awarded this year in Australia, of which only two were awarded in Victoria.

Doxorubicin is used to treat a wide spectrum of tumours. It remains the benchmark against which all new anticancer drugs are compared.

However, says Professor Phillips, greater use of doxorubicin remains limited by several factors which need to be reduced or eliminated for the drug to be more effective.

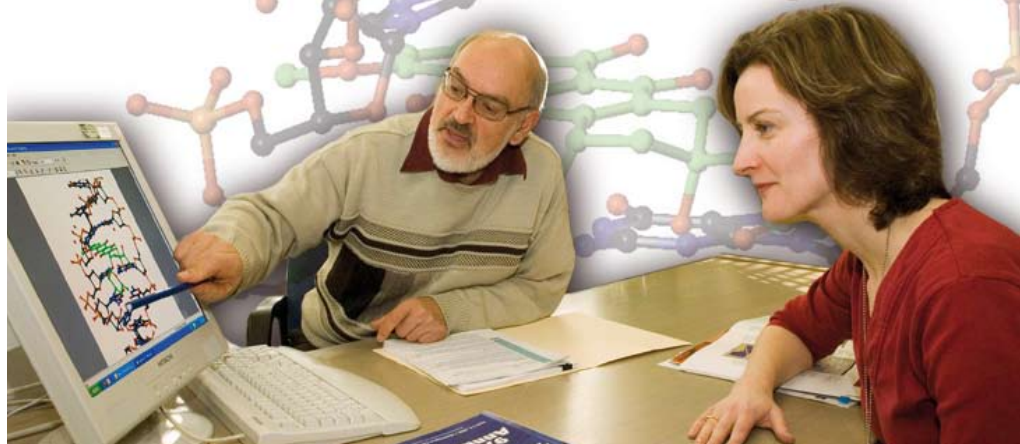
It is cardiotoxic which means that it can damage heart muscle and the total drug received by individual patients must therefore be minimised. It also produces side effects common to most anticancer drugs, and patients can develop resistance to its use over time.

The latest research aims to reduce or eliminate these factors, enabling its more widespread use.

Professor Phillips says that previous research in his laboratory has shown it is possible to activate doxorubicin by interaction with formaldehyde, a simple but highly reactive chemical that links doxorubicin to DNA.

Doxorubicin-DNA linkages are termed 'covalent adducts'. Tumour cells have elevated levels of formaldehyde which originate from within the cells themselves.

These levels can be enhanced substantially by treatment with formaldehyde-releasing prodrugs such as AN-9 developed by Israeli scientists, Professor Abraham Nudelman of Bar Ilan University and Dr Ada Rephaeli of the University of Tel Aviv, with whom the La Trobe team works in close collaboration.



Professor Phillips and Dr Cutts: decreasing the level of unwanted side-effects.

By treating tumour cells in culture with doxorubicin and a formaldehyde-releasing prodrug, a massive increase of doxorubicin-DNA adducts was observed.

Dr Cutts says that cancer cells treated with this combination of doxorubicin and formaldehyde-releasing prodrug undergo more widespread cell death compared to conventional doxorubicin treatment.

Details of research illustrating this were published with Dr Lonnie Swift, a research Fellow in Professor Phillips' laboratory, in the May 2006 issue of the journal *Cancer Research*. Importantly, cancer cells that were previously resistant to doxorubicin also undergo cell death.

By designing and testing a new series of formaldehyde-releasing prodrugs, Professor Phillips and Dr Cutts have identified a new formaldehyde-releasing prodrug called AN-193 that is even more efficient at activating doxorubicin than AN-9. Several important potential advantages arise from the ability to form these more cytotoxic doxorubicin-DNA adducts.

Because doxorubicin is more cytotoxic when in the form of drug-DNA adducts, it may be possible to administer it at a lower dose than doxorubicin alone. This would decrease the level of unwanted side-effects.

New prospects for tumour-localised treatments

Doxorubicin adduct formation also offers new prospects for tumour-localised treatments because the activating agent, being a small, chemically simple compound, can be localised in high concentrations within tumours, hence localising the cytotoxic response to the tumour.

There is now considerable interest in the possible clinical advantages to be gained by the co-administration of doxorubicin, together with a formaldehyde-releasing activating agent.

Professor Phillips says that as a result of the new grant, this concept is now able to be tested on human tumours in an animal model. The objective is to demonstrate improved responses in both doxorubicin sensitive and resistant human breast tumours in mice in order to establish whether this is a viable treatment option for future clinical development.

The tumour volume will be measured in response to single agent doxorubicin treatments, and compared to combinations

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Non-fundamentalists a key to peace

RELIGIOUS non-fundamentalists must play a key role in solving the problem of ever increasing violence, according to La Trobe University's Shepparton campus PhD candidate, Dr Frank Purcell.

'Extreme fundamentalism within Christianity and Islam threatens peaceful co-existence in a globalised world. To overcome this threat, non-fundamentalist religious leaders must take back the initiative from violent fundamentalists.

Dr Purcell expressed these views at a recent seminar, *Religion, Violence, Peacemaking*, at the Shepparton campus, based on research for his second PhD – into the role of religion in violence and its potential role in peacemaking.

Aged 75, Dr Purcell is a former priest who already has a doctorate in theology.

Dr Purcell said that the religious element in many current conflicts was obvious, citing examples of sectarian war in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants, the war between Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholics and Albanian Muslims, Jews versus Muslims in Palestine-Israel and Shia and Sunni Muslims fighting one another and the invaders from the 'Christian West' in Iraq.

'The movements of people which are a feature of the globalisation of the modern world, and the pluralism of modern democracies, make it inevitable that peoples of different religious and secular beliefs, and the cultural traditions arising

from those beliefs, must find ways of living together.

'Ensuring that there is minimal friction between these religions and traditions is a major challenge, even in Australia,' he said.

Dr Purcell said that religion was ambivalent towards violence but was not inevitably linked to it. At the same time, while religion was manipulated for political and imperial purposes, it had also played an important historical role in minimising violence.

He said that rejection of religion was not a solution – and rejection was not happening anyway. Evidence was becoming clearer by the day, even in Australia, that religion was not going away.

The 'secularisation theory', that religion would become marginalised and

decline, has not happened. Instead the secularisation which has occurred has strengthened and purified religion.

'Lenin's utopian dream that peace would be found in the removal of all religious, cultural and material distinctions has become one of the principal elements fuelling fundamentalist reaction and aggression.

'Fear of sameness and fear of loss of identity, not our differences, lead to violence. Consequently, there has been an extraordinary growth of fundamentalist religious movements within all religions across the world.

'Although religion is a phenomenon often culturally derided in post-modern Australia, politicians are more than happy to keep forming symbiotic relationships with religious groups.

'The West has privatised religion by

Fear of sameness, not our differences, leads to violence.





Women need to know about folate **before they become pregnant**

A wider campaign is needed so that women are aware of the benefits of a diet rich in folate or folate supplements before they become pregnant.

This is one of the conclusions of a La Trobe University investigation into the number of women who take folate supplements before conception and during the first three months of pregnancy.

Folate, also called folic acid, is a B group vitamin known to prevent birth defects, usually of the brain and spinal column, if taken before pregnancy and during the first three months of gestation.

It is available in its natural form in such food as beans, leafy green vegetables and orange juice, and some cereals and in the form of tablets as a diet supplement.

Ms Lyndsey Watson, Dr Stephanie Brown and Ms Mary-Ann Davey of La Trobe's Mother and Child Health Research Centre, set out to determine how many women in New South Wales and Victoria took folate at the recommended times, and to determine which characteristics were associated with taking folate.

The results of their findings and recommendations were published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* earlier this year.

The team used data collected in two population-based surveys, the Victorian Survey of Recent Mothers 2000 and the 2001 NSW Child Health Survey.

They found that 36 per cent of women in Victoria reported taking folate supplements before becoming pregnant compared with 46 per cent in NSW. In Victoria, eight per cent and in NSW, 28 per cent increased folate intake in their diets.

However, in both surveys, younger women, those with less education and less income, unmarried women and those of non-English speaking background, were less likely to take folate supplements in the recommended period.

In Victoria, women who had more than one child were significantly less likely to take supplements. In NSW, women with an unplanned pregnancy and those living in rural areas were significantly less likely to take folate supplements before becoming pregnant.

Fifty-three per cent of women cited a general practitioner or obstetrician as a source of folate information and 45 per cent cited family or friends. Receiving information from either of these sources was significantly associated with folate supplementation taken before becoming pregnant.

Overall, less than 50 per cent of women took folate supplements before conception with the proportion significantly lower among socially disadvantaged groups.

Ms Watson said that since women are unlikely to achieve adequate folate intake before conception without deliberate action, a multifaceted approach to providing women with information about folate was needed.

'As well, future surveys are needed to monitor usage and knowledge,' she said. ●

separating Church and State, but the reality is that religion's influence is still quite strong. Most of the world, including the West, lives in systems in which religion sets many standards of daily life including food, clothing, sexual relationships and calendars.

'In pluralist, secular societies, there are other stories from which people draw meaning – family life, the struggle to win respect for the environment, stories of science and struggles to build democratic societies.

'Yet, even many of these seem to acknowledge that such stories are not quite enough. They admit that there is a spiritual dimension to life as well – a religious dimension in some sense.

'Because mainstream Christian churches acknowledge they cannot exercise direct political power for the good of society, their role is now to call on rulers and communities to address issues which are a violation of basic human dignity – denial of human rights and freedoms.

'Religions face a serious challenge and the outcome is not assured. Fundamentalist interpretations within both religion and politics are appealing in times of insecurity and threat.

'Non-fundamentalist religious leaders should reduce the ability of politicians to manipulate religion for political, nationalistic or imperial purposes. But, much will depend on the quality of the religious leadership in a given society.' ●



Shining **light** **through** **membranes** for better medicine

BIOCHEMISTS at La Trobe University are playing a leading role in research aimed at better understanding the workings of membranes in our bodies.

So important are the activities of membranes to our health that seventy per cent of the drugs on the market today are targeted to influence the activity of membrane proteins.

La Trobe Professor of Biochemistry, Leann Tilley, is one of a research team from a number of universities and other institutions to receive an Australian Research Council Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities grant of \$1,047,000.

The research aims to help develop frontier technologies for biomedical and nanotechnological studies of membrane proteins which involve furthering knowledge about their structure, dynamics and function.

Professor Tilley said that membranes in our cells provide the barriers between different compartments where the various reactions of life take place.

'Proteins within the membranes provide communication ports between different cells and different "rooms" within the cells and allow specific compounds to cross the barriers.

'Some membranes transmit the electrical signals that allow our nerves to carry information, while some capture light – which allows our eyes to see and plants to carry out photosynthesis.

'Some membrane components are targeted by foreign organisms as a means of gaining entry into our cells. If we could understand the architecture and machinery of these important life processes, we would be in a better position to design ways of modulating them.

'While about seventy per cent of drugs on the market today exert their activities by targeting membrane proteins, fifty per cent of the top 100 drugs target one class of membrane receptors – the so-called G-protein coupled receptors.

'We need to know more about the structures of membrane proteins, including the way they are organised in the membrane, the way they interact with

ligands or drugs, the way they signal through to messenger systems within the cell interior. This would greatly facilitate the rational design of novel drugs to target conditions such as inflammation, depression, and pain.

'The grant will allow the purchase of state-of-the-art instrumentation for nuclear magnetic resonance imaging, fluorescence microscopy and surface plasmon resonance to study the structure and interactions of membrane proteins,' Professor Tilley said.

She and her colleague, Research Fellow Dr Nick Klonis, will buy a fluorescence correlation spectroscopy microscope, valued at \$550,000, and install it in the confocal microscope facility at La Trobe University by the middle of the year.

Other researchers involved are Professor Frances Separovic (University of Melbourne), Associate Professor Mibel Aguilar (Monash) plus others from a number of partner institutions including RMIT, the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research and the Department of Primary Industries. ●

Anti-cancer drug quest

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with the prodrug AN-9 and the improved prodrug AN193, to establish if the doxorubicin plus AN-193 combination is more effective in reducing tumour growth.

The bio-distribution of doxorubicin-DNA adducts will also be assessed in different tissues to demonstrate whether

adduct levels are associated with tumour responses in both doxorubicin sensitive and resistant breast cancers, as well as to identify the extent of formation in other potentially critical tissues such as heart and liver.

A successful outcome to this study would confirm the molecular understanding of the doxorubicin activation process developed over the last five years by

Professor Phillips and Dr Cutts, and will provide new avenues for the development of tumour-targeted responses to doxorubicin.

The new grant is critically important because it now enables Professor Phillips and Dr Cutts to obtain the necessary proof-of-principal required to attract a commercial partner to help commercialise this technology. ●

Prize for **Conrad scholar**

The joy ... the joy!

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY scholar and Head of Chisholm College, Terry Collits, has won this year's \$15,000 biennial prize for literary scholarship in the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards for his book on Joseph Conrad.

Conrad's insights into empire and the human heart made him one of the most important and debated western novelists of the 20th century.

An exotic author of political intrigue and adventure in the early 1900s, Conrad, by mid-century, had been canonised by the literary establishment, and then popularised to almost cult status in the radical latter decades. (Who can forget Marlon Brando's performance as Kurtz in the film *Apocalypse Now!*)

In his award-winning new book, *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire*, Mr Collits has now opened a fourth phase – reconsidering Conrad for the 21st century.

The award judges praised the book as an 'excellent study' of the writings of Joseph Conrad from a postcolonial perspective. They said the book also highlighted the tragic contradiction inherent in the idea of 'self' where 'goals of civilization are contradicted both by primitive drives and remorseless law'.

Mr Collits says Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) ranks with Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, as two of the most significant books published at the turn of the 20th century.

However, institutional and cultural changes have 'radically affected the ways in which canonical writers are read in universities today. No other novelist of his time has been affected as drastically as Conrad by those shifts'.

One of the important insights of Conrad's colonial novels is that the highest point of Europe's imperial success might also be its lowest in terms of moral authority. 'In retrospect, that contradiction appears to foreshadow the demise of the European empires,' he says.

Mr Collits adds that in their 'angular relationship to empire, these novels mull over cracks in the edifice of

imperial ideology instead of celebrating its magnificence.' The world imperial system of Conrad's time, says Mr Collits, has echoes 'in the late-twentieth-century vision of a new world order based on inexorable processes of globalisation, which tend to erase or otherwise incorporate all difference.'

In his acceptance speech, Mr Collits dedicated his award 'to those numberless English teachers whose task it is to find new ways of presenting the "classics" to contemporary readers who live in cultural conditions very different from those in which their grandparents lived – or in which some politicians seem to imagine they are still living'.

He added: 'The day the short-list for these awards was announced, *The Australian* newspaper began one of their regular "cultural values" scandals, this time over the fact that Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School (of all places!) had set an essay question on Shakespeare's *Othello* asking for a Marxist, postcolonial, or feminist reading of the play.

'The usual suspects invited by the paper to respond saw this as the beginning of the end of the culture as we know it. Amazingly, the Prime Minister himself weighed in on the side of the anxious conservatives. My question is a simple one: "Why do I feel uneasy when the Prime Minister intervenes over an English essay question set at a prominent girls' private school?"' ●

NSW Arts Minister, Mr Bob Debus, left, congratulates Mr Collits.



Jung and the wide screen

THE creative and spiritual insights of the ideas that Carl Jung left us through analytical psychology are 'punchy, contemporary and attractive to "Gen Yers"' – those born after 1977.

Jung concentrated on the cross-cultural and timeless language of images as they filtered through art, myth, religion, dreams, and unconscious projections.

According to La Trobe University lecturer in Media Studies, Dr Terrie Waddell, this way of seeing is particularly useful when it comes to analysing cinema and television stories.

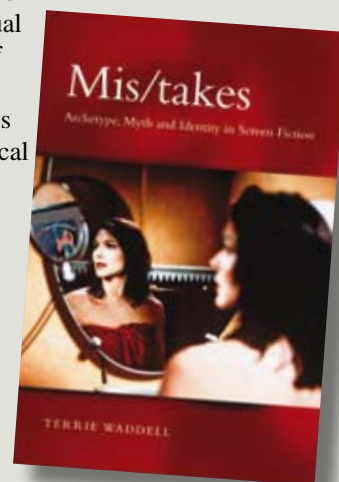
She covers this subject in her latest book, *Mis/takes: Archetype, Myth and Identity in Screen Culture* published in the UK by Routledge, launched this month at the International Association of Jungian Studies Conference at the University of Greenwich, UK.

Dr Waddell's research includes popular culture, myth, carnival, the grotesque, and analytical psychology, all of which find a place in *Mis/takes*.

She says examining the function of psychological motifs and symbols in film and television opens up another way of thinking about how identity can be constructed.

Mulholland Drive, *Memento*, *The Others*, *The X-Files*, *Twin Peaks*, *The Sopranos*, *Spider*, *Intimacy* and *Absolutely Fabulous*, are among the gems of the small and wide screen that she examines in detail.

Mis/takes, she says, gives readers a chance to engage with screen material in an 'original and subversive way'. The book will be of great interest to students of film, cultural studies, media, gender studies and analytical psychology. ●



The Greek Australian who 'crossed over'

THE LIFE OF ALICK JACKOMOS

ALICK JACKOMOS was an Australian of Greek descent who 'crossed over', married into the Aboriginal community – and became one of last century's leading advocates for Aboriginal welfare and Aboriginal rights.

Now, to commemorate this iconic figure and document his fascinating life at a time of renewed debate about Indigenous welfare, La Trobe University historians, Dr Richard Broome and Dr Corinne Manning have written a book, *A Man of all Tribes: The Life of Alick Jackomos*.

The book is not only the work of Drs Broome and Manning but of Alick Jackomos himself who died in early 1999 leaving many papers, a typescript life story and interviews with various people. The book was published in paperback by Aboriginal Studies Press and is available at most bookshops. It was launched recently at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Centre at Museum Victoria before a crowd of more than 150 people.

Alick Jackomos, the son of Greek migrant parents, was born in Collingwood and grew up there during the Great Depression. The tale of this remarkable man involves stories of diverse communities and ways of life now vanished.

After his adventurous Collingwood boyhood, Mr Jackomos joined the Australian Army in World War 11 and on his discharge became a travelling tent wrestler with Jimmy Sharman, whose boxing troupe was known Australia-wide. These shows relied heavily on Aboriginal boxers and audiences, and Mr Jackomos crossed cultural boundaries and sought

to associate with Aboriginal people at a time when most of the population chose to shun them.

He became an 'apprentice' of Aboriginal pastor, former VFL footballer and Governor of South Australia, (Sir) Doug Nicholls, in Aboriginal welfare work and activism for Aboriginal rights.

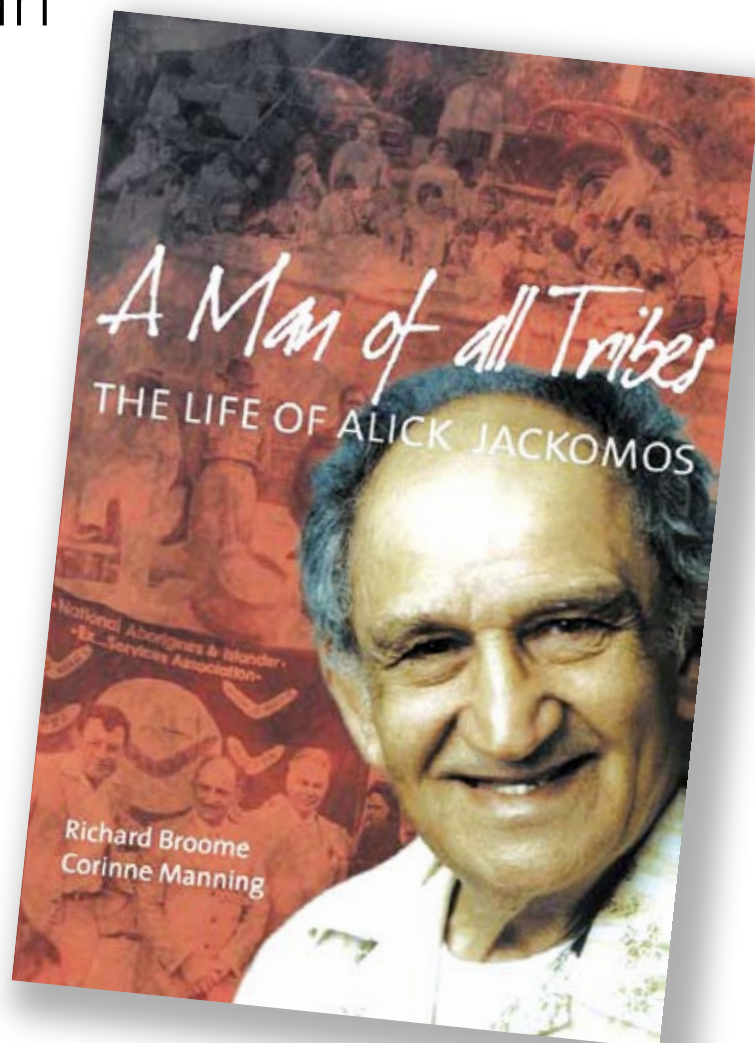
The book gives insights into his life in the context of evolving Aboriginal activism.

'There were moments of controversy as he was a non-Aboriginal man, with an Aboriginal family, living and moving in an Aboriginal world and working for Aboriginal causes,' says Dr Broome.

'All the while this man of little education collected a huge and remarkable photographic archive of Aboriginal Victorians and compiled over a thousand intricate genealogies.'

Despite his close association with Aborigines and Aboriginal causes, Alick Jackomos maintained strong connections with his Greek heritage and the RSL, of which he was a loyal member. He visited friends in Brunei more than fifteen times over twenty years. He was fascinated by its culture, and he made Brunei his second spiritual home.

A Man of all Tribes: The Life of Alick



Jackomos

was launched by Professor Mick Dodson, Chair of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies where much of Alick Jackomos' collection is housed.

Among other speakers at the launch, Joy Wandin Murphy, a Wurundjeri senior woman said: 'To share the life of Alick Jackomos will be a privilege for those who read this story. Celebration of one's life gives immense pleasure and provides an opportunity to acknowledge how people such as Alick shape and change attitudes from the grass roots to the top.'

Dr Broome is also the author of *Aboriginal Victorians: A History Since 1800* and worked with Alick Jackomos on *Sideshow Alley*, the story of the boxing and wrestling shows which toured agricultural shows in rural Australia.

Dr Manning is currently producing an oral history of Kew Cottages as part of the La Trobe University History Program's multi-layered history of the Cottages. ●

Helping **women** around the world – by GAD

HELPING WOMEN get a better deal in many Asian and Pacific countries is a daunting task. But it is a challenge that La Trobe University lecturer, Dr Wendy Mee, takes in her stride.

Describing herself as a feminist social scientist by training, Dr Mee, a lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology, has taken assignments as a 'gender and development' (GAD) consultant for the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Australia's CSIRO.

ADB consultancies take her to such colourful and historic places as Bukhara and Samarkand on the old Silk Route in the Republic of Uzbekistan in Central Asia.

Her most recent assignment was to Papua New Guinea for a social impact review of the Lihir gold mine.

Wherever she finds herself, and recently it was in strife-torn Nepal, her task is basically the same – to ensure that women receive appropriate and equitable treatment in development projects.

ADB assignments relate directly to her teaching in La Trobe's Development Studies program, where she teaches a second year sociology subject Gender and Development.

This subject examines key concepts and debates in international development from a feminist perspective. It examines the impact of development and other national and international development forces on the social conditions in less developed countries of Asia and the Pacific,



particularly on more vulnerable members of society.

Dr Mee says that poverty and gender inequality very often ensure that women and girls have less opportunity to benefit from developmental forces and social change.

Her expertise in this area stood her in good stead when ADB asked her to review some of their development projects.

'It is imperative that women are not marginalised by such projects,' Dr Mee said. 'One way that this can be achieved is to ensure that those running the projects are aware of local gender relations. For example, in areas where women are heavily involved in agricultural work, it would be inappropriate to send men exclusively on training courses to improve farming methods.'

Her first assignment was to Uzbekistan in November 2000. She travelled extensively, not only to major cities but also to rural areas meeting many women leaders involved in government and non-government women's organisations.

'One of my tasks was to evaluate how women were coping with the difficult economic circumstances which developed when the former Soviet republic moved from a centrally-controlled economy to a form of market economy,' Dr Mee said.

'Women in this country

face a heavy burden. Firstly, they now have to pay for many things, such as medical treatment and crèches, that were formerly provided free. Secondly, real wages have fallen making the economic burden even harder.'

She has subsequently visited other countries to evaluate the contribution of 'gender and development' specialists in ADB's resident missions in Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Bank sought an expert to consult with these specialists and others in their countries to report on ways to ensure that women receive equal treatment in employment, training, decision-making and other aspects of ADB-funded projects.

Dr Mee's most recent assignment in Papua New Guinea was in partnership with Dr Martha Macintyre from the University of Melbourne.

She said there had been a number of new developments in how to improve the performance of social reviews in the mining industry. 'Many of these developments have been influenced by international sustainable development initiatives. Relatively little acknowledgement has been given to the impact of mining on gender relations within affected communities.'

'The Lihir project sought to establish a more robust social review framework, one which is both responsive to local needs and priorities and in line with emerging

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American influences on Alfred Deakin

Alfred Deakin, Australia's second Prime Minister and one of the young nation's most profound thinkers, had strong views on colonialism, the future of the Pacific, race relations and our relationship with USA.

These views frequently brought him into conflict with the British Colonial Office. Federation exacerbated these tensions.

Three times Prime Minister in the first decade after Federation, his influence on the new nation, both in internal and external affairs, was far reaching.

Were his views the result of his admiration of American thinkers whom he read or befriended during his earlier years as a Colony of Victoria cabinet minister?

This question was raised – and answered generally in the affirmative – in a seminar on Deakin by Marilyn Lake, Professor in La Trobe University's History Program, to a crowded seminar at the John Scott Meeting House recently.

Professor Lake's research interests cover Australian history, nation and nationalism, femininity and masculinity, race, gender and imperialism, global and trans-national history – many of which inform her study of Deakin, whom she regards in many ways as a tragic figure.

Her seminar was based on research in the National Library in Australia, the US National Archives in Washington, the UK National Archives in London and the Harvard University Archives.

Her interest in the relations between leading thinkers and political leaders in Australia and the United States was prompted during her time as Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard University in 2002.

A radical liberal, Deakin was handsome, intelligent, a gifted speaker and deep thinker.



According to Professor Lake, his thinking about political independence and self-government was linked to his subjective investment in manhood and his admiration for the place he always called 'the great republic' evident in his relations with writer Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher Josiah Royce and President Theodore Roosevelt.

In 1885, when Deakin went on an official visit to California to investigate irrigation, he also went east on a pilgrimage to the grave of Emerson – the prophet of self-reliance – in Concord, Massachusetts.

Royce and Deakin were personal friends. They met in Melbourne during Royce's visit to Australia in 1888 and holidayed together and walked and talked in the Blue Mountains for a week.

They continued a friendship by correspondence, often about political philosophy, for more than 20 years. In 1908, during the visit of the United States Fleet to Australia, sent by Roosevelt in

response to Deakin's invitation, Royce sent Deakin a copy of his latest book, *Loyalty* which Deakin quoted in his welcome to the fleet's officers and crew.

Roosevelt and Deakin shared strong views about the benefits to native peoples of European colonialism and identified as white men joined by bonds of brotherhood.

When the fleet arrived and Deakin mixed with its officers, he rejoiced in the 'richness of a natural relationship between Australia and the United States', a celebration which displeased the British Colonial Office, which already had its nose out of joint because Deakin had not consulted it before inviting the fleet to Australia at a time when Britain still controlled Australia's foreign relations.

Deakin considered that the Colonial Office destroyed Australian men's manhood, hence his attraction to the assured, self-confident, plain-speaking men of 'the great republic'. ●

Helping **women** around the world

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international standards as reflected in international agreements. These agreements include UN conventions, OECD guidelines and World Bank protocols, as well as principles for sustainable development.

'One important aspect of this project

was to insure that the social review was "gender inclusive" in its design.'

Dr Mee's experience elsewhere had shown that gender was an important component of all social impact reviews, even in the case of projects that ostensibly have little to do with women or gender, such as the construction of mines and the design of sanitation systems.

'I would like to think my work is making a contribution to help women. It is important not only to consider women's practical needs in the design of projects but also more long-term strategies which empower women and ensure they are involved in the implementation and design of projects that impact on their lives.' ●

Rare award for leading linguist

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY has awarded its highest degree, Doctor of Letters (D Litt), to one of the world's leading linguists, Professor Alexandra Aikhenvald.

Professor Aikhenvald is Professor of Linguistics and Associate Director of the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at La Trobe University.

Higher doctorates, based on substantial work (usually published books and papers) require a panel of international examiners and are rarely awarded. Her award was based on four books and 14 papers submitted in February this year.

Professor Aikhenvald's work includes descriptive and historical aspects of Berber languages and in 1990 she published, in Russian, a grammar of Modern Hebrew. Much of her research since has involved travelling to, and spending extended periods living in, some of remotest regions of the Amazon Basin in South America.

Professor Aikhenvald is a major authority on languages of the Arawak family of northern Amazonia, and has written grammars of Bare (1995, based on work with the last speaker who has since died), Warekena (1998), and Tariana, from northwest Amazonia (2003).

She is now in the final stages of a

comprehensive grammar of the Manambu language from the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Once again, her research for this involves considerable field work in isolated villages.

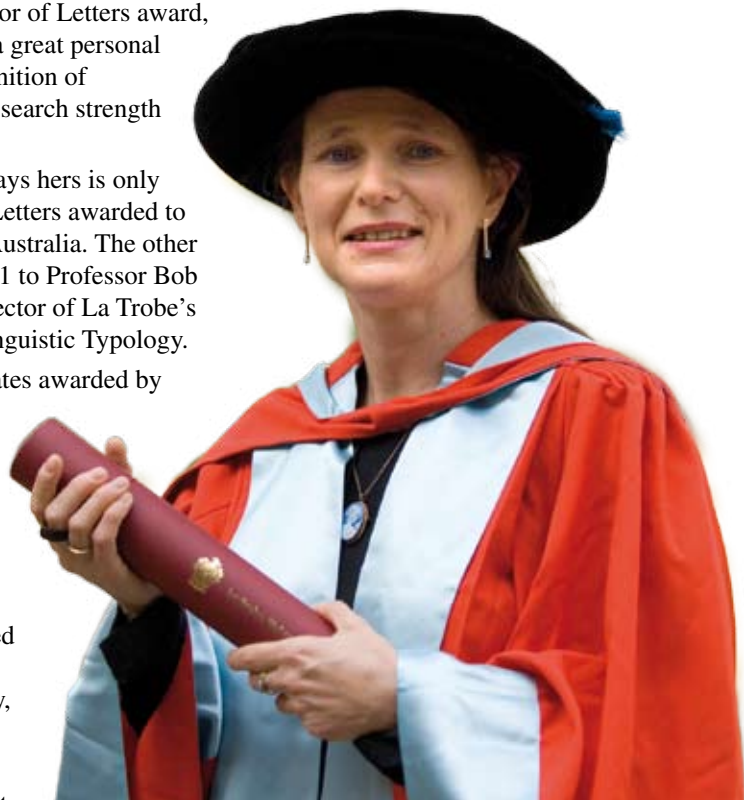
Qualifying for the Doctor of Letters award, she says, was not only a great personal achievement, but recognition of linguistics as a major research strength at La Trobe University.

Professor Aikhenvald says hers is only the second Doctors of Letters awarded to linguistics scholars in Australia. The other was by the ANU in 1991 to Professor Bob Dixon, who is now Director of La Trobe's Research Centre for Linguistic Typology.

Previous higher doctorates awarded by La Trobe University include multi award-winning Australian author, historian and La Trobe Emeritus Scholar, Dr Inga Clendinnen, and internationally renowned classicist and Resident Fellow at the University, the late Professor A D Trendall.

La Trobe University last

year was rated the 23rd best university in the world in the arts and humanities in a survey by the British 'Times Higher Education Supplement'. ●



Indigenous Peace Building Workshop

The Conflict Resolution Research Centre in the School of Law recently held a four-day workshop in Mildura on 'Indigenous Peace Building and Caring for Conflict'.

Professor of Law and Dispute Resolution, Tania Sourdin, and Indigenous Mediation and Peace Practitioner, Helen Bishop, ran the workshop which was attended by Indigenous people from a variety of backgrounds.

Professor Sourdin said people without training in conflict resolution were often tentative about the mediation and negotiation process. The aim therefore was not only to



Professor Sourdin, left, with workshop participants.

enhance knowledge and skills, but to boost participants' confidence when assisting in the resolution of disputes.

The workshop outlined special characteristics of community disputes and allowed participants to better

understand disputes within cultural contexts.

Professor Sourdin said students were also given practical examples of peace-making by exploring historical case studies – the inspiring stories of Ghandi,

Dr Martin Luther King and Vincent Lingiari – to highlight how rewarding conflict resolution can be when 'peace is built with dignity'.

Response to the workshop was such that many participants requested further training. The concept for the Indigenous peace building workshop was instigated by former Law School Head, Dr Oliver Mendelsohn.

Two other Law School staff, Dr Tom Fisher and Ms Judy Gutman, are researching the impact that such courses have upon student perceptions of conflict. Their results should be available later this year. ●

Prizes for helping student learning

SIXTEEN La Trobe University staff members have won Citations for Outstanding Contributions for Student Learning. The University awards, for sustained effort in supporting student learning, recognised academic, library and general staff.

They were presented by Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart, at a recent ceremony on the main Melbourne campus at Bundoora.

‘We had some very high quality applications and, apart from congratulating the winners, I acknowledge all the people who were considered for this award,’ Professor Stoddart said.

Awards were made for projects that range from enhancing students’ understanding of ethical and professional responsibilities by linking classroom learning with community legal practice to curriculum development that enables non-maths students to build mathematical models for specific applications by using a small core of mathematical concepts.

Professor Stoddart said: ‘At a time when the ability to demonstrate excellence has important ramifications, these citations are an important step.

‘A prime purpose of universities is to produce new knowledge and research, and



Citation winners at the presentation ceremony. Below: Vice-Chancellor Stoddart presents an award to Mr Greg Jamieson, Department of Economics and Finance.

we really push that aspect.’

With the transmission of knowledge also changing rapidly though, it means professionalisation of the teaching role is becoming increasingly important.

‘This University is continuing to improve its staff promotions system to include greater recognition for teaching talent, and we are working hard to keep abreast of the latest in effective teaching and learning methods and supporting technology.

‘While there is a pragmatic reason for universities

to concentrate a lot more professionally on what they do in the teaching field, there is also an intellectual and professional edge to it. This will have the impact of making sure we remain a major target for students who are progressively becoming more discriminating over teaching performance.

‘We are hoping these awards will become part of a much prized and highly competitive system, which will continue to contribute to the quality of teaching in the University.’

The winners are:

Mr Mark Furlong, Social Work and Social Policy; Ms Mary Anne Noone, Ms Judith Dickson and Ms Elizabeth Curran, Law; Dr Elizabeth Johnson, Biochemistry; Professor Eleanor Wertheim, Psychology; Ms Beverley Forsyth, Mrs Heather Hulett, Ms Susan Porter, Mrs Jill Stokes and Mrs Christine Wanklyn, Library; Dr John Banks and Dr Peter Stacey, Mathematics; Mr Greg Jamieson, Economics and Finance; Ms Carol Merli, English; and Dr Caroline Chanock, Academic Skills Unit. ●

