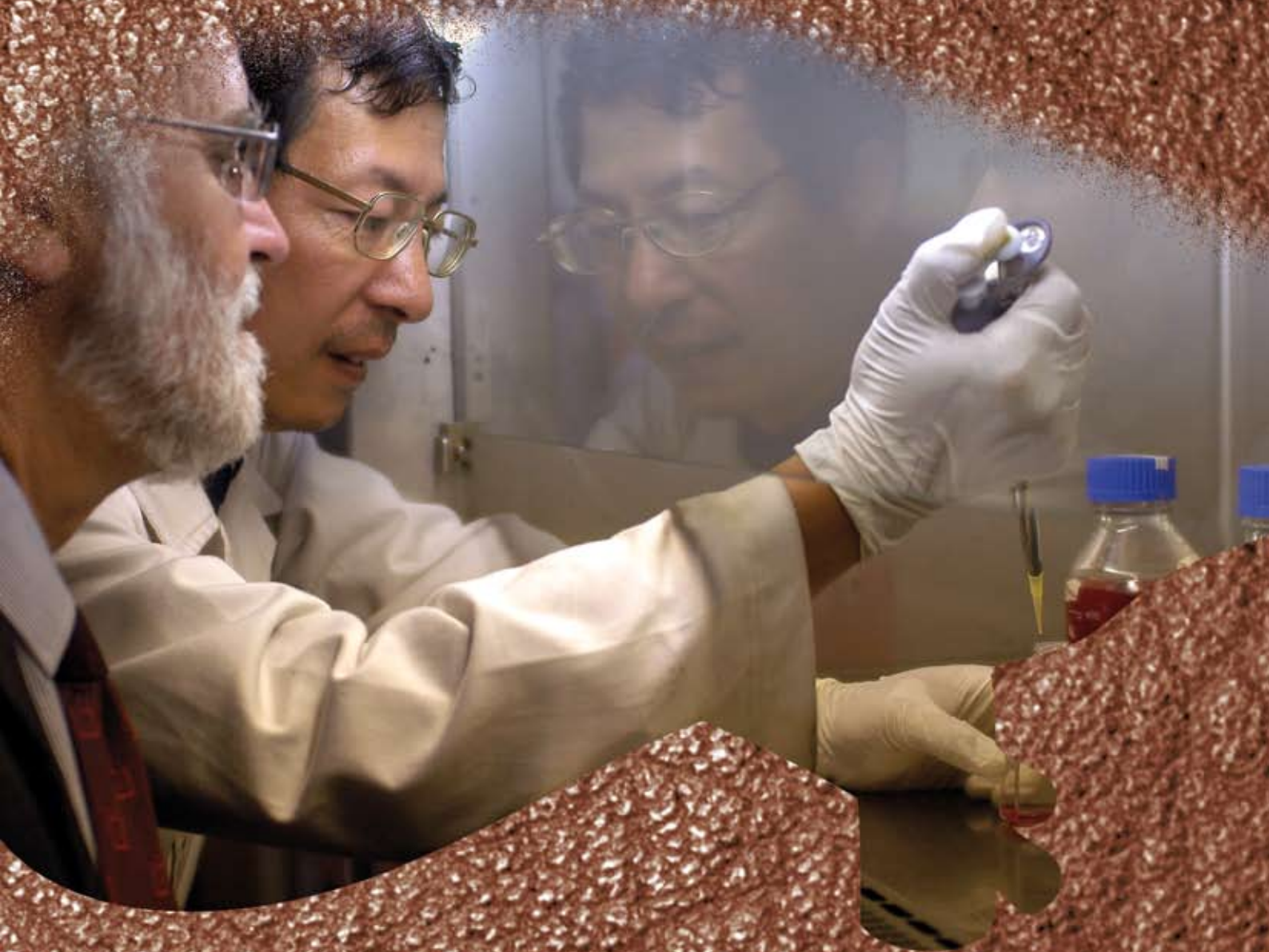


# Bulletin



## POSSIBLE NEW TREATMENT FOR LIVER DISEASE

- The Terrorist Challenge
- Lessons after September 11



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Professor Kenn Raymond and Dr Jiezhong Chen of the School of Pharmacy whose research may lead to more effective treatment of the liver disease, cholestasis. See page 7  
Photograph by Brenden Fletcher

The La Trobe University Bulletin is published ten times a year by Marketing & Communications, La Trobe University.

Articles may be reproduced with acknowledgement. Photographs can be supplied.

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Design: Campus Graphics, 70736  
La Trobe University.  
Printed by Work & Turner.

Website: [www.latrobe.edu.au/bulletin](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/bulletin)



LA TROBE STUDENTS can now learn more about Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, their culture, history and society.

A new subject, Introduction to Indigenous Australia, is being presented as a first-year elective in the Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology degree. It is also available in other disciplines.

It is the first time that La Trobe has offered a first-year subject dedicated to Aboriginal issues and is the first subject at La Trobe taught by an Indigenous lecturer.

Ms Julie Andrews, appointed to La Trobe in February 2005, is the University's first Indigenous academic staff member. A member of the Yorta Yorta people, she is from Mooroopna. Her mother was born on the Cummertunja Mission near the Barmah Forest on the Murray River near the Victoria-New South Wales border.

Supervised by senior lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology, Dr John Morton, Ms

## New subject on Indigenous issues

Andrews completed an honours thesis in anthropology on Aboriginal Hip Hop or rap music in 2004 and intends to continue her postgraduate study to PhD level.

Ms Andrews said the new subject, which she designed, covers Indigenous issues including Indigenous writers, art, performance, law, archaeology, oral history, music and kinship and family.

Prominent Indigenous guest lecturers include Koorie Heritage Trust member, Mr Jim Berg, and actor Mr Tony Briggs. Several elders who advise magistrates on sentencing in the Koorie Magistrates Court will also lecture.

'This course provides an opportunity for Indigenous community leaders and elders to enter the lecture room and tell their stories in a formal way and to meet students,' Ms Andrews said.

'It also gives students an opportunity to meet members of the Aboriginal community, an opportunity they may never have had without this course.'

Ms Andrews said that knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues was of critical importance to Australia in its approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relations. ●

## Education and Indigenous students

La Trobe University Bendigo Senior Lecturer in Education, Mr Raymond Nichol, has produced a book that examines the history and practice of education for Indigenous students in Australia.

It examines the widespread failure to meet their needs and offers creative ways to incorporate Indigenous forms of learning.

Entitled *Socialisation, Land and Citizenship Among Aboriginal Australians: Reconciling Indigenous and Western Forms of Education*, the 460 page book was recently published in New York by the Edwin Mellen Press.

It is being distributed in the USA, UK and elsewhere in Europe, and Australia and has been reviewed very positively in the United States and Australia.

Mr Nichol argues that culturally appropriate

education for Indigenous people is not a privilege but a fundamental right. He explores Indigenous Australian education, particularly over the last 30 years, and suggests forms of reconciliation between western and Indigenous forms of education.

Mr Nichol says he hopes the book will help to increase understanding of the context of education for Aboriginal students and their communities.

'It aims to provide insight and positive directions for students, educators and those working in allied professions, particularly those in Indigenous Studies, Indigenous education and health, and community development courses.' ●



To combat terrorism,  
our leaders need to

## RESPOND TO THE TERRORIST CHALLENGE



Professor Brown

**T**HE LEADERS of our emergency response forces must respond immediately and appropriately to a terrorist attack. To do this with maximum efficiency, they must cooperate closely using their understanding of the strategies and tactics of potential terrorists.

In the world battle against terrorism, La Trobe University researchers are making a significant contribution to provide this understanding. Basically, they have set out to become efficiency experts in countering terrorism attacks.

Professor of Management at La Trobe, David Brown, and two PhD students, Mr Michael Arcella and Mr Zoran Endekov, are working with police and other services in both Australia and overseas to come up with appropriate answers.

They will present results of their research at the 6th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Business to be held from May 25–28 in Honolulu.

They will chair a panel discussing

the subject: *Leadership Capabilities in Response to Terrorist Attacks*, to delegates from a number of countries.

Professor Brown says that while there is a significant body of research in the field of leadership, there is almost no empirical research examining relationships between leadership capability and performance outcomes involving a unified, multi-agency response to terrorist-evoked critical incidents.

‘Due to the multi-agency response necessity, terrorist-evoked critical incidents present unique leadership challenges for emergency management,’ Professor Brown said.

‘Emergency agencies have over a relatively long period developed detailed and complex disaster plans designed to address impacts created by floods and wild fires.

‘Agencies have developed responses to these natural disasters at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels of emergency management. However, unlike natural disasters, terrorist attacks have purpose and intent. Terrorists plan their attacks with the purpose and intention of creating the utmost political, social, and economic impacts.

‘Natural disasters are seen to entail a well understood and highly structured response from specific emergency agencies. Terrorist-evoked actions are targeted to create critical incidents that have an ill defined structure.

‘Such critical incidents maximise risk and create a multi-emergency situation forcing a unified inter-agency response. A difficulty is that the orientations of emergency services tend toward formal organisational structures and cultures that do not facilitate inter-agency co-operation to address critical incidents with an ill-defined structure,’ Professor Brown said.

Owing to the uniqueness of this approach to leadership research, he has over the previous 18 months spent time in the UK at a number of organisations

concerned with response to terrorism attack. They include the London Home Office, the Anti-Terrorist and Armed Response branches of New Scotland Yard, London Fire Brigade and the National Police Leadership Centre.

From these he has collated data relating to leadership characteristics, organisational structures, and performance factors associated with emergency agency responses to terrorist-evoked attacks. The



panel discussion at the Hawaii Conference is one of a number of events Professor Brown has participated in or organised to discuss response to terrorism attack.

In November 2005, he organised an invitation-only seminar at La Trobe University presenting his work in conjunction with Chief Superintendent Alan Webb, a counter-terrorism exercise director from New Scotland Yard. Most of the senior officers involved in counter-terrorism in Victoria attended.

Professor Brown said his research was an extension of previous work related to critical incident response performance conducted with Dr Andrea Kirk of Monash University and previously published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

His research on leadership and critical incident response performance involves Victoria Police and other Australian police forces. ●

## COLLABORATION ON reproductive science RESEARCH

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY is involved in collaborative research with leading British reproductive scientist, Professor Martin Johnson.

Professor of Reproductive Sciences at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Christ's College, Professor Johnson is currently a Distinguished Fellow at La Trobe's Institute for Advanced Study (IAS).

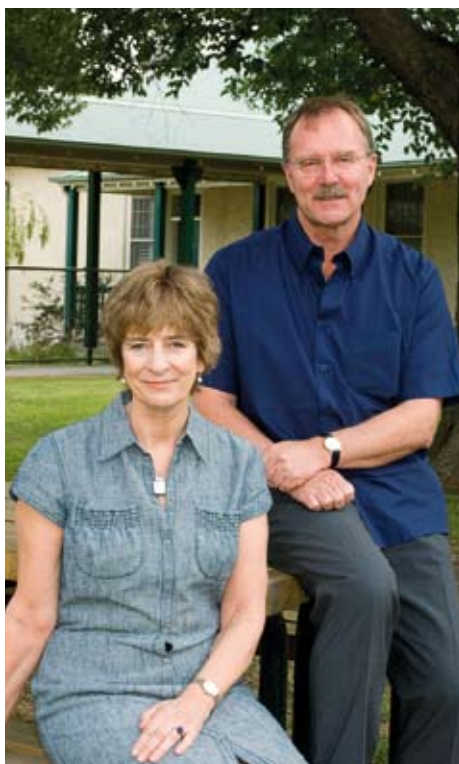
Dr Kerry Petersen, an Associate Professor in La Trobe University's School of Law, is collaborating with Professor Johnson on a number of inter-disciplinary projects as a result of his IAS Fellowship.

Together they are writing an article on public interest issues in the regulation of assisted reproductive technologies.

Professor Johnson was the first graduate student of Bob Edwards, 'father' of IVF who achieved the first in vitro fertilization.

During his visit to La Trobe, Professor Johnson gave a presentation at a public seminar organised by La Trobe's Law School, La Trobe's Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) and the Victorian Infertility Treatment Authority, at the John Scott Meeting House in early March.

As well, he gave a seminar in mid-March at the IAS in which he explored the genetic and other biological influences



Dr Petersen, left, and Professor Johnson

on the development of individuals.

Dr Petersen specialises in the area of human reproduction law, particularly in assisted reproductive technologies (ART).

Over the last few years she has worked on projects with ARCSHS Director, Professor Marian Pitts, and Professor

Gordon Baker, an infertility specialist in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Royal Women's Hospital.

They have conducted a survey comparing the impact of legal and professional regulation on ART clinics in NSW and Victoria and found considerable differences in practice between the two states. This survey was published in the *Journal of Law and Medicine*. They are planning further projects.

Dr Petersen was awarded an Australian Bicentennial Fellowship by the Menzies Centre King's College London in 2004 to visit the Centre for Family Research (CFR) at the University of Cambridge in 2005. She spent three months at the CFR examining recent ART regulatory developments in the UK.

Some of this research is included in the chapter 'Genetic Technologies and ART: legal regulation, self-regulation and ethical values' in the book *Disputes and Dilemmas in Health Law* which Dr Petersen co-edited with La Trobe Adjunct Professor in the School of Law, Dr Ian Freckelton.

Federation Press will publish *Disputes and Dilemmas in Health Law* in July 2006. ●

## FORMER POLISH PM at La Trobe

Former Prime Minister of Poland, and currently UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, Professor Marek Belka, recently visited La Trobe University.

In Australia as guest of the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs, Professor Belka gave a well attended lecture on the European Union after enlargement.

His visit to the University was at the instigation of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart, who chaired the lecture, and of the Politics and Economics departments.



Professor Belka also had informal discussions with members of the Politics and Economics departments.

In his lecture he explored the implications of enlargement for the established members of the Union in regard both to foreign policy and the development of economic and social policy within the Union.

His lecture laid the foundations for further links with the University, of great potential importance given the establishment of the new European Union Centre based at La Trobe. ●

# Ultra fine imaging at La Trobe University



**A** STATE-OF-THE-ART X-ray microtomography facility, one of the highest resolution instruments in Australia, will be installed at La Trobe University during 2006.

The facility, to be housed in the Department of Physics' Centre of Materials and Surface Science (CMSS), employs the technique of three-dimensional imaging such as that used in CAT scans – but with much higher resolution.

Its purchase and operation is supported by a budget in excess of \$1,500,000, from the ARC Linkage-Infrastructure scheme, the Victorian State Government and institutional partners Deakin, Monash and Swinburne universities and companies VCAMM Ltd and LM Electroplating Pty Ltd.

Dr Andrew Peele, a Queen Elizabeth II Research Fellow in La Trobe's Department of Physics, is the project leader, heading a team which includes CMSS director, Dr Paul Pigram and other La Trobe scientists.

He said the new device would allow scientists to probe the structure of a wide range of materials for which it was previously difficult to obtain direct 3D data.

Dr Peele, who specialises in a range of areas related to use and research of X-ray optics, said the facility would help researchers understand the microstructure of materials at a speed and level of detail not readily available to Australian researchers.

'It allows us to probe in immense detail the structure of a wide range of material including such commercially vital materials as high tech components, laminates for aircraft components and carbon fibres.

'We can also look at porosity in mineralogical materials, which is very important to geologists and the mining industry, and the porosity of metals vital to the automobile industry.

'Using techniques that our group has already developed, we will be able to image biological materials, for example of porosity of bones and blood vessels which will greatly advance the study of bone and blood diseases. Other uses of the facility include a detailed examination of the structure of animal eyes, of gemstones and other industry and academic projects.'

Dr Peele said that the X-ray microtomography facility will form a valuable addition to tomographic end-stations available at synchrotron sources, with straightforward access and comparable or superior resolution. When installed, the device will be available to industry and academia on a fee-for-service basis.

Footnote: Is that huge diamond in the ring your partner gave you for Christmas as perfect as it looks? The X-ray microtomography facility can detect cracks and faults in gemstones.

'Unfortunately,' says Dr Peele, 'the Centre for Materials and Surface Science cannot offer this as a free service to University staff.' ●

## La Trobe Improves Mental Health Nursing Training

La Trobe University's Faculty of Health Sciences is enhancing its nurse training curriculum to upgrade its mental health component.

'We have made changes to give students the opportunity to make an informed choice of psychiatric nursing as a career option,' says Mr Alan Robins, a lecturer in Mental Health in the University's School of Nursing and Midwifery.

A specialist in psychiatry, Mr Robins is engaged in research for his PhD thesis entitled *The New Asylum* – an examination of the most beneficial housing for persons with severe mental illness and substance abuse. The study examines the effects of deinstitutionalisation on persons suffering from severe mental illness.

Mr Robins said a number of changes had been implemented in La Trobe's nursing degree course. These included doubling clinical placement time from two to four weeks and the appointment of a full time lecturer devoted to mental health.

In addition the Mental Health unit was shifted from second semester third year to second semester second year allowing students the opportunity of making an informed choice of psychiatry as a career option.

Specialist lectures from practising psychiatric nurse clinicians, consumer consultant, carer consultant, and industry bodies including the College of Mental Health Nurses, Health and Community Services Union and the Australian Nursing Federation were introduced.

Mr Robins has an extensive clinical background, having previously been employed in mental health areas in Aged, Adult, Child and Adolescent services as well as Alcohol and Drug agencies.

He said La Trobe has this year introduced a new elective unit called Community Psychiatric Nursing In Practice to continue strengthening the mental health stream in undergraduate training. ●

# Nursing home **dilemma** for families and staff

IT HAPPENS THOUSANDS of times a year. The family arranges for mum or dad, elderly and frail, to enter a nursing home where qualified staff will provide constant care.

While this brings relief to most families, it also gives rise to an unforeseen dilemma. What is the family's new role in the care of their loved one now under the full-time-care of others?

To what extent should they get involved, offer advice or give directions to staff, or should they now leave the job to the 'experts'?

Very importantly, should facilities be more 'family friendly'?

La Trobe University specialist in aged care nursing, Dr Michael Bauer, a lecturer in the University's School of Nursing, sought answers to these delicate questions in research for his PhD thesis.

Dr Bauer concluded that the problem would remain difficult until nursing homes develop better practices and programs to respond appropriately to relatives' needs.

He said his research was based on the premise that it was sound nursing philosophy for nursing homes to work collaboratively with residents' relatives. 'We know that many families – but certainly not all – want to continue to be involved in some way once their loved one was in a nursing home,' Dr Bauer said.

'In addition, the Commonwealth Government acknowledges the benefits of family assistance and advocates it in its nursing home standards.

'The quality of the experience, however, is frequently fraught with problems for both the family and staff.

'Little research has focused on the nature of family involvement in nursing homes from the perspective of nursing home staff.'

To address this, Dr Bauer interviewed 30 staff members of eight nursing homes, large and small, public and private,



in Melbourne and rural Victoria.

For many staff, family help was highly valued and arguably indispensable in maintaining high standards of care. Family members who visited regularly were respected for their dedication, and those who assisted staff with aspects of physical, emotional and social care were considered especially favourably.

However, the research found that many nursing home staff members regard the 'assistance' of the family of residents as a double-edged sword. They recognise that family have an important role

to play and incorporate family in their activities – but only up to a point.

Families can easily become an annoyance to staff if they overstep the boundaries. Some families can cause staff a lot of grief by being seen as disruptive.

Many staff would like to control the family as they control the environment. The current nursing home model of care is often task-focused – the emphasis is on getting the work done and sometimes the family is seen as getting in the way of this.

While managerial staff is aware of the value of the family, staff at the coal face – those engaged in day-to-day care – are often not well informed of the needs of families. They are not well equipped to deal with families because they are too focused on schedules and routines and they have limited negotiation, or conflict resolution skills. ●

## Aged care centre wins contracts

La Trobe University's Australian Centre for Evidence Based Aged Care (ACEBAC) has won two Government contracts aimed at improving the teaching of aged care.

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing awarded the contracts to the Centre, a multidisciplinary centre co-hosted by La Trobe University and Bundoora Extended Care Centre, which undertakes industry-relevant research into the care of older people.

Both tenders relate to promoting the adoption of the Aged Care Core Component in Undergraduate Nursing Curricula Principles.

The first involves the development of best practice models for aged care clinical placements for undergraduate nursing students.

The Director of ACEBAC, Professor Rhonda Nay, said that the experiences students have were central to their later career choice.

The second of these contracts, to be directed by Dr Bill Koch, a senior lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, will involve the development of an on-line clearing house of aged care education materials for use and access by Australian university Schools of Nursing.

The project aims to establish a web-based clearing-house for materials for undergraduate nursing students and teaching staff.

Dr Koch said this was an important project for La Trobe, as the clearing house will present the latest in teaching tools and information in a rapidly accessible format. ●

# POSSIBLE NEW TREATMENT FOR **LIVER DISEASE**

Research at La Trobe University Bendigo may lead to more effective treatment of the liver disease, cholestasis.

A report of the research by the Head of the School of Pharmacy at Bendigo, Professor Kenn Raymond, and La Trobe Research Fellow, Dr Jiezhong Chen, appeared in the February 11-17 edition of the prestigious British medical research journal, *The Lancet*.

Cholestasis covers a number of conditions in which bile excretion from the liver is blocked from escaping from the body. It can occur either in the liver itself, called intrahepatic cholestasis, or in bile ducts, called extrahepatic cholestasis.

Prolonged cholestasis, the symptoms of which are jaundice, itching, fatigue and diarrhoea, can lead to liver failure and can be fatal. In very severe cases, the only treatment is a liver transplant.

Professor Raymond said the potentially more effective treatment involved the

use of a combination of drugs that act as 'receptors' – proteins that occur on the surface of cells and assist the movement of bile salts from the liver.

He explained that the liver, one of the largest and most important organs in the human body, was responsible for utilising food and detoxifying drugs and also produced bile that helps digest fats. In certain liver diseases, including cholestasis, bile accumulates in the bloodstream.

'In the past, treatment for cholestasis has been difficult and frequently ineffective because one of the older drugs commonly prescribed increased the metabolism of bile salts and so lowered their concentration in the body,' Professor Raymond said.

He said that while he and Dr Chen, who is a medical doctor turned researcher, were investigating the metabolism of an anti-TB drug called rifamycin, they learned of the recent discovery overseas of two receptors in the liver.

Called pregnane X and farnesol X, they are involved in drug metabolic activities in the liver. 'We believe that



if we enhance their activity then the bile acids would be cleared more quickly from the body.'

Professor Raymond said that enhancement could be assisted by another recent development overseas – newly synthesised compounds called inducers which increase bile acid excretion.

'We believe it would be very efficient if we could combine the old drugs that increase the metabolism with the new inducers. Such a combination may possibly lead to a cure for cholestasis.'

Professor Raymond emphasised that as yet the results of the research were theoretical and the theory needed to be clinically evaluated. This is planned in conjunction with a Melbourne teaching hospital.

Professor Raymond said it was an honour to have the research published in *The Lancet*.

'Few papers by academics are published in this prestigious journal which provides an opportunity to promote to other research workers and hepatologists world wide.'



Professor Raymond, right, and Dr Chen

# NEW CONCEPTS for LOGIC in the MODERN AGE

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY philosopher, Dr Ross Brady, is setting out to apply new concepts to logic.

He is not dealing in lofty intellectual concepts. He believes his new approach to rational thinking will have concrete applications.

‘Because we work with valid patterns of argument, we work at an abstract level. Logic is generally a theoretical subject concerning systems of logic, determined using interpretations of basic logical words, like “and”, “not” and “if...then”’, says Dr Brady, a Reader and Associate Professor in La Trobe’s Philosophy Program.

‘Logic involves mathematical-style work, but is subject to philosophical disagreements regarding conceptualisation.

‘Despite working at a theoretical level, I believe my project can provide more meaningful and accurate applications of logic in computer science, philosophy and mathematics and will engender an overall smarter use of information,’ he said.

Specialising among other things in relevant logics, para-consistent logics, content semantics, natural deduction, the logical paradoxes, and philosophical



Bertrand Russell by Luana Milligan Boutilier

logic, Dr Brady has received \$105,000 in Australian Research Council funding to conduct his research over three years.

‘I am looking at the application of logic in this modern age. In doing so, I am one of few philosophers questioning the traditional view that truth-preservation is all there is to logical inference.’

Professors Stephenson and Lamb discovered that the opposite is true – that acidity helps prevent muscle fatigue – and they discovered and explained the complex mechanism involving the role of chloride, by which this happens.

Because many biology books had over the years espoused the incorrect facts, Professor Lamb requested textbook publishers to correct the error. Heinemann’s *Biology 1* is the first to do so. ●

What he describes as the traditional view is not that of the founder of logic, the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, but more recent “classical” philosophers like Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege.

There are many arguments that show that this traditional view of logic condones inferences that are informally invalid. Indeed, there are classical inferences which no-one in their right mind would ever use. For example: given any two sentences whatsoever, one implies the other.

Dr Brady is different from classical philosophers in that he believes that there must be meaningful connections between the premise and the conclusion of an argument, as opposed to that of classical logic where a conclusion can validly “follow” from premises due to truth-preservation alone. For example: Brothers are female. Therefore, the moon

is made of green cheese.

‘I am one of few philosophers in the world who really questions this. Some of my colleagues around the world do ask the question but very few attempt to come up with definite answers. I hope my continuing research will provide many of the answers.’

‘As an example of computational ramifications, instead of calling upon rigid data from a database, you can have a knowledge base of sentences which can then be logically coded. Then, applying logical rules and deducing conclusions, you can establish what was implicit rather than explicit in the original knowledge base,’ he said.

The research would also benefit the teaching of logic in Australia with the development of sharper analytical skills in students. It will also lay the groundwork for a textbook on the new logic. ●

## RE-WRITING THE TEXTBOOK

It’s not often that researchers re-write the textbook, but La Trobe University Muscle Research Laboratory scientists have done just that.

The latest edition of the *Biology 1* text book for VCE students published by Heinemann carries a full page story about research led by Professors George Stephenson and Graham Lamb. The research overturned a widely-held but incorrect theory that acidity, through a build up of lactic acid, was a major cause of muscle fatigue.

## IMPORTANT WORDS FROM

# THE LAST OF THE STOLEN WIVES

Only 20 remain alive, the last of many hundreds of girls and young women stolen by a tribe of South American Indians in violent raids on neighbouring villages to capture wives.

All of them, now in their sixties or older, are on first name terms with La Trobe University post doctoral fellow, linguistics expert Dr David Fleck, a leading world authority on Matses.

Matses, one of the Panoan family of languages, is spoken deep in a very remote and pristine part of the Amazonian jungle.

Dr Fleck is currently on a three-year post doctoral fellowship at La Trobe's Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, studying and collating his recordings and notes taken in the village of San Juan in Peru near the border of Brazil, 100 km from the nearest town, Colonia Angamos. His post doctoral project is to ascertain how other languages have influenced the Matses language.

He has had plenty of time to get to know the stolen wives, their personal histories and above all their languages. Over the past decade Dr Fleck has spent a total of five years in the village, has his own hut, and has been adopted into the tribal kinship system.

Originally from Peru, Dr Fleck grew up in the USA and first came to the village as a zoologist to study, with the help of the Indians, the biodiversity of local mammals – armadillos, monkeys, sloths, anteaters, wild boars, opossums and rodents.

To quiz them about their prey, he had to learn their language – and his passion for their language caused him to change his speciality from zoology to linguistics. He subsequently wrote the first Matses grammar as his PhD thesis.

'The role of the stolen wives – in as much as they represent an important outside influence – is vital in the evolution not only of the Matses language but helps us understand the development of all languages,' says Dr Fleck who speaks

four languages fluently and can make a good fist of several others.

'For most of the time human language has existed, there were no languages like English, Mandarin, French and German spoken by large numbers of people. All languages were spoken by relatively small groups – exactly the situation we still have today in isolated parts of the globe like the Amazon Basin,' he said.

'It was only in 1969 that the outside world made direct contact with the Matses.

'Only five years before that they were still raiding other villages – some of them up to 300 km away – for wives. There are writings by Europeans in South America 320 years ago about bloody attacks by Panoan groups on other villages for wives. I suspect that raiding occurred for hundreds of years before that.



'The Matses have a strong hunting culture. The better a hunter, the more wives a man can have and one of the ways his hunting prowess is determined is by the number of synonyms he has for his prey. As in other cultures, having a large vocabulary is a way to obtain social prestige in Matses society.

'The Matses language has many synonyms because the wives they acquired by raiding other villages where a different language was spoken were a very important vehicle for "lexical borrowing" – bringing new words into the language.

'This was important because their culture forbade the mentioning of a person's name, or any words remotely



Above: Maish, captured from the Chankueshbo tribe, with her Matses husband, Tumi.

Left : Dr Fleck with Maish, aged about 60, captured as a bride when she was about 12 years old.

sounding like the name, after a person's death, resulting in a constant turnover of words.

'I am fortunate to have the opportunity to learn first hand the linguistic influence of the very last group of stolen wives still living in isolation. Their region is one of thick jungle and rivers and travel is only possible by canoe on the rivers or walking jungle tracks.

'San Juan is so isolated it takes a day by boat and three days hiking through the jungle to reach it from Colonia Angamos.'

Dr Fleck said that the Matses' situation, that of hostile relations coupled by incorporating captives from many different groups, is one that has received little attention in the past.

'By studying the languages of captives living among the Matses we can get some understanding how these languages have impacted the Matses lexicon, grammar, and phonology,' he said. ●



## MISSING OUT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

because you're poor you get the blame – but should you?

**Question: Why don't poor kids go to university as much as rich kids?**

**Answer: They don't have the money, or that's what many people assume.**

**But is this the only factor?**

A highly qualified team with economics and social science expertise has been granted an ARC research grant of \$240,000 over three years to identify factors that prevent or discourage students from lower socio-economic backgrounds from participating in tertiary education.

According to one member of the research team, Dr Buly Cardak, senior lecturer in La Trobe University's Department of Economics and Finance, the research is motivated by international findings that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are up to half as likely to go on to post-secondary education.

One of the issues on which the project hopes to focus is that, along with the cost of university education, students can be excluded if their early schooling achievement is not sufficiently strong. An important question for understanding university participation is what factors affect this earlier school achievement?

The project aims to consider the roles of student ability, family background and school quality as factors influencing educational outcomes and a student's capacity to progress to university.

Apart from Dr Cardak, other team members are Professor Bruce Chapman, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, and Professor Vance Martin, Department of Economics, University of Melbourne, with involvement by Dr Chris Ryan also of the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU.

Dr Cardak says the project has three broad aspects. The first is the development of new theoretical economic models which can explain the variation in participation rates by socio-economic status.

The second is to test these models using simulation based estimation techniques with Australian and international data and the final objective is the evaluation of alternative policies targeted at improving equality of opportunity.

One of the key aspects of the theoretical analysis is the development of models of education that account for the fact that progress to later stages depends on outcomes in earlier stages.

Intuitively, this is quite straightforward. Students cannot move on to the next year level of schooling unless they pass exams or satisfy some progress requirements.

However in the economics literature, models of education have not included such multi-stage aspects of education. Using such a model allows researchers to consider what happens in earlier stages of education, like secondary and primary school and even earlier, and identify if factors other than being able to pay university fees are operating to hinder or discourage students.

The statistical aspects of the project will be based on existing longitudinal studies of youth in Australia, the USA and UK. Simulation base estimation is a relatively new technique and particularly useful for such problems as raw student abilities, an important aspect of the project, which are never observed.

'However, this technique allows us to estimate the role of important factors with the use of auxiliary models where raw student ability may be absent,' Dr Cardeck said.

'Statistically identifying the relative importance of factors such as student ability and family background in determining educational success will enable families, schools, universities and educational policy-makers to improve opportunities for high-ability students from all socio- economic backgrounds.

'Once we have statistical estimates of the importance of these factors, we can use the data to assess different policies by extending our theoretical models and using numerical simulation techniques. This might include an assessment of the impact of the HECS scheme, scholarships based on socio-economic status and fully subsidised university education.'

An important objective is to provide guidance on how to provide better opportunities to the most able students, whatever their socioeconomic background. Policy suggestions may include improving resources at the pre-primary, primary and secondary school levels to facilitate the progress of talented students on to tertiary education. ●

# Australia and Japan: Lessons after Sept 11

THE FIRST publication from a ten-nation, five-year project examining the evolution of US alliances around the world since the end of the Cold War – and particularly since September 11 – has been published by La Trobe University's School of Social Sciences.

The publication is based on the results of a international workshop, hosted late last year by Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan and co-sponsored by La Trobe University.

It explored 'Alternatives for Australia and Japan post Cold War', deepening dialogue on ethical and policy implications of the dramatic developments of the last few years for Japan's and Australia's role in the region.

The four-day gathering was initiated and organised by La Trobe Professor of International Relations, Joseph Camilleri, and Dr Mick Seigel from the Institute for Social Ethics at Nanzan.

Sixteen contributions examined the security policies of the two countries, China, the United States and the ASEAN countries. Regional and international organisations, in particular the United Nations, were also a focus of discussion.

Professor Camilleri says the aim of the project was to assess how Japan and Australia, 'two different yet strangely similar polities', have reacted, and are trying to adapt to the radically altered geopolitical, economic and cultural circumstances of post-September 11.

'In both countries there is a sense of vulnerability and threat, and both have

aligned themselves closely with the US led "war on terror" because of their strong security alliance with the United States.

'In Japan much has been made of the North Korean nuclear weapons program, and both the Australian and Japanese governments have chosen to emphasise the uncertainties ahead and the critical importance of the US role in Asia.

'Though a wide cross-section of public opinion in Japan and Australia remains opposed to the US invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq, both countries have come to be viewed as regional deputies of the United States.'

Professor Camilleri describes the project as a significant landmark in

key role in the establishment of La Trobe's new Centre for Dialogue to be formally launched later this year.

Nanzan University invited six leading Japanese scholars and one from Pakistan to contribute papers.

Presenters invited by La Trobe included Professor Desmond Ball (Australian National University), Dr Michael Hamel-Green (Victoria University), Dr Nick Bisley (Deakin University), Dr Richard Tanter (Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability), Professor Allan Patience (University of Papua New Guinea) and Dr Chandra Muzaffar (International Movement for a Just World in Malaysia).

Professor Camilleri says nearly 6,000 copies of the publication have been distributed worldwide. Officials involved in the East Asian Summit held in Kuala Lumpur last December were the first to receive copies. A book based on the papers and deliberations of the workshop will soon be published in English and Japanese. ●

*Copies of the publication are available from Christine Siokou, Email: c.siokou@latrobe.edu.au*



collaborative Australian-Japanese international relations scholarship.

It was organised with colleagues, Australian Studies Project Officer, Mr Larry Marshall, and Dr Michális Michael, who is playing a

# New Professors at La Trobe University

The Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University, Professor Brian Stoddart, has announced the appointment of a number of new professors. They are:



## Educational Studies

Dr Frank Hardman has been appointed to the Chair of Educational Studies.

Dr Hardman currently holds the position of Reader in Language and Education in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

He has previously been a lecturer in Education, Director of Continuing Professional Development and Assistant Dean in the Faculty of Education and

senior lecturer in Education. He has held a number of senior management positions at the same university and has served on many university committees.

His work on literacy, teacher discourse and language more generally in the education field has had considerable impact in the United Kingdom and internationally.

Dr Hardman has a long-standing interest in classroom discourse and interaction and has contributed widely to debate in this area. His recent work on classroom talk, which

utilises a computerised system for recording interaction, has attracted significant interest from practitioners, policy makers and researchers. Dr Hardman has an impressive publication record and has attracted funding from a range of sources.

He has undertaken collaborative work in Kenya on classroom interaction in primary schools and is about to extend this work with a cognate UNICEF-funded study in Nigeria.

## Economics and Finance

Dr Xiangkang Yin has been appointed Professor of Economics and Finance.

Professor Yin did his PhD in Economic Cybernetics at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China in 1989, writing his doctoral dissertation on *Random Control Theory and Its Applications to Financing and Investment*.

He joined La Trobe as a lecturer in June 1995, was promoted senior lecturer in



1999, and to Reader in 2004.

His research interests are in the areas of Chinese economy, corporate finance and governance, financial markets, industrial economics, innovation and development, and micro/macro analysis of imperfect competition.

He has taught in a wide range of economics and finance areas at La Trobe and has supervised numerous postgraduate students.

In recent years Professor Yin has held major ARC Discovery and Linkage Grants and has helped provide World Bank funded consulting services to the Foreign Trade University, Vietnam.

He has also given numerous conference and seminar presentations as well as being a referee for most local and many international economic journals. He has 29 refereed

journal articles including papers in the *International Review of Financial Analysis*, the *Journal of Finance* and the *Journal of Development Economics*. Professor Yin's research strengths lie in quantitative economic theory and in theoretical finance.

Postgraduate coordinator for the Department of Economics and Finance from 2003-2005 and a member of several University committees, he is currently working at the Australian Graduate School of Management on corporate governance issues.

## Professor John Wiltshire

Leading Jane Austen scholar, Professor John Wiltshire of the English Program who has been appointed to a personal Chair, has been at La Trobe for more than 30 years.

Among his books are *Samuel Johnson and the Medical World* (1991), *Jane Austen and the Body: 'the picture of health'* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) – both re-issued in paperback this year – and *Recreating Jane Austen* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

His edition of Austen's most ambitious novel, *Mansfield Park*, in the first scholarly account of the author's work, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen*, has also recently been published.

In collaboration with colleagues at La Trobe, and with Professors Paul Komesaroff of Monash University and Professor Judith Parker of the University of Melbourne, Professor Wiltshire has



also researched and written extensively in the fields of medicine, nursing, ethics and narrative.

His work in healthcare focuses on both informal and formal narratives of embodiment. With Professor Komesaroff he has published *Drugs in the Health Marketplace* (1995) and with Professor Parker articles and chapters on aspects of nursing, narrative and qualitative research. He is currently working on a history of Western medicine from the viewpoint of the patient, and preparing a volume for the Helm Information series, *Icons of Modern Culture* on Dr Johnson.

Professor Wiltshire will address the British Society for Medical Humanities in London in September, and the Jane Austen Society of North America in Tucson, Arizona in October, this year.

He is convenor of the conference, International Jane Austen, at La Trobe University in 2007.



## Education

**Dr Vaughan Prain**, formerly Head of the School of Education, has been appointed to the Chair of Education at La Trobe University's Bendigo campus.

His previous positions at La Trobe include Associate Professor and Research Coordinator in the former School of Arts and Education and Head of Education, Research and Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Education.

Previously Professor Prain had been a secondary school teacher at Heywood High School and Brighton Grammar School and a tutor at the State College of Victoria, Bendigo.

He has made substantive scholarly contributions to education literature in the

areas of English and Science Education. His research interests include science literacy writing for learning in secondary science, the use of new technologies for learning and the teaching of writing at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including writing research.

Professor Prain's pioneering work in bridging science education and English education led to his appointment to the Australian Academy of Science/DEST national project entitled Primary Connections which links primary science and literacy.

Professor Prain has consistently presented his research at national and international conferences and has undertaken a leadership role in professional organisations.



## Professor Gary Dowsett

Professor Gary Dowsett, who was recently appointed to a Personal Chair, is Deputy Director at La Trobe University's Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society.

He is also an Associate Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia University, New York, where he spent US academic years 2003-04 teaching in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences, and working with the HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies.

A sociologist, Professor Dowsett has long been interested in sexuality research, particularly in relation to the rise of modern gay communities.

Since 1986 he has researched the HIV epidemic, particularly in Australia's gay communities, and has worked on many

international HIV/AIDS and sexual health projects.

These include acting as a consultant to WHO's Global Programme on AIDS in Geneva, and as an adviser to other WHO programs, to the UN Development Programme and the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS.

His international work also includes designing a seven-country study of young people and contexts of risk in relation to HIV/AIDS, reviewing HIV/AIDS intervention programs for men who have sex with men in Bangladesh, and collaborating on similar research in Fiji.

He has recently developed training programs in community-based research and qualitative research design, and has taught research design courses in Australia, Fiji, and the USA.

Professor Dowsett is author, co-author or editor of five books, more than 70 book chapters and academic papers, and over 60 other publications. He was elected to the International Academy of Sex Research in 2003, and his first book, co-authored with three colleagues, was voted one of the top ten most influential books in Australian sociology by the Australian Sociological Association.

In 2005, he was awarded a prestigious five-year VicHealth Senior Research Fellowship.

interests include British, Australian, American and global economic history, innovation, technological change and entrepreneurship, the economics of migration, international economics and public policy.

Professor Magee has published two major research monographs as well as many articles in key economic history and business history journals and has been invited to contribute to prestigious invitation-only publications including *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*.

A member of both the national and international economic and business history communities, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, UK, in 2001.

With extensive experience in lecturing, curriculum development and supervision, he has developed and delivered teaching and research programs in many economic subjects at different levels in Britain and Australia.



## Economics

**Dr Gary Bryan Magee**, formerly Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Melbourne, has been appointed to the Chair in Economics.

The appointment is a 'return' for Dr Magee who started his academic career as a lecturer in Economics at La Trobe in 1991. Since then he has held a number of academic positions at Oxford University, Australian National University, University of London and the University of Melbourne.

He has also held a number of visiting appointments, including four in 2005. They were Australian Bicentennial Fellowship, University of London, Visiting Fellowships at the University of Oxford and the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, and Distinguished Visitor, China Development Institute, China.

Recognised as a leading economic historian, his research

# New Professors

## Professor Andrew Brennan

Andrew Brennan arrived in March as Professor and Chair of Philosophy. A graduate of St Andrews, Calgary and Oxford, he began his career at the University of Stirling in the UK before taking the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Western Australia, which he held for 14 years. His research interests range over

of logic, and papers on such topics as dryland salinity in Australia, globalisation, the birth of modern science and the ethics of place.

One of his reasons for moving to La Trobe was to take advantage of the research culture in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

‘La Trobe offers an exciting research environment where there is scope for new interdisciplinary work on ethics, globalisation and sustainability.’

Professor Brennan hopes to develop projects focused particularly on sustainability, ethics and policy, building on existing research links with overseas groups in China and Europe while not losing his fundamental attachment to philosophy.

‘My disciplinary home is – and always will be – philosophy,’ he said, ‘and I hope my work in other sectors is proof of the real contributions philosophy can make to the big issues facing us as individuals and as a community.’

He brings with him an ARC Discovery Project, ‘Making Ethics Work’.

logic, philosophy of language, personal identity, animal ethics and environmental policy. He was chair of the Animal Ethics Committee in Western Australia and serves on the Board of the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching.

In the last five years he has held visiting professorships at the University of Oslo and at City University Hong Kong. His recent work includes a co-authored book on philosophy

## Professor Peter Sullivan

Professor Peter Sullivan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Bendigo), has resigned to take up a senior professorship in Education at Monash University.

He will be succeeded by Professor Lorraine Ling who will become Director of the Bendigo campus, in addition to her role as Dean of the Faculty of Education.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart, congratulated Professor Sullivan on his new appointment.

‘I wish him well and thank him warmly for the work he has done with us over the past few years. He has worked hard and successfully for us in Bendigo and the position of the University there is the better for it.’



THE MOST SIGNIFICANT health and well-being problems of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) people in Australia improve as they get older.

This is one of the findings of *Private Lives*, a study conducted by La Trobe University’s Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS).

Initiated by the Victorian Department of Human Services funded Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, a consortium run by ARCSHS, Women’s Health Victoria and the Victorian AIDS Council, the study was the largest survey ever conducted with the GLBTI population. Nearly 5500 people between the ages of 16 and 92 participated.

The study found high rates of depression amongst GLBTI people compared with heterosexual people, and high levels of suicidal thoughts. It also found that nearly 70 per cent of GLBTI people regularly modify their behaviour due to their fear of prejudice and discrimination.

Up to 90 per cent of people had avoided showing affection in public and over half had modified their activities at work despite the fact that discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexuality or gender is illegal.

Many people also ‘protect’ themselves when they use health services. One in three had not told their regular GP about their sexuality or gender identity.

‘While these findings are very worrying,’ said Professor Marian Pitts, Director of ARCSHS and a senior researcher on the study, ‘we were heartened to realise that each situation improves with age.’

‘We found that, as people got older, they were less likely to be depressed. And people’s behaviour at work and with their families becomes more relaxed as they age, although some people over 70 indicate a renewed tendency to “hide” behaviours.’

Ms Anne Mitchell, Director of Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria and an Associate Professor with ARCSHS, said the report indicated the importance of strategies to increase social acceptance of GLBTI people.

‘There is a need for more public and workplace education around the issues of sexuality and gender identity. We also need increased relationship recognition and more secure funding for support groups for same sex attracted young people,’ she said.

The report was launched by the Victorian Health Minister, Ms Bronwyn Pike, who at the same time launched a web-based clearinghouse of health information developed at Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, [www.glhv.org.au](http://www.glhv.org.au). ●

# La Trobe and the Commonwealth Games

Present or past La Trobe University students won three Gold medals and participated in many other events at the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

In addition, the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University was involved in making the Games a success in a number of ways.

The Gold medallists included swimmer Danni Miatke who won the women's 50 metres butterfly. Ms Miatke is enrolled for a BA at the Melbourne (Bundoora) campus but has deferred until 2007.

Tamsyn Lewis, who graduated from La Trobe with a Bachelor of Science in 2003, was a member of the Gold Medal Australian women's 4 x 400 metre relay team. Her brother and coach, Justin Lewis, is also a La Trobe alumnus, graduating Bachelor of Science (Biological Science) in 1995.

The third Gold Medallist was Rachel Imison, goalkeeper of the Australian Women's Hockey team. Ms Imison graduated in 2005 with an honours degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics. She was also a member of the successful Australian teams at the Olympic Games in Athens and Sydney.

Other graduates who participated included Emma Colson (Cycling: Women's Mountain Bike), Anna Thompson (Athletics: women's 10,000 metres), Elizabeth Allen (Athletics: women's 800 metres) and Timothy Matthews (Athletics: finalist in the men's 200 metre EAD T46).

Current La Trobe University's Bendigo campus Bachelor of Physiotherapy student, Erin Carroll, represented Australia in badminton.

La Trobe University's Bendigo campus participated in the Games in a number of ways.

Dr Helen McBurney, Associate Professor in the School of Physiotherapy, was the Medical Coordinator for all Bendigo Commonwealth Games venues.

She organised the medical teams, including physiotherapists and sports trainers for the Bendigo Athletes Village and sporting venues for the full-bore rifle shooting and basketball. Among the sports trainers there were several physiotherapy students.

'It was fun but exhausting being on call for 24 hours a day. Luckily we had no serious injuries among the athletes while they

were in Bendigo,' Dr McBurney said.

La Trobe University's Bendigo campus was also the holding camp for the 167-member Scottish team in the three-week lead up to the Games.

The University conducted the camp for the team in association with the Greater Bendigo City Council.

La Trobe University Director of Engagement and Enterprise, Mr David Ensor, said the aim of the Holding Camp was to provide Scottish team athletes with the best possible preparation in the lead up to the Games so that athletes could produce their best performances.

The School of Physiotherapy extended its support to the Melbourne Athletes Village through the provision of key items of equipment to Team Scotland.

Multimedia lecturer Mr Cameron Rose of the School of Arts & Design produced a video for the Commonwealth Games Cultural



Timothy Matthews (Athletics: finalist in the men's 200 metre EAD T46)

Festival in Bendigo.

The production – *A Sport for all Ages* – explores the social and community aspects of lawn bowls – one of the few sports that has players from the very young to the very old, providing a bridge over the generational divide.

Past and present Multimedia students were involved in the production with cinematography, editing and production assistant roles.

The film was screened from March 15–18 at the Campbell Theatre in Bendigo during the Commonwealth Games Cultural Festival. ●

# Challenging the **van Gogh** **'troubled genius'** industry

**T**HE MANAGING Curator of La Trobe University's Art Museum, Mr Vincent Alessi, has found himself in an unexpected position as he nears completion of his PhD research on Vincent van Gogh.

It never entered his head when he began his PhD research five years ago that he would find himself challenging what he calls the 'van Gogh troubled genius industry'.

Mr Alessi says that this 'industry' stems from two sources. One is the strong emphasis by writers, art historians and film makers on negative aspects of the Dutch painter's troubled life – he sold only one painting during his lifetime, he was always broke, he had no friends, he cut off part of his ear, he spent time in a psychiatric hospital – all of which are quite factual.

'The other source is the widespread belief that he had an inherent genius for painting. This is certainly not correct. He did not work in a vacuum and, like many painters, developed his skills from a number of sources,' Mr Alessi said.

Mr Alessi came to his conclusion that the 'troubled genius' portrayal of van Gogh was not strictly accurate after investigating one of these sources. This is the artist's collection of black and white popular prints he personally clipped from mainly English newspapers, and their influence on his paintings.

He believes that the collection of about 2,000 prints, cut from papers including *The Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic Weekly*, greatly assisted van Gogh to improve his techniques. Far from being a natural genius, he had to learn painstakingly his craft like any painter.

Mr Alessi's PhD research consists of cataloguing the 1,400 surviving prints of wood block illustrations which van Gogh mounted on thin cardboard between 1881 and 1885 and investigating how they were used to improve his painting technique.

Although approximately 1,400 prints still exist, there are many others that were mentioned by van Gogh in his letters that have been lost.

'By analysing the letters I wish to list all the prints that van Gogh mentions. Furthermore, I wish to recreate the 18 folios that van Gogh used to categorise his collection, the first time



that this has been done. Once this recreation is complete I will analyse the collection for recurring motifs and themes.

'From this I can draw conclusions on what van Gogh collected and hopefully it will lead to a more thorough understanding of the role English prints played in van Gogh's development.'

**S**TAFF at the van Gogh Museum, in Amsterdam where the surviving prints are housed, have welcomed Mr Alessi's project as the prints have never been formally catalogued and their effect on the artist's work – particularly its thematic aspects – formally investigated.

Most of the cuttings were 'social realist' in nature in that they illustrated the social ills of society towards the end of the Industrial Revolution. They depicted street urchins, the homeless and poor, and mining and industrial scenes.

Van Gogh, who came from a middle class family, had spent several years in England and could read and write English as well as Dutch, French and German – but he had no real education in art, having had only one month of formal art training.

Having failed in an attempt to become a clergyman, van Gogh tried to get a job as a draughtsman on a newspaper and began collecting the woodcut illustrations with a view to improving his draughting skills.

'I have been able to illustrate that he subsequently used some of these prints as a kind of "template" to help him in areas of painting where he initially lacked skill,' Mr Alessi said.

'For example, in his early days as a painter he did not have trouble illustrating individual figures but he did struggle composing groups of figures. I believe he used his print collection to improve his technique, reconstructing the actual structure of the prints into his paintings.'

Mr Alessi said that van Gogh and his work started out as one of his art interests but for the past 15 years it had dominated his life.

He has visited Amsterdam three times over the past five years for his PhD thesis research which he will submit towards end of 2006. His supervisor is La Trobe Art History senior lecturer, Dr Richard Haese. ●