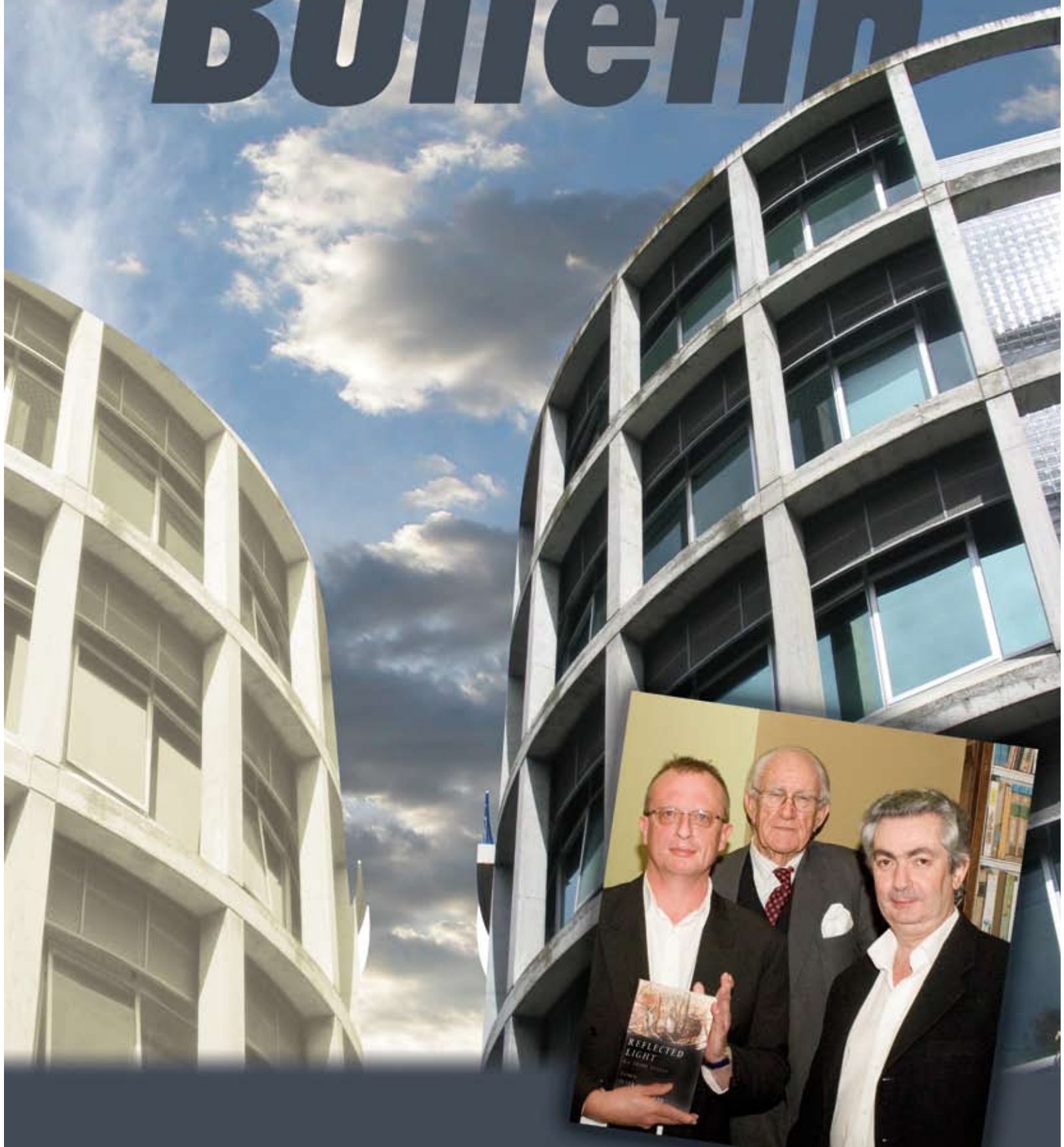


La Trobe
UNIVERSITY

Bulletin



La Trobe Essays
A LIGHT IN THE IVORY TOWER



IN THIS ISSUE

- Reflected Light – La Trobe Essays launched 3
- Key role in Australia-China free trade conference 4
- Winners of national teaching awards 5
- Honour for Les Murray 6
- Research in Action**
- GPs role in fight against family violence 7
- Why La Trobe Essays? – by Robert Manne and Peter Beilharz 8
- Malcolm Fraser: missed chance for greater regional security 9
- A seesaw helps philosophers explain causal powers 10
- Trinity of Minds 11
- Helping development in Indonesia 12
- La Trobe degree for Third World Computer lab for Tiwi Islands 13
- Song and dance about language loss 14
- Boosting student interest in science 14
- C J La Trobe: Governor and artist 15
- Installation of new Chancellor 16



Former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, launches *La Trobe Essays*, see stories pages 3 and 8.
Cover design: Basil Pardo

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

Articles may be reproduced with acknowledgement.
Enquiries and submissions to the editor, Ernest Raetz, La Trobe University, Victoria, 3086 Australia
Tel: (03) 9479 2315, Fax (03) 9479 1387
Email: bulletin@latrobe.edu.au

Articles: Ernest Raetz, Noel Carrick, Adrienne Jones
Photos: La Trobe University PDI
Design: Campus Graphics, 73025
La Trobe University.
Printed by Work & Turner.

Website: www.latrobe.edu.au/bulletin

The work of these two students will be on display on **Open Day** at La Trobe's Melbourne (Bundoora) campus, **Sunday 27 August**.

New use for technology in unmanned aircraft



'Messing around' with a model aeroplane might seem like a pastime of marginal importance for bright young technology students.

But two such students at La Trobe University are using their skills to control the operations of model aeroplanes to forward the efficiency of one of the world's fastest growing aeronautical industries – autonomous unmanned aircraft.

The work of Robert Ross, right, and Wade Tregaskis has been described by their supervisor, Associate Professor John Devlin, as a 'novel implementation in the latest microelectronic devices'. The project is co-supervised by Mr Paul Main, a lecturer in Electronic Engineering.

The new 500 gram device developed by the students, while fitted to an unmanned aircraft only 50 cm long, can be applied to unmanned aircraft of any size.

Dr Devlin says Robert's and Wade's advanced technology is a tiny step forward in improving the rapidly growing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) industry, estimated to be worth \$8 billion world-wide by 2008, and hundreds of millions of dollars annually in Australia.

Calling their new device an AE Robotics E1 prototype, the students used a commercially purchased model remote control aeroplane as its base.

The two, both fifth-year Bachelor of Computer Science/Bachelor of Electronic Engineering students, designed an embedded system using the latest microelectronic devices that takes a step further the efficiency of an unmanned plane's performance.

Their microchip is placed between the aircraft's radio control device and its normal controls, enabling the plane to be placed into fully automatic mode.

The students used a PC to develop the pre-flight plan using their own software to build and download a flight database to an embedded microcontroller on the plane.

The embedded device uses GPS navigation as its point of reference and primary navigation system. It also incorporates Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems devices, to provide three-dimensional magnetometers and accelerometers to augment the GPS, which is not particularly accurate at low speeds.

The device also records flight information and photographs on a small memory card.

Dr Devlin said that currently the uses of UAVs were 90 per cent military and 10 per cent commercial, but the proportion was changing rapidly and UAVs were being used more and more for civil uses including meteorology – currently the largest non-military use – but also for traffic control, crop assessment, and wildlife conservation.

'That two of our students can make technological advances like this shows the value of the multi-skilling that a double degree program gives,' says Dr Devlin.

'The electronic skills of Electronic Engineering were used to design the embedded system, and the programming skills which give the device its functionality come from the Computer Science side of their studies.'

'*Reflected Light* is a coming together of one of Australia's most exciting publishers and an institution with an incomparable reputation for "deepening the national conversation" ... Indeed there are more fine things in this book than the sensible reader has a right to expect.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 July, 2006

'Clearly there is a light on in the ivory tower'

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY is showcasing the talents of its writers – and its pre-eminent reputation in arts and humanities – in a new collection of essays, *Reflected Light*.

Launched by former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, and published by leading independent Melbourne-based publisher, Black Inc., the book has been edited by sociologist, Professor Peter Beilharz and Professor of Politics, Robert Manne.

Mr Fraser said: 'I congratulate the editors and contributors whose works are included in *Reflected Light*. The works show an expertise and a knowledge across a wide front.'

Noting the book's aim to discuss contemporary issues not for academic colleagues but for intelligent, non-specialist audiences, Mr Fraser added: 'The purpose of serious writing, ought, in my view, to be

Black Inc. in its promotion of the book commented on La Trobe University's 'unique reputation in Australia for the grace of its writers and for its contribution to public debate'. '*Reflected Light* collects reflections, evocations, commentary, criticism and humour by leading writers with a connection to La Trobe.

'The contributors to this collection read like a who's who of Australia's public intellectuals, writers and thinkers. They range from Inga Clendinnen on the perils of technology, John Carroll on why Australia is the lucky country, Stefano de Pieri on life on a slow river, Judith Brett on the chook in the Australian unconscious, Dennis Altman on Gore Vidal, to Robert Manne on Howard's love affair with America.

'*Reflected Light* is a collection that showcases not only some of the best of La Trobe University but also some of the best thinkers and contributors to Australian culture generally.'

The launch was held at the North Fitzroy Star hotel and attended by more

Commenting on the role of public intellectuals and quoting University of Sheffield political economist, well-known UK author and commentator, Andrew Gamble, Professor Stoddart said two points were particularly relevant:

'Gamble stresses that the extent to which people are prepared to become public intellectuals is crucial both for the public domain and for the future of what he calls progressive politics.

'The second point is that universities have always almost traditionally been self-absorbed – and the new higher education sector makes it even more difficult to be a public intellectual. (Gamble) talks about Britain's Research Assessment Exercise, and we are on the edge of similar activity here (the proposed RQF), so a lot of what he says also applies to Australia.

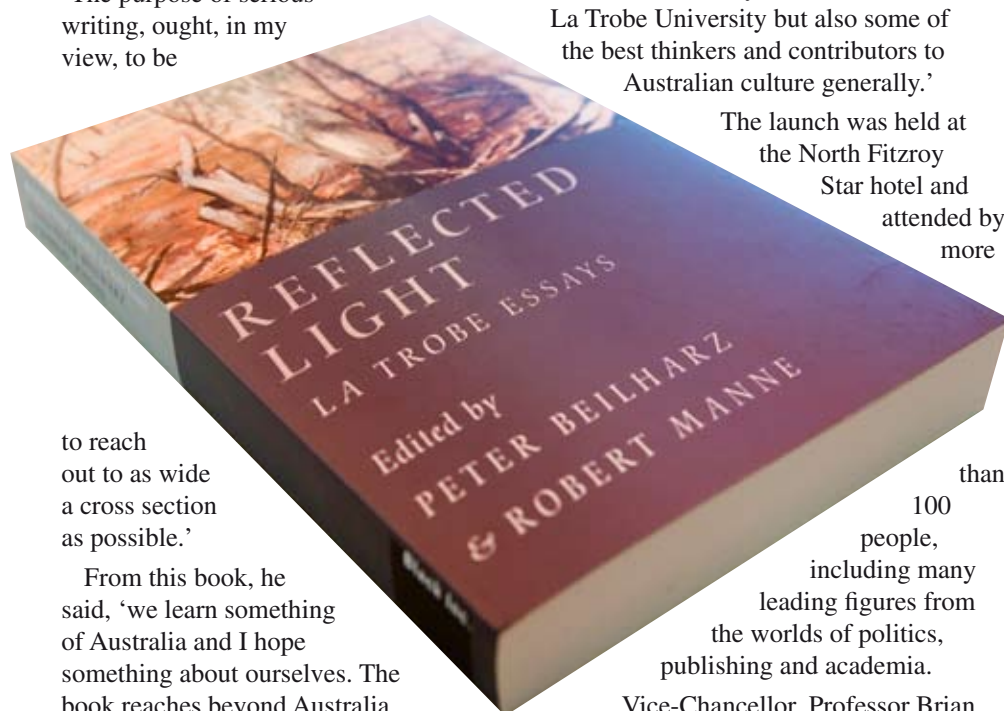
'That's why the appearance of this set of essays is so important, because it not only advertises the way in which La Trobe thinkers write and engage with the public – but it also shows the way some universities are going to survive the things that are happening to us.

'This is not to say we don't have to make some strong decisions and think very carefully about where we are at, and be highly analytical about ourselves – but, as Peter Beilharz pointed out, getting the balance right between innovation and preservation of our very strong heritage is going to be absolutely essential to the University.'

Thanking the editors, Professors Manne and Beilharz, for 'such a great piece of innovation', Professor Stoddart also praised Morry Schwartz, 'for his vision at Black Inc. and for supporting this volume in a way that shows great courage'.

'I think it will pay off as a highly innovative publishing venture – and we'll certainly want to talk to about the sequel!' ●

See '*Why La Trobe Essays*', page 8



to reach out to as wide a cross section as possible.'

From this book, he said, 'we learn something of Australia and I hope something about ourselves. The book reaches beyond Australia, to India, to Indonesia, to Vietnam, to commonplace events which are alien to so many. Together, these works demonstrate the breadth of the contribution and the vision that this University has made to intellectual life in Australia,' Mr Fraser concluded.

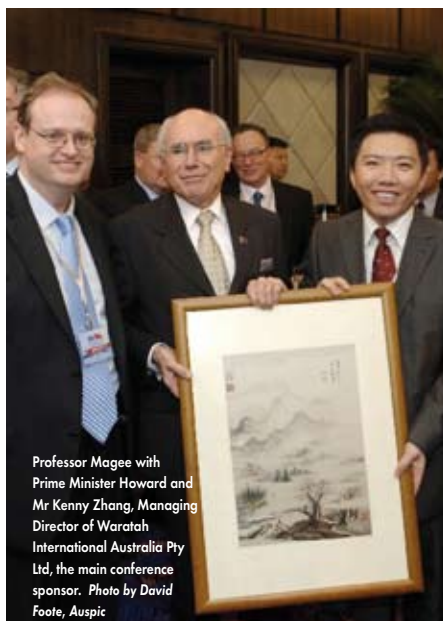
than 100 people, including many leading figures from the worlds of politics, publishing and academia.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart thanked Mr Fraser 'for what I think is the best possible demonstration of why these essays were put together'.

'Your commentary on the book tonight (see report, centre pages) has encouraged everybody involved in this project, and your support is greatly welcome.'



Key role in Australia-China FTA conference



Professor Magee with Prime Minister Howard and Mr Kenny Zhang, Managing Director of Waratah International Australia Pty Ltd, the main conference sponsor. Photo by David Foote, Auspic

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY'S new Professor of Economics, Gary Magee, has played a key role as organiser of the recent major international conference on the Australia-China Free Trade Agreement currently being negotiated between the two governments.

The conference – at which Prime Minister, John Howard, delivered a keynote speech – received extensive publicity in Australia. It was held in late June in Shenzhen, China.

Professor Magee says it was attended by some 570 senior government leaders and officials, Australian and Chinese negotiators, business and corporate representatives, and leading academic analysts. It focused on issues central to the proposed FTA, particularly in relation to manufacturing, resources, investment, intellectual property and business law.

Other La Trobe analysts at the conference were Dr Robert Waschik, from the Department of Economics and Finance, who presented a paper, as did former students and staff members of the University, Professor Wang Dashu, now at the School of Economics

at Peking University, and Dr Mary Amiti, who works for the International Monetary Fund.

Professor Magee says the conference, sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, was of vital importance to Australia's future. It also provided a rare forum for Australian academic economists to make a 'direct and major impact on an important plank of our national trade policy'.

He says the conference also helped open many new opportunities for La Trobe to develop and strengthen its links with China's top academic and policy institutes.

China today, he says, is the most dynamic force in the world economy, accounting for more than a quarter of global growth. In the next decade, China is projected to become the world's third largest economy after the United States and Japan. Australia is in position to benefit from this.

'The Australia-China bilateral economic relationship has strengthened dramatically since China's policy shift towards global economic integration. China is already

Australia's third most important trading partner. Our exports to China have grown at an annual rate of around 20 per cent in recent years. For example, sales of iron ore rose by 126 per cent in 2005 to \$5.7 billion while exports of manufactures increased by 17.6 per cent to \$2 billion.

'Australian exports of total services to China have more than trebled over the last decade, reaching almost \$1.3 billion in 2004, driven by growth in education, tourism and transport services.'

Professor Magee says China is now Australia's number one source of foreign fee-paying students, and student enrolments grew by 18 per cent last year to more than 80,000. China is also emerging as a major source of tourism and short-term visitors. Arrivals from China reached 285,000 in 2005.

'However, despite rapid growth in trade, there remain significant barriers for Australian exports to China in several important areas. Chinese tariffs remain high relative to Australia's, with the average in 2005 at 9.9 per cent for all products and 15.3 per

cent for agricultural products.

'Importantly, tariffs escalate on many value-added products exported by Australia. Exports of services are constrained by regulatory barriers that restrict market access and increase costs. Though bilateral investment has been increasing in recent years, it still remains relatively low.

'Australian investors, for example, have concerns about legal transparency, security of investment, enforcement of contract law and protection of intellectual property in China.

'In this context a well-structured Australia-China FTA has the potential to yield very substantial benefits to both economies. Negotiating a comprehensive agreement that meets the concerns and objectives of both Australia and China is a challenging task.

'The Shenzhen conference was designed to make a major contribution towards developing mechanisms and procedures that will enable a satisfactory conclusion to these negotiations.' ●

La Trobe **wins** national **teaching awards**

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY has won six Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in this year's Carrick Institute teaching awards.

The national recognition follows La Trobe's own ten teaching awards in May to staff who have made a significant contribution to student learning.

Carrick Citations are granted to people who have made a significant contribution to the quality of student learning in a specific area of responsibility over a sustained period, whether they are academic staff, general staff, sessional staff or institutional associates.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Denise Kirkpatrick, said it was a wonderful achievement for the staff concerned and the University to have more than half of La Trobe's internal awards gain added recognition by winning the Australia-wide awards.

'These awards recognise the long-standing contribution that staff members make to the student experience, and I congratulate all our winners.'

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart said: 'At a time when the ability to demonstrate excellence has important ramifications, these citations are significant. They will help ensure that we remain a major target for students who are progressively becoming more discriminating over teaching performance.'

'With the transmission of knowledge changing rapidly, professionalisation of the teaching role is becoming increasingly important. This University is working hard to keep abreast of the latest in effective teaching and learning methods and supporting technology, and is continuing to improve its staff promotions system to include greater recognition for teaching talent.'

The awards were presented at a ceremony for Victorian and Tasmanian winners at the Melbourne Museum in August.

Winners of the University's Citations for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning (see June *Bulletin*) are also conducting short presentation and discussion sessions – with a video conference link to interested parties at

other campuses – to enable the wider University community to learn about their award-winning work.

Winners of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching Awards are:

Professor Eleanor Wertheim, Psychology: for creating learning opportunities that enable students in professional courses to effectively meet the challenges of their professional and personal lives. Professor Wertheim's

skills development across a diverse Arts Faculty.

Ms Beverley Forsyth, Ms Heather Hulett, Ms Susan Porter, Ms Jill Stokes, Ms Christine Wanklyn, Library: for an effective and engaging program that contributes to new nursing students' understanding of researching information sources, academic literature and



success follows her win in 2004 of the prestigious \$40,000 'Australian Award for University Teaching', one of only six granted nationally by the Federal government.

Dr John Banks, Mathematics: for persistent, student-learning focused curriculum development which enables non-maths students to build mathematical models for specific applications using a small core of mathematical concepts.

Dr Caroline Chanock, Academic Skills Unit: for transforming insights gained from work with individual students into an innovative integrated program of academic

scholarly writing across five campuses.

Dr Elizabeth Johnson, Biochemistry: for the development of innovative learning tools to teach graduate and discipline-specific skills and to encourage deep learning.

Ms Mary Anne Noone, Ms Judith Dickson, Ms Elizabeth Curran, Law: for enhancing students' understanding of ethical and professional responsibilities in a deep learning experience that links classroom learning with legal practice. ●

Rose-red city in the angles of a cut-up
green anthology: Grape stanzas, citrus strophes.
I like your dirt cliffs and chimney-broom palm trees,
your pipe dream under dust, in its heads of pressure.

La Trobe honours **Les Murray**

'It is Les Murray's great achievement that, like Wordsworth, he has been able both to illuminate the conditions of common life and to convey the immanence of the sacred. In doing so, he has shown us the intricacies of what it can mean to be Australian at the turn of the twenty-first century.'

With those words by Mildura campus Head, Pro Vice-Chancellor Alan Frost, the University recently conferred the degree Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) on Australia's greatest living poet.

Professor Frost said the hallmarks of Les Murray's poetry 'are an arresting clarity of image and the everyday language in which the imagery is presented, as in this opening to his poem about Mildura'.

The ceremony was held on the Mildura campus as part of the Mildura Writers' Festival – not far from the banks of the river with which he shares his name. Dr Murray has been a regular participant in the Festival, of which La Trobe is a foundation sponsor.

Dr Murray's literary achievement has brought him wide distinction. He has many times been awarded State Premiers' literary prizes. He has three times won the Grace Leven Prize for poetry (1965, 1980, 1990), was awarded the Petrarch Prize in 1995, and the T S Eliot Prize in 1996.

In 1998, he received the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He is an Officer in the Order of Australia and has been elected a Fellow of the



Chancellor Mrs Sylvia Walton presents the award to Les Murray.

Australian Academy of the Humanities.

At the conclusion of the ceremony Dr Murray gave a public lecture, titled 'An Hour with Les Murray' as part of the Dean's Lecture Series.

He spoke about editing anthologies of Australian poets, from Ken Slessor and James McAuley to John Shaw Neilson, right back to Frank ('The Poet') McNamara, a convict at Port Arthur during the 1840s.

A highlight was Les Murray reading McNamara's best known work: *The Convict's Tour to Hell*, a satire on convict experiences. In this poem, he imagines his own death and descent into a Hell populated by those who tormented him

on Earth – including a number of prominent NSW officials.

A section of the Festival is held on the La Trobe Mildura campus. Sessions this year, apart from the Les Murray main event, included the regional launch of the book *Reflected Light: La Trobe Essays*.

Ranging from the local to the global, the essays acknowledge the prominent role of members of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and display connections to place, from Bundoora to Mildura, (see cover story).

Associate Professor, Greg Kratzmann, led a session on another great Australian poet, the late Gwen Harwood.

There was also a panel discussion about the possibility of publishing a journal or magazine dealing with the Mildura region and, more broadly, with the Murray Darling Basin. This was chaired by sociologists, Professor Peter Beilharz and Dr Trevor Hogan from the University's Thesis Eleven Centre for Critical Theory and included Peter Rose, Ivor Indyk, and Stefano de Pieri.

Other Festival events on campus included readings by Helen Garner and Marion Halligan, and a panel session with Raimond Gaita, Barry Hill and Helen Garner dealing with *Memoir: Fact and Fiction*. ●

When research into disturbing issues makes waves, what do you do?

Take it global

says La Trobe Research Fellow

WHEN La Trobe social scientist Dr Angela Taft initially investigated the way general practitioners in Australia manage families affected by violence between partners, she found that GPs not only regularly overlooked the impact of partner violence on children, but there were also serious limitations in their abilities to manage the consequences for the families involved – or even for the safety of colleagues and staff in their own clinics.

Apart from the common barriers of lack of time and training, she says GPs also lacked any effective process for managing the situation when things got worse – or for recognising that their own attitudes and perceptions may often stand in the way.

‘GPs had a range of attitudes that ran the gamut from “I think they’re all bastards, I’d run over them on a dark night”, as one rural GP said about abusive male patients, to “It’s really difficult to think of the men as abusers when you’ve been seeing both of them as a couple for a long time; I had no idea,”’ Dr Taft says.

‘There was a really strong realisation from that study that GPs needed better advice.’

The cross-currents tapped into during her PhD research in 2000 had such complex implications for GP management practices that Dr Taft has since extended

her work into several major collaborative studies addressing the health system’s response to intimate partner violence.

A Senior Research Fellow at La Trobe University’s Mother and Child Health Research, she and a group of international partner violence and health care specialists have recently devised 32 innovative guidelines to assist GPs confront the many complex issues arising from domestic violence – to recognise when their own attitudes and prejudices may be blinding them, to identify patients who may be perpetrators, victims or at risk, especially women and children, and to act with confidence in managing the consequences, not least for their own clinics.

The result of a consensual, multinational research process led by Dr Taft, Associate Professor Kelsey Hegarty, from the University of Melbourne, and Professor Gene Feder from Queen Mary’s School of Medicine and Dentistry, London, the guidelines have been endorsed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for use by family physicians throughout Australia.

The group hopes the guidelines will be similarly endorsed by counterpart organisations in the UK, Canada, the Netherlands and the United States.

Delivering a ‘Distinguished Paper’ award presentation to a Plenary Session

of the 2006 Australian General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference in Perth in July, Dr Taft told several hundred GPs and health care researchers she and her fellow-researchers acknowledged that partner violence is a global health problem, reflecting their shared understanding that it was an underlying issue in many serious and recurrent problems in primary health care.

The international consultative process from which the guidelines evolved had its provenance in a meeting Dr Taft and her principal researchers attended during an international family physicians’ conference in Amsterdam in 2004.

Identifying the issues as global, the group invited diversely qualified experts from Australia, Canada, the US, the UK, and the Netherlands to help them evaluate recommendations – resulting in a two-year collaboration between 11 international universities and research institutes. In Australia the research dovetailed under another major research project, a community randomised trial in the north-western suburbs of Melbourne evaluating social support for pregnant and recent mothers at risk of abuse.

The guidelines are now also being trialled among 30 general practitioners participating in that project, which is also led by Dr Taft, Dr Rhonda Small and Professor Judith Lumley from Mother and Child Health Research, and Dr Hegarty. This project, like the international study, evolved from the findings of Dr Taft’s original PhD research.

The most radical guidelines according to Dr Taft are those suggesting GPs ask all pregnant women and girls about partner violence, parents about the impact on their children, or ask the children themselves. She says there has been little awareness to date that this is appropriate, and doctors need to be mindful of the link between domestic violence and child abuse.

‘These are issues which have been poorly addressed in general practice. They’re important for the safety not only of the women and children, but also for the men, because some are homicidal, and some are homicidal and suicidal – and also for the clinics’ own staff,’ Dr Taft concludes. ●





Former Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, at the launch with, from left, Vice-Chancellor Brian Stoddart, Black Inc.'s Morry Schwartz, Professor Beilharz and Professor Manne.

Why **La Trobe Essays**?

By Peter Beilharz and Robert Manne

THIS BOOK arose because of a chance remark made to one of its editors – about the unusually prominent role played in Australian intellectual life by members of the humanities faculty at La Trobe. While the book was still little more than a twinkle in its editors' eyes, we learned, with a mixture of amusement, puzzlement and pride, that La Trobe University had been judged by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* to have one of the top twenty-five humanities faculties in the world. While such surveys are always open to question and often downright misleading, this one did seem to us to register something real.

Forty-five years ago or so, plans were made to create a university in the bushland paddocks of the northern outskirts of Melbourne. Today that university is a mature institution, with a solid record of achievement in the fields of science and scholarship; with a history of having introduced tens of thousands of first-generation university students, especially from families living in the less affluent suburbs of Melbourne's north and west, to the life of the mind; and with a reputation – more a matter of accident than design – for enlivening, deepening and complicating the national conversation, in a variety of ways.

Over the decades, La Trobe University – and here we can only speak with

competence of the humanities and social sciences – has seen some remarkable accomplishments. There was a time when three of Australia's most renowned philosophers – Jack Smart, Peter Singer and Frank Jackson – worked together at La Trobe. Through the writings of Inga Clendinnen, Rhys Isaac and Greg Denning the name of La Trobe became attached

Forces have emerged which have begun to threaten the future of the study of liberal arts

in the 1980s to a distinctive branch of history, the ethno-historical school. Jean and Allan Martin pioneered new approaches to teaching sociology and history. Exiles such as Agnes Heller and Claudio Veliz added new views. Members of the faculty – John Hirst, Judith Brett and Marilyn Lake – have made seminal contributions to the understanding of Australian political history. The schools of Linguistics and Archaeology are among the most distinguished in Australia. No

university has more regularly filled the Harvard Chair of Australian Studies, at least in recent years. Nor is there a university in Australia whose members – from the left, the centre and the right – have assumed as prominent a part in the national political debate. At the same time La Trobe has had strong relations with journals like *Quadrant*, *Arena* and *Thesis Eleven*, and has helped support public culture through *Australian Book Review* and now *The Monthly*.

Like all institutions universities are subject to constant change – driven by internal rhythms, external financial pressures, student demand, movements in intellectual fashion, shifts in the national and the international mood. Their challenge is to respond sanely to these forces without betraying the values that lie at their heart – the quest for what some would call truth and others knowledge, the ethic of civility and collegiality, the commitment to introduce each new generation of students to the world of learning and thought. Time and again, the humanities and social sciences at La Trobe have been required to reinvent themselves. In the necessary task of reinvention, La Trobe has generally succeeded, at least thus far, in remaining faithful to the traditions of that broader institution, the Western university, in which the study of the liberal arts has always been a vital part.

The continued well-being of this kind of project ought not to be taken for granted. Over the past few years a number of forces have emerged which, in combination, have begun to threaten the future of the study of liberal arts in Australian universities and to undermine the confidence of the broader community in that pursuit. The first threat is conceptual. A language which places emphasis on the instrumental and material role of universities in national economic wellbeing has gradually subverted an older language, shared by earlier generations, which did not doubt the role of universities in the creation of a more liberal society and in the cultivation of minds. The second threat is financial. Despite unprecedented national wealth, over time the proportion of overall university funding provided by government has steadily declined. A shift in the balance of university offerings, away from sciences and the humanities towards more vocationally oriented professional training, has been the predictable and inevitable result.

Most worrying of all, however, is the third threat. Over the past few years an increasingly strident case about the teaching of humanities, borrowed from neo-conservative intellectuals in the United States, has been mounted by certain commentators and politicians. They claim that, because an army of trivialising, politically correct, postmodern, anti-Western moral relativists has systematically colonised the liberal arts, to shut them down would represent, if anything, not a national loss but a national gain.

ONE REASON for putting this anthology together is to reveal, not abstractly but concretely, the distinctive contribution the humanities and social sciences faculties of one of our leading universities has made to national life, through the grace of its writers and through its place in public debate. An even more important purpose is to try to show – through the sheer variety, the political diversity, the reflective intelligence and the humour of the essays we have chosen – both the falsity of the current dour or silly stereotype of the humanities faculty in Australia that has been carefully constructed in parts of the media, and what it is that we stand to lose if the forces which presently threaten the study of liberal arts at the contemporary Australian university were ever to succeed.

Some of the authors in this anthology are well known to the public; some are mainly known only to others in their

Our missed chance for greater regional security

WHILE *Reflected Light* demonstrated ‘the breadth of the contribution and vision that this university has made to intellectual life in Australia’, former Liberal Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, during his launch of the book, said: ‘I don’t think you will be surprised if I want to touch in a little more depth on the section headed ‘The New Dominion’.

He said Australia’s relationship across the Pacific was not a relationship between countries or governments. ‘It is a relationship between two people. We know, within a little more than two years, that President Bush will be out. We have no real knowledge of what is likely to happen in Australia.

‘I happen to believe that after Bush, in the United States those who have promoted and supported his policies will be regarded as inimical to American interests, perhaps even as pariahs. The United States is an open country and already there are many who talk of the gross mistakes. The Neo-Conservatives and the evangelical Christians are starting to fragment.

‘If the next American administration does not want to know President Bush or his supporters and lieutenants, will they want to know those who have done most to encourage him from a country like Australia? Will our relationship with the United States fall, as the reputation and status of Bush and his lieutenants fall?

‘Australia at the moment is regarded as a faithful implementer of President Bush’s policies. In my view that represents a betrayal of Australia’s basic interests. Robert Manne (in his article in *Reflected Light*) believes that Australia has become a new dominion, but this time a dominion of the United States. Is that code for saying that there are some who wish Australia to become the next State of the Union? I would take to the streets on that issue!



‘To me all this represents a very significant missed opportunity. After the end of the Cold War we had the opportunity to exercise a much greater degree of independence without prejudicing ANZUS. It was an opportunity to create greater security for our own region.

‘We ought to be speaking about these issues. I hope this book helps to promote a significant debate.’ ●

Mr Fraser speaking at the launch.

scholarly fields; some are at the beginning of their careers. Most are academics. One or two have a relationship to the university community of a different but no less important kind. Most are associated with the Bundoora campus of La Trobe; some play a significant role in the regional campuses. Apart from judgement of merit, only one criterion placed a limit on what we chose to publish. We were determined that the imagined audience of the essay would be, in each case, not fellow academic specialists but fellow citizens. In putting this anthology together

we received strong support from La Trobe University vice-chancellors Michael Osborne and Brian Stoddart, and from the heads of the School of Social Sciences, Joel Kahn and David de Vaus. To all of them we are very grateful, as we are to Morry Schwartz, Chris Feik, Sophy Williams, Caitlin Yates and the splendid Black Inc. editorial team. ●

*The above is reprinted from the introduction to *Reflected Light*.*

A seesaw helps philosophers explain **Causal powers in nature and history**

MANY AREAS of philosophic reasoning have little interest to the general public – although some have vital bearings on our lives.

They escape our attention because we deem them too complex and theoretical.

Thus few outside the fields of philosophy and pure mathematics are aware of the important knowledge stemming from what philosophers call ‘causal powers’.

Two philosophers at La Trobe University, Professor Brian Ellis and Dr Behan McCullagh, have recently been investigating the importance of causal powers in nature and in history.

The traditional theory of causal relations is based largely on the work of David Hume (1711-1776), who many believe was the most important philosopher to write in English. He maintained that causes and effects are related by general laws discovered by scientists studying regularities in nature.

analogy of a seesaw.

‘If you exert a force on one end of a balanced see-saw by sitting on it, that end of the see-saw will go down. This is so regularly the case as to be regarded as a causal law.

‘But the see-saw will not go down if there is an equal or greater force at that time on the other end. In that case the see-saw will not move, or it will be depressed at that other end instead.

The moral is that causal laws are true only so long as nothing in the environment interferes with the process they describe. They are true in closed, controlled situations, like laboratories, where interference can be excluded.

But the world is open to all kinds of unpredictable and uncontrolled forces. So causal laws are not strictly true of events in the world, for often they are, or could be, falsified by interfering conditions.

can be offset by other tendencies at work, when someone sits on the other end.

‘Causal powers are the tendencies things have to bring about changes of certain kinds in certain circumstances. Often the tendencies are reciprocal. Thus see-saws tend to depress at the end where someone sits on them, and sitting on an end of a see-saw tends to depress it’.

Professor Ellis has been fascinated by the new philosophy of nature that comes with acceptance of causal powers.

Instead of things in the world being inert, related to one another by contingent laws, he now sees things as possessing a number of causal powers that are essential to their nature.

He is particularly interested in the theoretical entities of chemistry – including atoms, molecules, molecular structures, and electron shell structures – and their intrinsic properties.

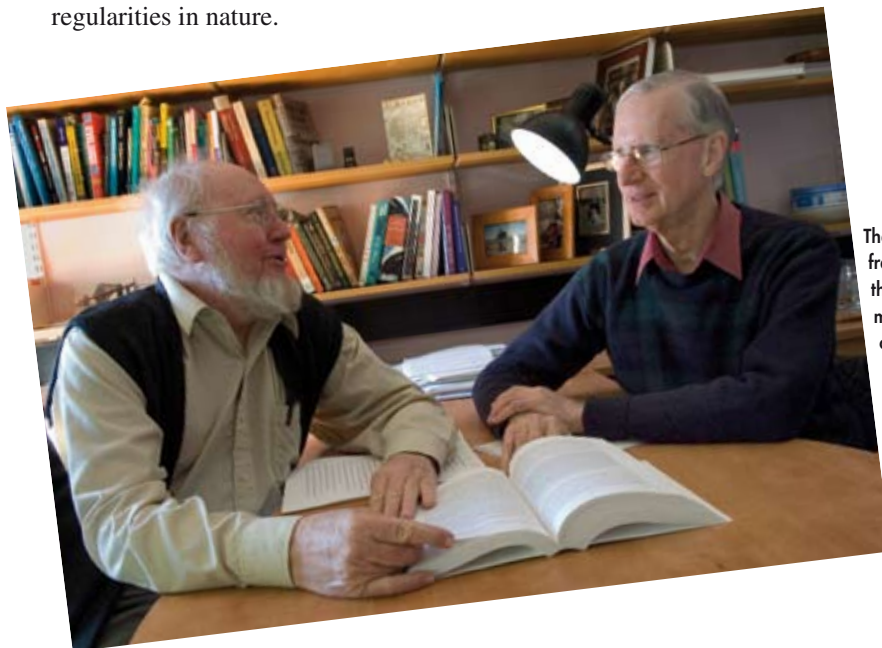
Professor Ellis has elaborated his views in two recent books: *Scientific Essentialism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), and *The Philosophy of Nature* (Acumen: Chesham, 2002).

Dr McCullagh, in a recent seminar paper, ‘The Driving Forces of History’, considered the place of causal powers in history.

He says that history studies human behaviour, and the causal powers moving people to act as they do are better known as ‘dispositions’ to act in certain ways in certain circumstances.

‘These are not universal, but vary between societies and individuals. Historians often take them for granted, but when people behave strangely, they are driven to ask why, and to study the dispositions that moved them. The event that triggers a disposition can be regarded as a cause of the behaviour that results,’ he says.

‘Once the importance of dispositions is recognised, historians can study the way in which different, often competing dispositions, have interacted to produce the behaviour that interests them. They then have a theoretical framework for the analysis of motivational complexity.’ ●



Theoretical framework for the analysis of motivational complexity.

The revival of interest in causal theory stems largely from two seminal books published in 1975, *Causal Powers: A Theory of Natural Necessity* by Rom Harré and E.H. Madden, and *A Realist Theory of Science* by Roy Bhaskar. They suggested that causes are related to their effects, not by general laws, but by causal powers.

Professor Ellis and Dr McCullagh explain causal powers by using the

‘But instead of saying the causes and effects are related by a general law, we could say that causes trigger tendencies to bring about certain changes in things, even though those tendencies can be offset by other tendencies in the environment.

‘Sitting on one end of see-saws triggers a tendency they have to depress under the force applied at that end. But that tendency

Trinity of minds, multiplicity of ideas, unity of title

It must rank among the most remarkable research coincidences.

How did three prominent scholars in three different fields on three different continents, unaware of each other's existence, come to write books with the same title on the same subject?

Each of the three books was published under the title *The Spirituality Revolution*.

The first, by cultural theorist, Dr David Tacey, Associate Professor in La Trobe University's English Program, was published by Harper Collins in Australia in 2003.

It was followed by the second in 2004 by Robert Forman, Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts in the USA and the third in 2005 co-authored by Paul Heelas, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster in the UK.

Such is the coincidence, and such is the subject matter, the rise of spirituality, that several hundred mental and physical health professionals will meet at a congress in London in November organised to discuss the books and their contents.

Dr Tacey and Professors Heelas and Forman will be the three keynote speakers at the congress, organised by the Wrekin Trust and the University for Spirit Forum.

The Network is a worldwide group of several thousand psychologists and health professionals who explore the boundaries of the human mind,

going beyond the old bio-medical model of human life.

Over the three-day congress called 'The Grassroots Spirituality Revolution', the three authors will meet, both privately and publicly in workshops and seminars, to discuss their independently sourced views on spirituality and how these views converge and diverge.

Dr Tacey has read Professor Heelas' book but not that by Professor Forman. He says that all three have focused on the reasons why spirituality is becoming stronger in the world at the same time that formal religions are losing their adherents.

'In former times, the terms religion and spirituality went hand in hand. Spirituality was once the core of religion but now people want to be spiritual but not religious,' said Dr Tacey, a specialist in psychoanalytic and psychological readings of literature and culture.

'This situation puzzles and concerns today's dwindling faith institutions. One reason is that the old idea that people should remain with the religion into which they were born is almost gone,' Dr Tacey said.

'This marks the end of the era of blind acceptance of faith. People are much more willing to seek alternatives to the religious beliefs they inherited. One result is that in the Western World, many people are changing their beliefs.

'The fastest growing religion in the West is Buddhism because people can follow a spiritual path without having



to believe in God. They are more likely to follow the lack of logic in Tibetan Buddhism than the lack of logic in Christianity.

'Spirituality is recruiting many new adherents and among them are psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical professionals. Psychologists and psychiatrists are interested in its effects on mental health and medical professionals in its effects on physical health.

'Spirituality keeps up our spirits and this has attracted the interest of psychiatrists. They once belonged to one of the most secular and non-religious professions but they are now starting to investigate spirituality and its benefits.

'I teach a subject called Spirituality and I am finding students are much more interested in this than they were even a few years ago.'

A well known commentator on religious affairs, Dr Tacey has two new books coming out this year in London and in New York – *How to Read Jung* and *The Idea of the Numinous* – making a total of eight books. He will also feature in two new television shows going to air later this year on ABC and SBS.

Although an academic and not a clinical psychologist, he is to be made an honorary member of the International Association of Analytical Psychology based in Switzerland at a congress next year in Cape Town. This is in recognition of his professional services to psychology and psychoanalysis. ●



Helping development in Indonesia

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY'S Bendigo campus is the academic partner with an Indonesian Community Development program, Community Empowerment for Rural Development.

The Masters level program is coordinated by senior lecturer in Social Science, Trevor Budge, with Drs Phil West and Shari Siegloff supervising the students' theses.

Dr West says the first students arrived in January last year and spent a year and a half at Bendigo completing an intensive English Language course. This was followed by seven academic units ranging from rural and regional planning, economic development, to researching social life.

They then began research on a 12,000 word thesis for which they returned to Indonesia for three months' field research. For the final two months – mid-June to August, 2006 – the students have returned to Australia to complete their theses.

Dr West says these topics vary widely. They include projects on a water users' association, youth exodus from rural areas, rural neo-natal care and evaluation of a rural savings and credit program.



In May, Dr West travelled to Indonesia to supervise the progress of the students, checking collection of secondary material, thesis planning, ethics issues, as well as their field research and introductory drafts.

'Each student's English skills, fluency and accent varies, so I had to adapt for individual needs.' Dr West had never been to Indonesia and found it a wonderful learning and cultural experience. 'Initially, the social inequality was very striking,' says Dr West. 'There are Mercedes and BMWs on the roads next to people-powered taxis and marble-gilded homes near slums with open sewers.'

'However I've lived and travelled in many countries including Latin America and the Philippines, and I think the Indonesians are among the warmest and most hospitable people I have met, despite the more negative issues about the country often portrayed in the Australian media.'

Dr West, a photography enthusiast with a number of exhibition and publication credits, also used his time to capture snapshots of Indonesian life. ●

An on-line exhibition can be seen at philwest.org/photos

New La Trobe Degree for **Third World**

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY is introducing a new double degree next year to train graduates to work in third world countries.

Called a Bachelor of Agricultural Science / Bachelor of International Development, the combined degree aims to attract those wishing to work in developing countries and to help improve their agriculture.

A senior academic in La Trobe's Department of Agricultural Sciences, Dr Peter Sale, a co-ordinator of the new course, has first hand knowledge about the needs of the communities the new course is designed to help.

Dr Sale spent part of last year working as a volunteer with a non-government organisation, the African Child Foundation (ACF), in Ugandan villages in East Africa, where HIV/AIDS is rife and many young children are orphans.

Years of war, political upheaval, and sickness have left a once rich agricultural area in poverty, without

infrastructure and insufficient finance to raise agricultural production to its potential.

Dr Sale worked on agricultural projects while his wife, Julie, also a volunteer, worked as a teacher and helped with HIV/AIDS testing with village communities.

After returning from Uganda, the Sales are continuing to help these communities. Julie has been raising funds to help ACF build and equip classrooms for a small school in the village of Katebo, near Lake Victoria.

'Julie has received support from staff at La Trobe, local Rotary and local schools in Melbourne,' said Dr Sale who lectures in plant production and farming systems.

'After discussing the needs of the Katebo community with the local people, my aim is to help the ACF raise funds to develop a goat farm and provide small goat flocks to the many widows who currently have no income,' Dr Sale said.

'My experience in Uganda



showed me first hand the need for the specialised training, both in agriculture and in the area of development studies, which is what this new double degree course is designed to provide.

'The course will offer a range of skills required in these situations', he added.

Dr Sale is co-ordinating

the Agricultural Sciences segment of the double degree and Dr Alberto Gomes, a senior lecturer in La Trobe's Sociology and Anthropology Program, will co-ordinate the International Development segment. ●



STUDENTS at La Trobe University's Chisholm College have donated a computer laboratory to boost educational opportunities for children on the Tiwi Islands.

This followed a request from the Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School at Nguuu on Bathurst Island, which has 250 students.

Computer lab for **Tiwi islands**

The project was co-ordinated by College Manager, Jannene Graham. Chisholm's IT staff, Andrew Robinson and Nick Evans, took up the technical challenge and, with the help of the La Trobe's IT community, assembled 26 computers and other equipment for the island.

The two men rebuilt and upgraded donated computers for the school and some extra ones for a 'cyber lab' for another community project in Nguuu.

The cost of transport was a major hurdle for Chisholm College residents, but NQX Freight came to the rescue, moving the equipment to

Darwin, from where the Tiwi Barge shipped it across to Nguuu.

Other companies who helped with the project were National Storage and Box Makers, who donated wrapping material and boxes, while Mouse Matters provided the mouse pads.

Chisholm Head, Terry Collits, says the College's next community service project for the Tiwi Islands is helping to fund a local breakfast and lunch nutrition program for students, some of whom do not get regular meals at home before school. ●



Welcome dance at the Singpho National Festival in Assam at which Dr Morey was a guest of honour. Priests in headdress lead the dance.

PROGRESS is robbing many remote cultures of their languages – and contact with modern technology is doing the same to their musical traditions.

However, as a result of the efforts of Dr Stephen Morey, a research fellow at La Trobe University's Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, the Turung and Singpho speakers of Assam in northeast India may escape that fate.

He has recently returned from a four-month field trip to the area which he describes as a 'linguistic hotspot' where perhaps 150 languages are spoken, often by small numbers of people.

Dr Morey is one of four La Trobe scholars working there on endangered languages, giving La Trobe the greatest concentration

Song and dance about language loss

of non-Indian scholars in the region helping with language preservation.

His task is to compile comprehensive documentation of the Turung and Singpho languages, funded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, based at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Dr Morey says the Turung language is spoken in only seven villages, of which he has visited six – the seventh being very remote and consisting of only three families.

During his field trip, a Turung elder suggested how the Turung language could be written. This proposal was recorded by Dr Morey and played to residents in each of the other five villages. The result is that the Turung community is now moving towards agreement on how their language could be documented in Roman script.

Dr Morey returns to Assam in October to continue this project and produce a book in this new orthography, tentatively titled 'A book for teaching the Turung language'.

He has also been asked by the nearby Singpho people, whose language is closely related to Turung, to assist with its documentation. In particular he is seeking elderly people who still know traditional songs and stories.

'I have already collected a large number of these. Several, called "Mam Htu Soi Wa", used to be sung when women pounded the husks off the rice prior to cooking, a task that once took several hours every day. Now machines are used for this work and very few people still know these songs.' ●

5	6	7	8	9	10
B	C	N	O	F	Ne
10.81	12.01	14.01	16.00	19.00	20.18
13	14	15	16	17	18
Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar
26.98	28.09	30.97	32.07	35.45	39.95
31	32	33	34	35	36
Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr
69.72	72.61	74.92	78.96	79.90	83.80
49	50	51	52	53	54
In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe
114.8	118.7	121.8	127.6	126.9	131.3
81	82	83	84	85	86
Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
204.4	207.2	209.0	(209.0)	(210)	(222)

Boosting student interest in science

HEAD of the La Trobe University School of Education, Professor Vaughan Prain, is national consultant to a \$1.8million 'Primary Connections' professional development project to assist teachers to teach science.

Funded by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) through the Australian Academy of Science for three years, the project has expanded to involve 100 teachers in 50 schools

throughout Australia.

Professor Prain said that our country 'is facing a crisis with a shortage of science teachers and decline in student interest in science subjects and take-up of science careers'.

'At a time when we have all this new technology before us and increased capacity for scientific development, the nation is facing a crisis in student interest,' he said.

'Enhancing science teaching and learning is now a national priority, and significant research is being undertaken to address this.' ●

As part of this, the Faculty of Education recently hosted a symposium on science literacy and learning at the Bendigo campus for teachers, principals, students and others.

It was led by four international experts, all working on different aspects of research to increase student interest and enhance teaching and learning in science. They were Professor Larry Yore from the University of Victoria, Canada, Professor Professor Brian Hand, University of Iowa, United States, Professor Russell Tytler, Deakin University and Professor Prain. ●



Continued from page 16

Installation of new Chancellor

this puts La Trobe on the map as a precinct of world-class biological and agricultural science.

Such developments resulted from 'a myriad of achievements by men and women who have devoted learning, wisdom, passion and care to create all that is excellent and unique about La Trobe.

'Their efforts are exemplified in the enormous contributions of two of my predecessors who have honoured us with their presence tonight: Sir Archibald Glenn, the University's first Chancellor, and my immediate predecessor, Emeritus Professor Nancy Millis,' Mrs Walton said.

'The vision and energy Sir Archibald brought to the establishment of the University, and the wisdom and passion with which Professor Millis guided the development of La Trobe as a multi-campus University, are inspirational to me as incoming Chancellor.'

Mrs Walton, who took up her post as Chancellor in April this year, has been a member of the La Trobe University Council since 1993 and Deputy Chancellor since 1997. She is a long-standing contributor to the development of education policy in Victoria in both government and non-government sectors. ●

Full details about the appointment of the Chancellor appeared in the March 2006 Bulletin, see: www.latrobe.edu.au/bulletin

The La Trobe Society, established in 2001, has raised funds to erect a bronze sculpture of C J La Trobe which will be unveiled later in 2006 on the forecourt of the State Library.

Charles Joseph La Trobe Governor and artist

VICTORIANS have a rare chance to view the artistic talents of their first Governor, Charles Joseph La Trobe, following the opening of one of the National Trust's most significant collections on La Trobe University's main Melbourne campus at Bundoora in late July.

The exhibition, titled 'Charles Joseph La Trobe: A Sketcher of No Mean Pretensions', was opened by Professor David de Kretser, AC, Governor of Victoria. It runs until Sunday 27 August, the Bundoora Campus Open Day, before touring other venues throughout the State until early 2007 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the National Trust in Victoria.

The exhibition, at the La Trobe University Art Museum, Glenn College, comprises 34 pen and ink and watercolour sketches created during La Trobe's travels in Italy, Switzerland, North America and Mexico.

In addition, there are

19 works from Victoria and Tasmania completed during La Trobe's tenure as Superintendent of Port Phillip from 1839 to 1850 and then as Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor, 1851 to 1854.

The exhibition is complemented by a selection of La Trobe's travel accounts, a life-size portrait of La Trobe by Sir Francis Grant, and artefacts from La Trobe's cottage. It is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund.

La Trobe supervised the establishment of self-government in Victoria,

the public library, art gallery, a university, and the development of the gold fields. He also helped establish Melbourne's Botanic Gardens and many parks in rural and metropolitan Victoria, including Fitzroy Gardens and Royal Park.

La Trobe University, named in his honour by an Act of the Victorian Parliament in 1964, was officially opened in March 1967 and celebrates its 40th Anniversary next year. ●

Exhibition hours: Tuesday to Friday 12 noon to 4 pm or by appointment, Tel: 9479 2111.

The Governor, Professor de Kretser, left, and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart, in front of the La Trobe portrait by Sir Francis Grant



Installation of new Chancellor

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY has launched a major push to consolidate and improve its position as one of the top ten Australian universities by adopting measures to significantly boost 'the excellence of our learning, teaching and research'.

Speaking at her installation on 1 August, La Trobe's new Chancellor, Mrs Sylvia Walton, said this effort also included maximising new opportunities through stronger links with business and professional organisations when the University opens its new central City Campus next year, at the corner of La Trobe and Elizabeth Streets.

She said La Trobe Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Stoddart, had described how the higher education sector faced extraordinarily challenging times.

'In recognition of these challenges, La Trobe recently completed a comprehensive consultative process to develop a Strategic Plan to 2010 and well beyond, by giving the University a very specific place in the Australian and international higher education systems.'

A leading Australian educationist, Mrs Walton said: 'The University's expansion across Victoria has supported the Federal and State governments' policy of providing access to



Mrs Walton addresses the University after she was formally installed by the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser, AC, as the fifth Chancellor of La Trobe University.

higher education to rural and regional students.

'We are acutely aware of the vital role our campuses play in the advancement of Victoria's regional communities and are proud of the contributions we have been able to make. But we cannot do it by ourselves.

'We need ongoing government recognition of the economic and social benefits that La Trobe University has brought to these communities – and of the substantial investment of financial and human resources

that such commitment demands.'

MRS WALTON said La Trobe featured regularly among the world's leading universities as judged by international surveys.

'The humanities were one of the founding disciplines and for the last 40 years La Trobe has been a leading generator of public dialogue in our society.

'This has been recognised internationally, for example in recent rankings by *The Times Higher Education Supplement* in the UK, which ranked La Trobe 23rd in the world in humanities.

'This tradition is amply demonstrated in the publication *Reflected Light*, a collection of essays by a number of La Trobe's outstanding public intellectuals. I commend this rich collection to you.

'Next month the Victorian Premier will launch the University's multi-disciplinary international Centre for Dialogue, to foster research and discussion between cultures, religions and civilisations – surely a most crucial role in society today.

'La Trobe's strength in the biological sciences also reflects our history,' Mrs Walton said. 'It was one of the first disciplines established in 1967, with agriculture introduced the following year.

'Today we have on the Bundoora campus one of Australia's largest, most successful wholly university-owned and managed research and development parks.

'The \$20 million Victorian AgriBiosciences Research Centre which opened earlier this year, is an outstanding example of this type of collaboration and builds significantly on La Trobe's internationally recognised strengths in the biosciences.

'The Centre houses academic, government and commercial research and development groups collaborating on research that will provide significant benefits to Australian agricultural and biotechnology industries.

'Along with the Microarray Consortium and the Bioinformatics Consortium,



Chancellor Walton, centre, after the ceremony with members of her family and State Governor, Professor de Kretser, right.

Continued page 15