

# Bulletin

Alliance to fight  
cancer and  
autoimmune  
disease

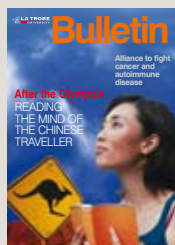
**After the Olympics**

READING  
THE MIND OF  
THE CHINESE  
TRAVELLER



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Two Indonesian students, Master of Public Health AUSAID scholarship winner Inge Dhamanti, left, and Taufik Rachman, who is about to do a Master of International Laws on a La Trobe scholarship, meet local student, Katherine Hill.

## Boost for the world of learning

### New generation scholarships help international students

**THE FIRST GROUP** of international students under La Trobe University's new scholarship program, largely from Europe Asia and the Americas, was welcomed at a reception hosted by Vice-Chancellor, Paul Johnson.

The ambitious program, for which the University has set aside a significant increase in funding over the next five years, follows a review last year of all international scholarships. Professor Johnson urged students to enter fully into University life.

'It is an important part of international mobility that you not only focus on your work but try to enjoy other cultures,' he said.

'You can make friends here with people from around the world and experience many opportunities that La Trobe, the City of Melbourne and this State offers.'

Professor Johnson said the University had 120,000 former students in just about every country in the world, many of them now prominent leaders.

'I am confident that your time at La Trobe will be an important element in creating your future success. We will be eager to see how you progress not just through your time here, but also in your future careers.'

La Trobe Chief Officer, International, John Molony, said La Trobe's new scholarship program greatly increased

spending on academic scholarships. These include eighteen Academic Excellence Scholarships for bachelor and coursework master degrees and forty new awards, Higher Degree Fee Remission Scholarships, that encourage the best and brightest international research brains to La Trobe to contribute to the University's research effort.

**'It is an important part of international mobility that you not only focus on your work but try to enjoy other cultures.'**

The program also boosts commercial and strategic scholarships which involve partner institutions and stakeholders in regions where the University has particular interests, and those that meet humanitarian and social justice needs, mainly for current students experiencing unexpected financial hardship as well as others from areas facing political unrest and natural disaster.

Mr Molony hopes the scholarship program will expand further through donations as the University more actively seeks financial support from its alumni and other groups to try and increase opportunities for future generations of students. ●

# ALLIANCE TO FIGHT CANCER and auto-immune disease

**M**ANY OF Australia's top scientists, clinicians and immunologists have embarked on a multi-disciplinary collaboration with government and industry targeting faster, more specific and cheaper diagnoses and treatments for cancer and auto-immune diseases.

They have joined forces in a new \$30 million Federal Government-funded Cooperative Research Centre for Biomarker Translation (CRC-BT) launched recently at La Trobe University's Research and Development Park, on the main Melbourne campus at Bundoora.

'Biomarkers' include cell surface proteins that differentiate one cell from another, making it possible to distinguish healthy cells from disease-causing cells by their 'markers.'

Core partners in the new CRC are La Trobe University and the Macfarlane Burnett Institute for Medical Research and Public Health in Melbourne; the Mater Medical Research Institute and Mater Health Services in Brisbane; and the Women & Children's Health Research Institute and Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science in Adelaide.

US-based biotechnology corporations, Amgen and Becton Dickinson Biosciences, are the commercial partners. Amgen, a global biopharmaceutical company, specialises in human-based antibody therapeutics; Becton Dickinson Biosciences is one of the world's leading

diagnostics companies and a leader in innovative products for clinical and diagnostic use.

As well as \$30 million from the Federal Government, the venture involves \$6 million from participants, and more than \$100 million 'in-kind' funding from its partners over seven years.

Using a diversity of expertise – which includes cell surface science, mass spectrometry, monoclonal antibody development, antibody-based diagnostics and clinical immunotherapy – the CRC aims to develop highly specific diagnostic tests and therapies to treat cancer and auto-immune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, Type 1 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, psoriasis, and lupus.

The researchers are identifying 'biomarkers' with potential for development as therapeutic and diagnostic applications. These will be clinically trialled and, if proven, commercialised with royalties flowing back to the CRC for research and development programs.

Launching the CRC, Vice-Chancellor Paul Johnson said: 'The Australian biotechnology industry is still a young industry, but it is developing, and this kind of collaboration will substantially reinforce it.'

'In addition to providing a greater understanding of health and disease mechanisms for the Australian medical research industry, the CRC will lead to

new jobs and the development of a field of research that will greatly enhance Australia's overall innovation capacity.'

Professor Johnson said it would also promote Australia's ongoing credentials as a home-base for future R&D manufacture, product development and clinical trials.

'The inclusion of US companies Amgen and Becton Dickinson in the CRC will open up greater access for Australian companies to world-class expertise in diagnostic and drug development, clinical evaluation, and product sales.

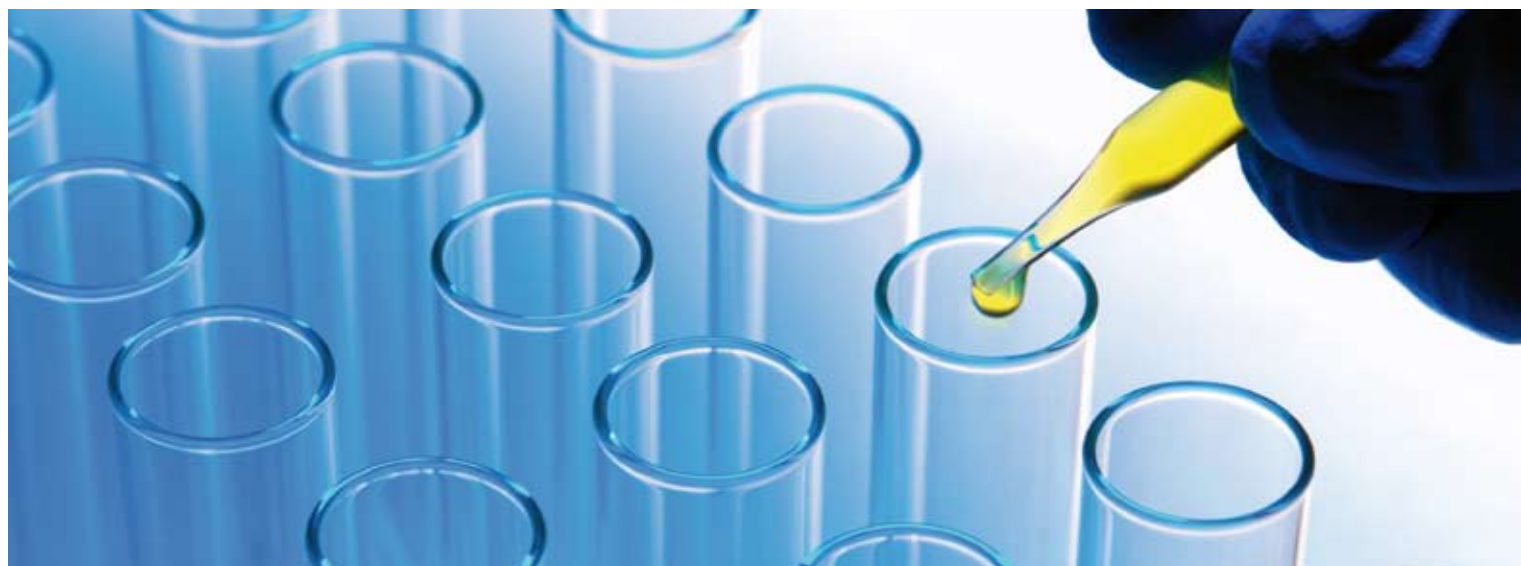
'The CRC also reflects this University's long-recognised strengths in molecular sciences and biotechnology research.'

The CRC's newly-appointed Chief Executive Officer, Mr Michael Kleinig, said: 'We have brought together some of the world's leading researchers and industrial partners in the development and use of monoclonal antibodies for the diagnosis and treatment of disease.'

Professor Heddy Zola, the CRC's Chief Scientific Officer, believes the CRC has potential to make a real difference in the future treatment and diagnosis of disease.

The CRC will also run a \$500,000 research and practitioner-oriented education program including 40 PhD research scholarships.

— *Adrienne Jones* ●



# Islamic banking course

## a first for Australia



Dr Bhatti discusses his new book with a group of students, from left Cuong Nguyen, Rihan Saleh and Ahmad Alharbi.

**LA TROBE** University is planning to introduce the first course in Australia dedicated to Islamic banking and finance, joining a handful of universities in the West embracing this fast-growing segment of global finance.

The Master of Islamic Banking and Finance will provide students with post-graduate training in the technical skills demanded by Global Islamic capital markets and institutions.

Associate Professor Dr Ishaq Bhatti, of La Trobe's Department of Economics and Finance, says the Masters program will appeal to international students from Asia wanting Islamic financial training in English and to local graduates keen to enter the growing sector in Australia. Several local banks – NAB, Kuwait Finance House, HSBC and Muslim Community Cooperative of Australia are active in the field.

The International Centre of Education in Islamic Finance, a training subsidiary of Bank Negara Malaysia, the equivalent to Australia's Reserve Bank, will provide industry-based certification for graduates of the La Trobe course, opening up employment opportunities throughout the international banking and finance sector.

'The Islamic banking and finance market has experienced substantial and unexpected growth in recent years, growing at a rate of ten to fifteen percent per year,' Dr Bhatti says.

'Today, more than 260 Islamic financial institutions are operating worldwide, which are claimed to manage assets worth no less than A\$500 billion, while the assets held by Islamic financial institutions were only A\$8.5 billion in 1985.

'Such immense growth has brought Islamic finance to the attention of the international banking community, prompting the major banks to set up Islamic financial windows to take advantage of demand for Shariah compliant finance.'

Islamic banking has grown from Shariah law which traditionally bans usury – the charging of interest on loans, Dr Bhatti says. 'Islamic banking is a community activity. It offers equity and security between lender and borrower. If a borrower runs into financial difficulty, it is the responsibility of the lender to help sort out his problems.'

The bank will reduce payments, offer moratoriums, give free financial planning advice and in some cases pay out the loan through the zakah, a fund set up out of the 2.5 per cent annual contribution from accumulated assets required by Shariah law which seeks to encourage the distribution of wealth.

In his recently-published book, *Developments in Islamic Banking*, Dr Bhatti calls this approach 'a paradigm of fairness and equity', contrasting it with conventional economics which has little interest in promoting benevolent behaviour in the market. The lender in Western financial systems enjoys an exclusive right to get back his rented capital with a predetermined interest income, whereas a borrower may bear interest risks out of all proportion to his abilities.

Islamic banking seeks to redress this imbalance by dividing the risk between lender and borrower. In the more intimate setting of the community, the lender will accompany the borrower and purchase the

new car or computer on his or her behalf.

Repayments are set according to a formula which includes the purchase price of the item, the rate of inflation, bank costs and a profit margin. This margin is set at the time of the loan and is not subject to variation.

Similarly, in the case of the residential housing market, the bank will buy a house for the customer and rent it back at market value. Any additional repayments will come off the value of the loan.

**Western financial institutions have acknowledged the stability of the Islamic banking system and invested heavily in its bonds.**

Dr Bhatti makes the point that maximising profit is not the major objective of this system.

'In the conventional system the bank can lend more than their assets. They then issue bonds which are debit-based products to attract investors.'

Islamic banks are not debt-based but asset-based, he says. This makes their bonds attractive to low-risk investors. Western financial institutions such as Citibank have acknowledged the inherent economic stability of the Islamic banking system and invested heavily in their bonds, Dr Bhatti says.

— Rhonda Dredge ●

# TOOLS FOR SMARTER LIVING AT global 'cleantech' expo

**S**MART LIVING is about making lifestyle choices that, among other things, can save energy costs and reduce our carbon footprint.

To assist with this, a smart energy meter has been developed by La Trobe University and Semitech Innovations which shows consumers in 'real time' where their energy is going and how much it costs.

Professor Jugdutt Singh, Director of the University's Centre for Technology Infusion, says a pilot project using these meters is already underway at the University. It aims to encourage people to better manage energy by providing them with a range of data about their energy use.

Still in its early stages, the project has attracted strong media and industry interest. La Trobe was one of the leaders in a delegation of Australian universities and companies that attended Copenmind 2008, a global exhibition and conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in September. Aimed at forming 'cleantech' partnerships, Copenmind 2008, attracted more than 100 universities and 4,000 international companies.

As a result, La Trobe and Semitech have now been invited to showcase the technology at Denmark's 'Energy Camp' expo later this year, along with a CSIRO project on carbon capture. Denmark, a

leader in energy innovation, holds this event to help its efforts to meet European Union climate targets.

'**AT THE MOMENT** there are only two electricity tariffs in Victoria,' says Professor Singh. 'With the State's electricity meters due to go entirely digital, tariffs will vary during the day according to demand. Peak energy use, especially residential use, occurs mornings and evenings.'

'At the current rate of expanding electricity consumption, power plants would have to be built at an exponential rate to meet future energy needs. Therefore, it will be more cost effective to manage energy usage consistently throughout the day than to increase power plant generation capacity.'

La Trobe's Centre for Technology Infusion and Semitech Innovations have installed their smart energy monitoring and management system at the University's Research and Development Park. The pilot project automatically measures energy use and manages load for the Park's entire Technology Enterprise Centre building in real-time. It uses thirty retrofitted smart meters and a data concentrator with a SiMAC microchip.

'An advanced software interface using context-aware and persuasive software technologies has been integrated to influence users to change their behaviour

and encourage energy conservation, resulting in reduction of green house gas emission,' says Professor Singh.

He explains the smart meters relay data to a central concentrator where the information can be stored for up to six months. 'If someone turns on a heater it shows up as a peak on a graph on an interactive touch-screen display.'

## NEXT GENERATION 'SMART' RESEARCH

**WHILE TRYING** to reduce energy demand and environmental impacts, the project is also helping develop 'next-generation smart living'. Professor Singh says 'smart living' links technology and lifestyle, but goes beyond convenience, entertainment and comfort.

'Ideally it will create a conducive environment compelling users to make right lifestyle choices which not only have positive health impacts but also offer cost saving and an environmental friendly approach. 'The research carried out at La Trobe is to integrate wireless capability onto the SiMAC chip to provide a complete solution for "smart" home and industrial resource management, including gas, water, electricity and appliances.'

Professor Singh envisages a time when appliances will communicate directly with the consumer offering advice on the most economic time for their operation. A dishwasher, for example, might 'prefer' to go to work at midnight rather than immediately after dinner, and householders will be able to respond by touching an interactive display system.

The pilot project is just one initiative La Trobe is taking towards reducing its environmental footprint. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Professor Tim Brown, says the first step in assessing the technology is to demonstrate its value in a corporate setting.

'Many of the tenants at our Technology Enterprise Centre will now be able to take responsibility for monitoring their own consumption,' he says. ●



From left, Professor Singh at Copenmind with Australia's Ambassador to Denmark, Ms Sharyn Minahan, Trade Commissioner Mr Flemming Stig Larsen and Senior Business Development Manager, Ms Andrea Wilson Skov.

# Festival sponsorships

## focus on literary achievement

**LA TROBE** University sponsored the opening session of the recent Melbourne Writers' Festival at the Melbourne Town Hall. The session featured controversial writer and academic, Germaine Greer. She spoke to a packed audience about her latest book which deals with the destructive nature of rage and has generated wide-spread community and media debate.

In her keynote address, Professor Greer – who late last year addressed an international conference co-organised by La Trobe's English Program on the less contentious issue of Jane Austen – reflected on the usefulness of rage when it is focused on achieving social change, and how it becomes destructive when misdirected.

The well-known academic, writer, literary critic, commentator and feminist was born Melbourne and now spends four months a year in Australia where she runs a rainforest rehabilitation

project in Queensland. The latest of her twenty books are *On Rage* and *Shakespeare's Wife*, a reconstruction of Ann Hathaway's life, and the daily lives of Elizabethan women.

A regular sponsor of the Melbourne Writers' Festival for many years, La Trobe University has for the past three years also sponsored the Festival's keynote opening address. Previous speakers were cultural critic Clive James and conservationist Tim Flannery, who also gave this year's Kerferd Oration on the University's Beechworth campus.

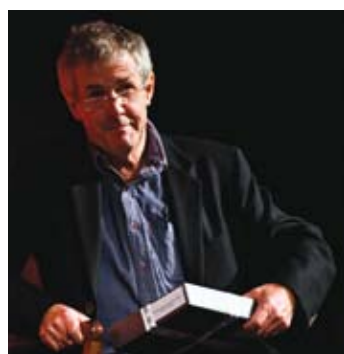
La Trobe academics participating in this year's festival were historians Professor Marilyn Lake, (*see also page 13*) and Dr Clare Wright; Convenor of Politics Professor Dennis Altman and colleague Dr Judith Brett; Head of Philosophy, Professor Andrew Brennan; and Dr Sue Turnbull, Media Studies. ●



Professor Greer at the book signing after her address at the Melbourne Town Hall.

### 'Book of the Year' for La Trobe alumnus

La Trobe alumnus and Bachelor of Arts graduate, historian and author Don Watson, below, received *The Age* 'Book of the Year Award' at the Melbourne Writers' Festival for his *American Journeys*. ●



## Malouf Lecture at Mildura

**CELEBRATED** Australian writer David Malouf delivered the inaugural La Trobe University Lecture at the Mildura Writers' Festival in July – a highlight of this year's event, of which the University is also a regular sponsor. Malouf spoke about the direction of Australian culture.

The University's Thesis Eleven Centre for Cultural Sociology was also a major contributor, with a session on Australian rock music. This

featured two sociologists, Thesis Eleven Centre Director Dr Trevor Hogan and Professor Peter Beilharz, former Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard. They were joined by historian and author Clinton Walker, well-known for his works on Australian popular music.

The University also hosted a series of weekend sessions on the Mildura campus – where speakers included Sonya Hartnett, Nicolas Rothwell, Alice Pung, Alex Miller and Les Murray – and a special workshop for VCE literature students.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson said sponsorship

of both the Melbourne and Mildura writers' festivals reflect the University's long-standing support for major cultural, artistic and literary events in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

They also highlight La Trobe's strong and growing role as a major centre for public intellectuals and for studies of society, literature and the humanities in general. ●

*More books - see pages 12 & 13*

# Reading the mind of the Chinese traveller

Thousands of Australians were among the estimated half a million tourists who visited China for the Olympic Games. But what does Australia need to know about the new wave of outbound tourism from an increasingly affluent China?

AN OLD CHINESE adage says that to be a learned man you must travel 10,000 kilometres during your lifetime.

‘Chinese people believe that knowledge comes from the landscape not just from books,’ says Dr Wenbin Guo, a tourism economist from La Trobe’s Bendigo campus.

That philosophy augers well for the future of Australia’s tourist industry. We are already the preferred destination for Chinese tourists and the La Trobe academic is predicting 500,000 Chinese visitors by 2020.

‘Australia has many famous natural landscapes that have just the right image in China,’ Dr Guo says. Phillip Island, Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef and the Twelve Apostles are the most famous.

Dr Guo’s comments are based on sound statistical methods and surveys of travel agents in China as well as on cultural history.

He began his research into China’s outbound tourists ten years ago when few had the means to travel. Annual figures have increased from five to 46 million a year in that period.

Chinese travellers are unlike Western backpackers, he says. ‘They want to keep to the track and minimise risks.’

Individual travel is too expensive and most favour small groups which spring from the tradition of travel involving a master and scholars. The aim of these tours was to get far away from the injustice encountered in the everyday



world. ‘This concept has parallels in the Western pursuit of Utopia,’ Dr Guo says.

## ‘Australia has many famous natural landscapes that have just the right image in China’

In Chinese culture, travel poems and paintings are not just portraits that display the topography of real places – they aim to transport the participant through the power of imagination.

Beautiful mountains and rivers, as well as magnificent man-made buildings in cities, were often the subjects of these poems.

‘Given the widespread popular exposure to such accounts through the process of formal education, it seems likely that such imaginings continue to influence thinking about Chinese and possibly international destinations,’ Dr Guo says. ‘The increasing number of people who now possess the means to travel is likely to shape the future development of domestic travel.’

Modern Chinese tourists are not interested in shopping nor in high-rise

buildings, Dr Guo says. They are after a unique experience. A famous landscape is their favourite destination. Most eat in local Chinese restaurants but they like to have a few new food experiences.

He lists novelty, safe location and a clean environment as other factors that help sell the image of a destination in China.

‘The depiction of a harmonious relationship between people and nature was often a centrepiece in their ancient travel,’ Dr Guo says. ‘Australia’s intact environments offer that.’ ●

## Attracting tourists Movies alone won’t do it

ON THE EVE of the much-heralded launch of Baz Luhrmann’s film *Australia*, La Trobe Head of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality, Sue Beeton, has questioned the popular wisdom that movies such as this and *Crocodile Dundee* encourage tourism to Australia.

Dr Beeton is author of a recently published book *Film-Induced Tourism*. ‘When I hear talk about the power of a single movie to increase tourism, especially international tourism, I am concerned, particularly when the

Continued page 10

# Reality television makeovers in context

Debate about whether reality on or off-screen is 'more real' epitomises current fascination with the blurring of lines between the two.

The author of a recent book *Smart Living: Lifestyle Media and Popular Expertise* blurs the line further by proposing that TV lifestyle gurus are taking over the roles once played by public institutions.

Dr Tania Lewis, a Charles La Trobe Research Fellow in Sociology, says that complex shifts in the social sphere are being played out on television.

Take obesity, for example. In the past, governments saw this as a public health issue. Now, in our era of neo-liberalism, obesity is a matter of individual will power to be aired as entertainment on TV.

Television lifestyle programs tell us how to make over ourselves, our homes and our families. The individual is exhorted – even humiliated – by the TV hosts of such shows as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *The Biggest Loser*, *Supernanny*, *Trinny and Susannah Undress the Nation* and *Honey We're Killing the Kids* to take responsibility for their own self-improvement.

'Lifestyle gurus are increasingly intruding on everyday life, directing ordinary people to see themselves as projects that can be made-over through embracing an ethos of relentless self-improvement,' the sociologist says.

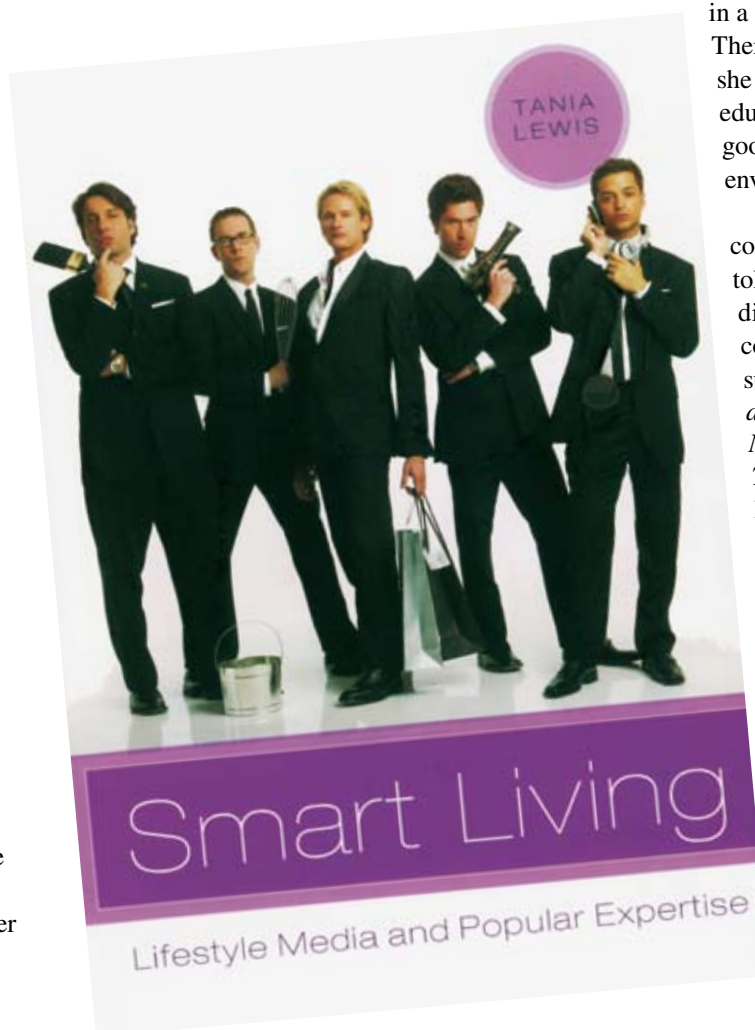
'*Smart Living* argues that they represent a new form of popular expertise sweeping the world.'

Dr Lewis, a former medical practitioner in NZ who retrained in the humanities specialising in media studies and cultural studies, previously worked at Monash University, the University of Melbourne and has been a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh.

Her book, which has been acclaimed for its insight into the 'social underpinnings of malleable selfhood', is ambivalent about the power now residing in television producers.

'I've interviewed quite a few,' she says, 'and the sense I get is they're not necessarily fully conscious of the values or ideologies that their shows are promoting. Ideas for shows tend to evolve organically – they reflect broader social shifts. You could say they come out of the zeitgeist.'

On the other hand, Dr Lewis is enthusiastic about TV as a medium of the people. Research has shown that viewers are not passive recipients of advice. They argue with hosts, identify emotionally with make-over victims and inundate internet sites with their views.



**'You could say people are more involved in TV make-overs than in parliamentary democracy.'**



Dr Lewis is interested in the way television offers us models for social relations. Reality lifestyle shows indicate our preoccupations with identity and selfhood.

'A number of social theorists have commented on the shift in late modernity to an emphasis on the biographical self. An individual is supposed to put all the pieces together.

'The claim is that people don't have communal forms of identity any more. People are untethered. They have to fabricate their own sense of belonging.'

Advice television attempts to provide people with new blueprints for selfhood in a 'post-traditional' age. There is also evidence, she says, that TV educates the public in good citizenship and environmental issues.

'Individual consumers are being told they can make a difference and help the community in shows such as *Carbon Cops* and *Cool Aid: The National Carbon Test* (aired by Ten last year),' she says. 'It's interesting because TV is rightly criticised for being individualised and commercially-driven. Yet on the other side there is a kind of empowerment of consumers as citizens and a focus on the public good. So TV is a very contradictory beast.'

The book, published by Peter Lang Publishing, tracks the development of lifestyle experts into celebrities and the closing of the gap between the public sphere of commodity production and the private sphere of consumption.

— Rhonda Dredge ●

# No more four-eyes

## Scientists say eye drops may cure myopia



**F**OR UP TO two billion people around the world wearing glasses for myopia or short-sightedness there may be a surprisingly simple solution on the horizon – eye drops to shrink their larger than normal eyeballs, potentially correcting their vision and in severe cases preventing blindness.

Too good to be true?

Not according to a husband-and-wife research team in Melbourne who believe they have established the complex physiological mechanism underlying myopia, revealing a potentially simple treatment to correct it by controlling fluid retention in the eyeball. The researchers – neuroscientists Dr Sheila Crewther and her husband and co-researcher Professor David Crewther – announced recently they have discovered that a diuretic drug, bumetanide, commonly used to control fluids in the treatment of heart and kidney disease, may inhibit the development of short-sightedness. While ‘only a first step’, the researchers say their findings offer new potential for developing a therapeutic treatment for myopia – the commonest visual disorder, now afflicting more than one in three adults globally.

Visual disorders including myopia are also the fourth

most common childhood disability and can have considerable impact on academic achievement resulting in children underperforming at schools across Australia and around the world.

While the increase in short-sightedness among Australian school children has been modest, in Asia, for example in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the prevalence of childhood myopia is up to four times as high. In the UK, about fifty per cent of university students are myopic, says Dr Sheila Crewther. In Singapore up to 80 per cent of young people are myopic by the time they leave school.

**‘...they have discovered that a diuretic drug, bumetanide, may inhibit the development of short-sightedness.’**

Dr Crewther, an Associate Professor of Psychology at La Trobe University’s School of Psychological Science, Melanie Murphy a PhD student and Professor David Crewther, Deputy Director of the Brain Sciences Institute at Swinburne

University of Technology, published the findings of their latest study online in the journal *PLoS* in July.

They believe their discovery may lead not only to prescription eye drops or other simple therapeutic intervention to control myopia – but may also mitigate or prevent the onset of more complicated secondary conditions such as retinal detachment and glaucoma.

The Crewthers’ findings are the result of an NHMRC-funded Development Grant to investigate pharmaceutical control of compensatory refractive changes in chickens wearing lenses to alter their visual environment. Their eyes were found to compensate for the power of the lens within a few days so that those wearing ‘minifying’ (negative) lenses developed myopia (short-sightedness), while those with magnifying (positive) lenses developed ‘short eyeballs’ and experienced hyperopia or long-sightedness.

The Crewthers say their research revealed that the diuretic drug given during the lens-wearing process only interferes with the induction of myopia, but not hyperopia, indicating a complex interaction between the visual process and fluid movement across a membrane called the retinal pigment epithelium

(RPE) surrounding the retina.

The Crewthers have been investigating myopia since the 1980s when they first became interested in the link between visual processing, environmental conditions and myopia.

Myopia requires corrective lenses or surgery to achieve normal vision and in severe cases can even lead to blindness in later life.

Dr Sheila Crewther says it was once believed that most refractive errors of eye were associated with ethnic and genetic differences. Subsequent experimental evidence suggested the cultural environment was equally important – and these latest physiological findings are a highly significant further advance in vision research.

‘Increased urbanisation, television, computers and intense education require much greater use of close vision in young people. All have been suggested as potential influences for myopia, but we still don’t know the exact cause.

‘However, we do know the highest prevalence of myopia is where you have the highest proportion of people living in high-rise apartment blocks and children are under pressure to achieve academically.’

— *Adrienne Jones* ●

# Call to tax, not trade, carbon emissions



Australia's proposed emissions trading scheme – considered by the draft Garnaut Report as a way of curbing carbon discharge – may face problems under the World Trade Organisation.

So says senior lecturer in Law, Keith Kendall, above, who suggests instead that a carbon tax should be Australia's answer to climate change. Mr Kendall specialises in taxation law and has spent the last year researching environmental taxation.

As a result, he says his position is that a carbon tax would be a much more effective and feasible option for dealing with carbon emissions than an emissions trading scheme.

While the Garnaut report briefly considered a carbon tax, Mr Kendall says it did so very superficially, focusing mostly on how an emissions trading scheme (ETS) would work.

Mr Kendall argues that a carbon tax has two practical advantages over a trading scheme. 'First, Australia already has a structure in place to administer a carbon tax – the Australian Taxation Office. There is no bureaucratic structure in place to administer an ETS.

'The scheme involves establishing a permit auction market and then maintaining a secondary market, a complex and expensive process.'

Arguably more important, he says, is the political opposition that traditionally accompanies these measures. 'The most vocal opposition often comes from emissions-intensive industries. However, experience elsewhere has shown that such opposition dissipates if international competitiveness concerns can be resolved.'

Mr Kendall claims such concerns can be resolved through an effective border tax adjustment (BTA) mechanism. Under this, imports are subjected to an equivalent charge and exports are

exempted – or, more correctly, have the charge rebated upon export.

'This is how imports and exports are currently treated under Australia's, and most other countries', goods and services tax.

'Concerns arise, though, regarding Australia's obligations under the World Trade Organisation – for example, whether a rebate represents an illegal export subsidy.

'It is arguable that a BTA under a carbon tax is consistent with the WTO. This is not the case with an emissions trading scheme.

'Assuming such legality, Australia can afford to act unilaterally in imposing a carbon tax incorporating a BTA, thereby addressing concerns over climate change without losing international competitiveness. This removes the "first mover" problem that has received so much publicity.

'Those seeking a global solution to this issue should prefer this option. Experience has proven that achieving multilateral consensus on environmental issues is unlikely any time soon.

'Eventual agreement is more probable where one or a few actors take the initiative and implement a suitable system. This is highly unlikely if the price of such action is to sacrifice international competitiveness.

'A carbon tax,' Mr Kendall concludes, 'is capable of addressing these concerns whereas an ETS is not.'

*Read the full argument on [latrobe.edu.au/news/opinions](http://latrobe.edu.au/news/opinions)* ●

*Continued from page 7*

## Attracting tourists

sites are in relatively remote areas, traditionally difficult for international visitors to access.'

Luhrmann's *Australia* is set in the Kimberley region, about a hundred kilometres west of Kununurra. International visitors, especially from the desirable Japanese and American markets, are usually limited for time.

'Even getting to Darwin,' says Dr Beeton, an Associate Professor in Tourism and Hospitality, 'can be a problem and may require them to forego

visiting other places in Australia. I am even more concerned when government funds promote such ventures, with little if any independent research into the phenomenon of "film-induced tourism".'

Dr Beeton quotes the Tourism Australia website which explains how people can 'leverage the phenomenon that will be created as a result of the release of Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*. This smacks of 'boosterism,' she says.

Movies certainly are 'powerful emotional image creators' she concedes and have the potential to contribute to a tourist's desire to come to Australia and may help convert that desire into action for some visitors. But while films

are part of the mix, Dr Beeton says a primary issue in attracting international visitors to Australia is the distance from its main international markets.

'We need to be realistic and pay attention to *all* of the research available, not simply those reports that support a particular view.'

Dr Beeton also points out that there 'are more movies that do not induce tourism than those that do, let alone those that may actively decrease visitation, such as *Wolf Creek ...*'

*See the full text of Dr Beeton's views on [latrobe.edu.au/news/opinions](http://latrobe.edu.au/news/opinions)* ●

# Archaeology goes Google-eyed to protect Afghan heritage

## AN INTERNATIONAL

team of archaeologists, led by PhD student David Thomas, has battled the odds and made important discoveries about key historic sites in the south of Afghanistan – with members conducting their research from the safety of their desks using the ‘virtual globe’ Google Earth.

The research has generated world-wide interest, with reports appearing in *The Economist* and on BBC Radio.

Mr Thomas says commercially available satellite images have been used by archaeologists since the 1980s to spot potential sites prior to fieldwork. Earlier this year, American archaeologist Professor Elizabeth Stone used high-resolution satellite images to assess the extent of looting at archaeological sites in Iraq. Her findings caused a political furore as she demonstrated that much of the looting has taken place since the allied invasion in 2003.

Mr Thomas’ own use of satellite images and fieldwork in 2005, to study looting at the World Heritage Site of Jam in central Afghanistan, attracted less attention at the time, despite his team’s discovery that more than 1,300 cubic metres of archaeological remains – eleven per cent of the surveyed area – had been destroyed by robbers who had left large holes at the site.

Frustrated in his efforts to continue fieldwork in central Afghanistan, Mr Thomas resorted to the ‘poor man’s’ version of satellite imaging – Google Earth – as a way of reaching archaeological sites in parts of the country too dangerous for Westerners to visit.



David Thomas and two Google Earth images: top, a 900 year old Ghaznavid dynasty fortress in the Afghan desert, and below, zooming in on palaces, mosques and walled gardens at the Ghaznavid winter capital of Bust on the Helmand River.

He and his team surveyed a seventy-five kilometre by seventeen kilometre strip of the Registan desert in southern Afghanistan using Google Earth, which is freely available over the internet. He says each of the five images in the strip took nine hours of painstaking study to ‘survey remotely’. The 1,800 possible archaeological sites initially identified were narrowed down to 450 probable sites after further cataloguing and cross-checking.

‘We located the remnants of nomads’ camp sites and animal corrals, deserted villages centred on mosques, sand-filled reservoirs, dams,

kilometres of underground water channels and ancient fortified occupation mounds,’ he says.

‘Although dating is difficult without fieldwork, it is likely that a significant number of these previously unknown sites were occupied in the medieval period, more than a thousand years ago, when the Ghaznavid dynasty had its winter capital seventy-five kilometres away at the site of Bust - Lashkari Bazar.’

**T**HIS massive site, its palaces, mosques, gardens and markets extending over seven kilometres along the banks of the Helmand River, was studied by French

archaeologists from 1949-52, he says.

The site has remained largely unexplored since then – until Mr Thomas’ team started studying Google Earth images of the area. The researchers presented their findings to the recent World Archaeological Congress in Dublin.

When the research is complete, Mr Thomas plans to pass on the findings to the National Afghan Institute of Archaeology in Kabul so that Afghan archaeologists can study and protect this newly discovered part of their past.

— Rhonda Dredge ●

# Gallery readings inspire students

*Staff in hand, prayer mat on shoulder, I was a zealous worker of miracles.*

SO WROTE the great Persian poet Attar 800 years ago. He could have been referring to the writer's path today as his words, read in English at La Trobe University recently by Iranian-born writer and translator Ali Alizadeh, crossed the gap of centuries.

Attar's poem is known as a 'ghazal' – a philosophical genre in which meanings remain hidden. It recently moved elegantly into the post-modern world of the Bundoora campus, at a literary event arranged by the English Department.

Alizadeh's translation of Attar is playful, even contentious. As a young writer born to 'the clamour of the revolution' who migrated to Australia at 15, Alizadeh says the heretical tradition of the ancient Persian poets has kept him going.

His novel *The New Angel* (Transit Lounge Publishing, 2008) plugs into his disturbing early years in Iran. 'Fiction provides a way of giving clarity to things forgotten,' he says.

Lecturer in English, Dr Alexis Harley is organiser of La Trobe's new series of Gallery Readings which are held in association with the University's Art Museum. She says while the printed word today is more accessible than ever, it hasn't made the relationship between authors and readers any more intimate.

'Sometimes writers need to imagine themselves in a social vacuum, but at some point they need to emerge: it's only when you read your writing aloud, see and hear people's reactions, that you realise what it is you've written.'

The La Trobe English Program Gallery Readings give emerging writers – and some very established ones – the opportunity to converse with their readers, she says. Equally, they give readers the opportunity to listen and to respond.

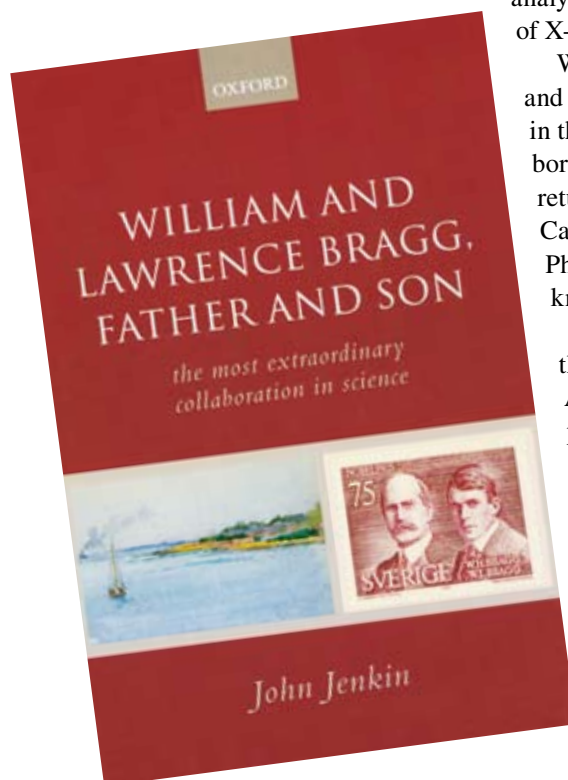
'The difference between reading a novel on the sofa and watching an author read is something like the difference between listening to a CD and sitting five metres from a chamber orchestra. Meeting the body behind the mind behind the

text illuminates that text in all sorts of surprising ways.

'For our students, those who study writing – and those many members of the University who are themselves writers – it's an opportunity to get a deeper sense of where stories, poems, and words come from.'

## MILES FRANKLIN WINNER IN OCTOBER

Other writers in the Gallery Readings include La Trobe history prize winning author, Robert Kenny, (*see article next page*). The series culminates on October 23 with a reading by Steven Carroll, a La Trobe graduate and winner of this year's Miles Franklin award for his novel *The Time We Have Taken*. ●



## BOOK PUTS NOBEL LAUREATE BACK IN LIMELIGHT

THE UNIVERSITY has also launched 'Thursday Review', on the first Thursday each month, as a public event to show-case new books published by La Trobe staff and researchers.

First book off the shelf to inaugurate this event was *William and Lawrence Bragg, Father and Son: The Most Extraordinary Collaboration in Science* by La Trobe University philosopher Emeritus Scholar Dr John Jenkin.

Speaker at the session, held in the University Bookshop on the main Melbourne campus at Bundoora, was Emeritus Professor John Riley.

The Braggs are relatively unknown compared with names like Howard Florey and Macfarlane Burnet. Yet they feature in the pantheon of Australian Nobel laureates, jointly winning the Prize in Physics in 1915 'for their services in the analysis of crystal structure by means of X-rays'.

William Bragg was born in Britain and came to the University of Adelaide in the 1880s. His son, Lawrence, was born in Australia in 1890, eventually returning to the UK where he became Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge, gaining a knighthood in 1941.

Dr Jenkin's book charts how this humble English father and his Australian son rose to international prominence and then back to relative obscurity. He says Lawrence Bragg explained the interaction of X-rays with crystals, and he and his father pioneered X-ray spectroscopy and X-ray crystallography.

The pair then led the field of X-ray crystallography internationally for fifty years, with most areas of science transformed by the knowledge they created: physics, chemistry, geology, materials science, electronics, and most recently biology and medical science. ●

*Information about future events:*  
Cecilia O'Halloran: (03) 9479 6528

# Top award for book on early Aboriginal Christian conversion

**LA TROBE SCHOLAR** Robert Kenny has won the history prize in this year's Victorian Premier's Literary Awards for a book that deals with the conversion to Christianity of the first tribal Aborigine in Victoria by missionaries.

Titled *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming: Nathanael Pepper and the Ruptured World* (Scribe Publications) the book looks at Pepper's conversion from the youth's point of view. It illuminates a highly significant moment in history, in 1860, when European society and Aboriginal spirituality collide on the colonial frontier.

The judges said it was 'a bold and challenging history, immensely erudite yet sparkling with lyrical prose and sharp insight. Kenny recovers – with absolute conviction and profound implications – the moral and symbolic worlds of two societies, and Nathanael Pepper's extraordinary efforts to reconcile the lamb of Christ and Aboriginal dreaming.'

Pepper was a member of the Wotjobaluk tribe which inhabited the Wimmera when Moravian missionaries arrived from Germany. It took Dr Kenny seven years to reconstruct the tale and his version of the youth's conversion, which also won the 2008 W.K. Hancock Prize from the Australian Historical Association for the best first book in any field.

'The book is all about the ideas and tensions operating in the incident of Pepper's conversion,' Dr Kenny says. 'It represents a meeting of European and Aboriginal cosmologies and symbolic worlds. Part of my argument is that the Moravians were evangelical Christians and they believed just as much in an enchanted spirit-filled world as the

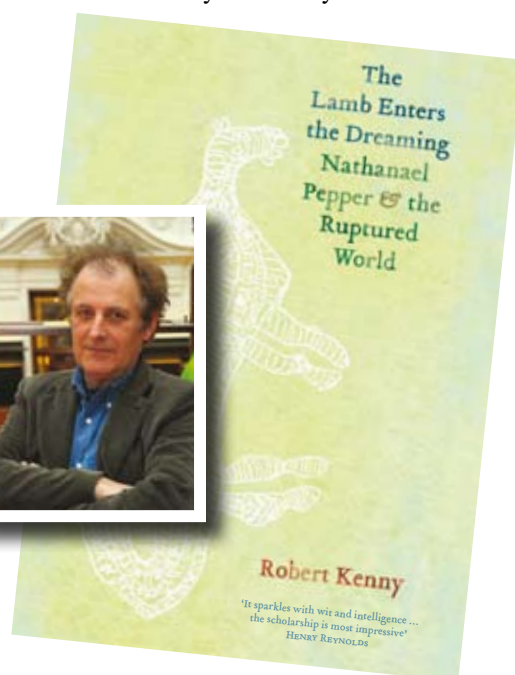
Wotjobaluk people.'

Dr Kenny suggests that when Nathanael Pepper and his people saw the Europeans arrive with their sheep, they perceived the animals as part of the spirit world. 'They regarded the sheep in a totemic way, as a European totem. And they were right. The Moravians' emblem was the Lamb of God, and passages in the Bible relating to the Good Shepherd impressed Pepper.'

Dr Kenny has pieced together his story from quoted conversations in diaries, letters by Pepper and documents in the headquarters of the church in Germany. 'It was a very odd thing to be in a baroque German village covered in snow while reading about the Wimmera,' he says.

Dr Kenny chose to focus on Nathanael Pepper because he was a convert from a tribal way of life.

'The way he approached Christianity was modified by the Wotjobaluk outlook. He had a good idea of Christian theology and understood the differences.' Dr Kenny accounts for the conversion in a way that subtly underlies the



pathos of the situation for the Wimmera people.

'Christianity is the religion of suffering. The Wimmera people were living in a world in which the old cosmologies had been severely challenged. It was not that their land had been taken from them. It disappeared and turned into another land. European animals changed the whole dreaming. The cosmology had been ruptured and in this ruptured world youths like Pepper were drawn to a new explanatory system.' ●

## HISTORIANS SCOOP NATIONAL AWARDS

La Trobe history scholars won top awards at the recent Australian Historical Association's 2008 Biennial Conference in Melbourne.

Professor Marilyn Lake, an ARC Professorial Research Fellow, was elected Vice President/President Elect of the Association. Professor Lake's most recent book, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, with Henry Reynolds, was published earlier this year to widespread critical acclaim.

Professor Lake said the success of La Trobe historians, including that of emerging and established scholars, was 'testament to the vibrancy of the History Program's research culture and to the strong support offered to post-graduates and post-doctoral fellows.'

'Recent new appointments to History, such as Tracey Banivanua-Mar – whose book, *Colonial Violence*, was highly commended by the AHA judges and short-listed for two NSW Premier's prizes for history – will ensure that La Trobe maintains its reputation as one of the leading history programs in the country,' said Professor Lake.

Dr Robert Kenny, an ARC Post-Doctoral Fellow, received the W.K. Hancock Prize for the best first book in any field. His winning work was *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming: Nathanael Pepper and the Ruptured World* (Scribe Publications, 2007), see story, left. Dr Kenny also gained his PhD from La Trobe.

Lecturer, Dr Marina Larsson, won the 2008 Serle Award for the best postgraduate thesis in Australian history. Her winning work was *The Burdens of Sacrifice: War Disability in Australian Families 1914-1939* awarded in 2006. The PhD thesis will be published as a book, *Shattered ANZACS: Living with the Scars of War*, by UNSW Press next year.

And leading Asia scholar, former La Trobe Head of Social Sciences, Professor John Fitzgerald – who now heads the Ford Foundation in China – won the Ernest Scott Prize for the best book in Australasian History for *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia*. ●



Dr Francesca Silvestrelli

## From Lecce to La Trobe FOR THE LOVE OF POTTERY

wing of Menzies College on the main Melbourne campus at Bundoora, an off-form concrete modernist building designed by Robyn Boyd – surroundings vastly different from the old-word universities where Dr Silvestrelli gained her string of qualifications.

While not widely known to the public, the Trendall Research Centre and its photo archive is a byword for serious students of South Italian and Sicilian pottery of the Classical period. Its collection of ancient Greek pottery includes complete vases and fragments. Some thirty of its finer pieces were lent last year to the Hellenic Foundation, a contribution to the community by the Trendall Centre as part of La Trobe's 40th anniversary celebrations. They are now on display in the Old Mint Building in Melbourne.

Dr Silvestrelli teaches at the University of Lecce. Her undergraduate work was done at the universities of Perugia

and Lecce and she received her Masters in Classical Archaeology from Pisa. Her PhD is from the University of Milan.

She has been associated with the Italian and American excavations in and around Metaponto, ancient Metapontion, an important Greek city west of Taranto. Dr Silvestrelli wrote her dissertation on material from the pottery workshops of Metaponto and has published a number of articles on this topic.

While at the Trendall Centre she worked on pottery from recent excavations in the area and gave a seminar on Metapontine pottery for La Trobe's Archaeology Program. The resources of the Trendall Research Centre were built up by one of the world's great classical scholars, the late Arthur Dale Trendall. An authority on painted pottery produced in the Greek colonial cities of South Italy and Sicily

during the Classical period, he also had a profound influence on the humanities and Classical studies in Australia for more than half a century.

Born in New Zealand, Professor Trendall studied at Cambridge and was Foundation Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Sydney before moving to the Australian National University in Canberra.

In 1969 he was appointed La Trobe University's first, and only, full-time Resident Fellow where he lived and worked at Menzies College for a quarter of century assembling his library and collection of photographs and artefacts.

The Director of the Trendall Research Centre, Dr Ian McPhee, says the Centre instituted the Trendall Scholarship in 2002 as an important connection between La Trobe and young researchers in Italy. ●

**SCHOLARS** from Italy are coming to La Trobe University in Melbourne to learn more about ancient pottery found in the southern part of their own country. The latest of these was one of Italy's foremost younger classical scholars, Dr Francesca Silvestrelli, a specialist in the ancient pottery of 'Magna Graecia', the area of the Greek colonies in South Italy and Sicily of the Hellenistic period.

Dr Silvestrelli spent six weeks using the facilities of the University's Trendall Research Centre, particularly its library and photographic archive that is the best of its kind in the world. The Centre is on the top floor of the South

## AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO STUDENT LEARNING

**THE UNIVERSITY** has won five 'Citations for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning' in the latest Australian Learning and Teaching Council awards.

The citations are valued at \$10,000 each. Congratulating the winners, La Trobe University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Belinda Probert said the awards highlighted the skills and experience of the staff involved – and the University's overall teaching strength.

'La Trobe is embarking on a process of redesigning and renewing its undergraduate curriculum to make it a leader in university teaching – and we

have the depth and breadth of teaching excellence to achieve this.'

This strength is confirmed by the recently released *Good Universities Guide 2009* in which La Trobe received four-star ranking for overall student satisfaction with their 'educational experience' and also for 'positive graduate outcomes'.

The winners of the Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning awards were: a team of Electron Microscopy teachers from the Bendigo campus comprising Dr Robert Glaisher, Dr Sabine Wilkens, Dr Christopher Bradley, Rod Lindrea, David Osborne and Glenys Shirley;

Dr Adrian Jones, senior lecturer in Historical Studies; Dr Fiona Bird, lecturer in Zoology; Dr Susan Lawler, senior lecturer in Environmental Management and Ecology at the Albury-Wodonga campus; and Dr Tom Fisher, senior lecturer in Law. ●



La Trobe winners and staff at the awards ceremony.

# Science in hot pursuit of highland frogs

## Tom Burton welcomes a new species into the family

**T**RUDGING through the jungle in Papua New Guinea, or tinkering with one of hundreds of thousands of exhibits at the Smithsonian Museum in America, Dr Thomas Burton has dedicated much of his life to the sticky, amphibian world of frogs – creatures widely regarded as indicators of global environmental health.

While he might try and tell you that ‘there isn’t really a story in it’, the Honorary Scholar at La Trobe University’s Bendigo campus is being modest.

Aside from being a widely respected herpetologist – or ‘herpo’ as he calls himself – in his time Dr Burton ‘just’ discovered a few frog species, and a number of ‘new’ muscles in frogs, and had an amphibian ligament named in his honour, called ‘Burton’s Ligament’.

Recently he has had another string added to his bow – a brown, eleven millimetre long frog from Papua New Guinea that was named after him.

Dubbed *Choerophryne burtoni*, the frog was named in recognition of his thirty-year contribution to the study of frogs. The frog is brown, with bumpy, slimy skin and characterised by a long snout.

‘The *burtoni* is big for its genus (family group) which is normally quite small,’ he says. ‘So you have this little animal with a long snout, which is probably related to helping it push through leaf litter.’

There are very few specimens of *Choerophryne burtoni* – or Burton’s Mayhay frog to use its common name – but no one uses the common name because it isn’t a frog you would typically encounter.

‘They live in Papua New Guinea,’ he says, ‘and they call from hard to find places in terrain that you don’t want to venture into. Think sink holes, fallen trees and jungle – and they only call at night when it is raining.’

Dr Burton hasn’t got high hopes of seeing a live specimen of the animal



Photo: Stephen Richards

named in his honour. ‘I probably won’t as there have only been three found so far,’ he adds. Having frogs named in his honour is just the icing on his career. The highlight has been the research itself.

‘Working deep in the bowels of the Natural History Museum at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and the American Museum in New York was a fabulous opportunity to delve into huge, world-wide, collections of frogs and do intensive comparative studies,’ he says.

‘There is nothing more thrilling than the anticipation of opening a jar and wondering if the next specimen I examine will confirm what I have been thinking – or blow all of my ideas out of the water.’

‘When you work in a world-class museum and you want to compare some structure you have seen in one species of frog against other related frogs, you can just whip into the collections room, find the species you need and check immediately.’

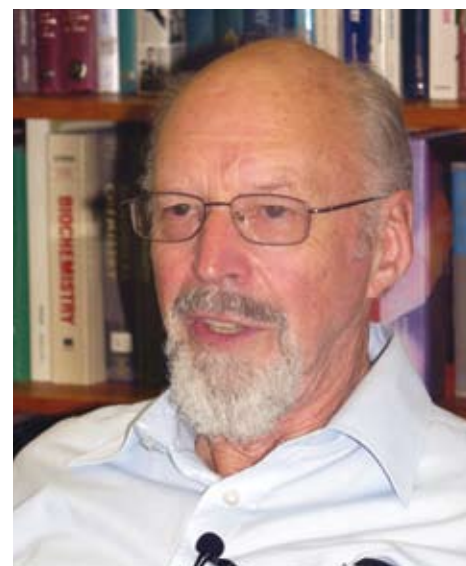
‘It beats sending away to the museum, waiting for the parcel of specimens to fly the Pacific and clear customs.’

Dr Burton’s ‘hot pursuit’ of frogs has taken him to some interesting places, in Argentina, the US and in Australia.

Papua New Guinea, where he was hosted by La Trobe zoologist Dr Dennis Black, was the first place overseas where he did solo field work.

‘I began collecting there twenty-eight years ago, and it was a great adventure. It was pretty scary then – and the place has gotten a hell of lot scarier since,’ he says.

— Mikhaela Delahunty ●



Dr Burton: thirty-year contribution to the study of frogs

# New Building at SHEPPARTON



**PLANS FOR** La Trobe University's new Shepparton campus have been unveiled. The \$9 million building is jointly funded by the Federal and State governments and the University. It will be situated on the corner of Fryers and North streets, Shepparton.

Campus Executive Director Elizabeth Lavender says with its stunning external appearance, the two-storey building, scheduled to be opened mid-2010, will be one of Shepparton's 'signature buildings'.

Comprising 2,000 square metres of floor space, it will have a Five Star Green Energy rating and feature flexible teaching spaces and a ground floor café and bookshop as part of its study space which will be available to students, staff and the community.

The first floor includes offices, meeting rooms and facilities for visiting and research staff. There is also a Nursing Skills Laboratory and space for student support staff. ●

## Helping Victoria's families

### NEW HOME FOR BOUVERIE CENTRE

A NEW \$5 MILLION facility for the Bouverie Centre – Victoria's Family Institute – which helps people deal with many challenging issues related to mental health, has been officially opened. The Centre is part of La Trobe University's Faculty of Health Sciences. Its new, permanent home is in Gardiner Street, Brunswick.

Opening ceremony speakers included La Trobe Chancellor, Mrs Sylvia Walton; Ms Dassi Herszberg, on behalf of families who have used the Centre; Bouverie Director, Dr Colin Riess; and Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Hal Swerissen.

Dr Riess said the opening was an important milestone for the Centre, which had been housed in temporary quarters since 1983.

A pioneer and leader in family therapy in Australia, the Centre helps more than 250 new families a year, free of charge, providing them with mental health, community health, and alcohol and drug services. These initiatives assist people with significant behavioural and emotional



difficulties and provide clinical programs in specialist areas including acquired brain injury and sexual abuse.

The Bouverie Centre began as the Bouverie St Clinic in 1956, one of the State's earliest 'Child Guidance Clinics', with six specialist staff. By the mid 1970s it ran State-wide training courses, evolving through the late 1970s into Australia's first specialised family therapy centre before 'mainstreaming' with La Trobe University's Faculty of Health Sciences in 1996. Since then its academic program has grown to include introduction courses to family

therapy; industry based graduate certificates, and clinical masters and research PhDs.

Over the years, the Centre has also developed many new ways of approaching family mental health issues. For example, the term 'Family Sensitive Practice' was coined by its mental health team, which has helped influence attitudes towards family development in mental health services. Among many new initiatives, the Centre is now managing the implementation of the 'Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness' strategy supported by the Victoria's Department of Human Services. ●