



## NCPO Invited to Distance Ed Meeting



*The delegates to the Distance Education meeting held in Hong Kong. NCPO staff member Wes Pryor is third from left on the back row.*

The NCPO has long been recognised as a leader in distance education (DE). The international P&O community is increasingly exploring how DE can be used to increase the skills base in our field both in industrialised and low income nations. Recognising this shift, a task force established by the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics recently convened a strategic meeting of educators with experience in DE. The meeting was hosted by the P&O department of the Hong Kong Polytechnic Institute in Hong Kong.

Recognising the NCPO's leadership in this area, ISPO invited Wes Pryor to contribute to the meeting.

Over three days, around 20 delegates from 10 countries discussed their projects in DE and how they had advanced the educational requirements in their regions. Of particular interest to the group was the NCPO's recent experiences with DE for a group of students based in Phnom Penh. Mr. Pryor was able to report the projects strengths and weaknesses to the delegates.

Among the outcomes of the meeting was a resolution to explore Continuing Professional Education opportunities for all professionals in P&O and related fields. The NCPO looks forward to contributing to those developments.

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## ANZ Research Grant Awarded to NCPO Lecturer

An ANZ Medical Research and Technology in Victoria grant of \$19,000 was awarded to NCPO Lecturer Les Barnes to help his research into prosthetic ankle function.

Les is currently doing a Professional Doctorate part time as well as his teaching duties. He commenced the Doctorate in March 2004 and it is to be completed in 2012. The topic of his Doctoral Study is *Prosthetic Management of Ankle Motion During Walking*.

Les will be commencing clinical trials involving amputee subjects in 2007. The trials involve measurement of prosthetic ankle motion with force transducers fitted to a transtibial prosthesis. The proposed outcome of these trials is to identify and quantify suitable sig-

nals from the transducers that can be used as input to a computer control system for a prosthetic ankle joint.

Later, other trials will be conducted on a prototype prosthetic ankle joint fitted to transtibial prostheses. The goal of these trials is to ensure that the ankle is able to provide suitable control and motion in amputee walking.

The ANZ Medical Research and Technology grants are limited to projects in Victoria for basic clinical and biomedical research on major health problems. The objective of the grant program is to support medical research, including the purchase of equipment essential to a specified project. Grants of up to \$30,000 are awarded for one year.

## Teaching CSPO Students & Visit by CSPO Manager



*CSPO students and staff, as well as NCPO staff, enjoy a lunch in the HS Clinic courtyard*

For over a year now, a very unique group of students has been part of the National Centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics at La Trobe. A small group of students from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Laos and Cambodia have been studying with us by distance while based at the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CSPO).

The students recently visited La Trobe for 3 months intensive clinical work. During the specially developed summer semester, the students completed technical projects in Lower Limb Orthotics units, both transtibial and transfemoral prosthetics as well as a brief clinical placement and theoretical work in research methods, upper limb orthotics and prosthetics as well as fracture management.

Units that are typically extended over a 13 week semester were compressed to one or two weeks. This was a new challenge for both staff and students.

When asked about the best thing about visiting, one student suggested that

“..practical projects, where we can become accustomed with different materials and components were great. After studying by distance, we really appreciated the face to face teaching as well.” It was

hoped that the experience would allow graduates to improve clinical services in their home countries, where the needs are disproportionately high.

“Not only have our clinical skills been developed, but knowing the world-class standard of P&O care in Australia, we will be able to advocate for improved services for our own clients,” one student said.

“And, since many of us will be teaching, exposure to different teaching methods and evaluation techniques will really help us,” added another. “Learning from experienced senior staff was a great experience for us – Les Barnes is a really friendly guy who we learned a lot from!”

The students are currently back in Phnom Penh undertaking further distance studies including the Bases for Clinical Decisions and Independent Study project. One student suggested that “Learning about research is really valuable to us, as this is sometimes ignored in our parts of the world.”

The students are due to graduate in July this year. A second intake is planned for 2008. The NCPO is currently conducting a comprehensive review of this program to improve its quality for future intakes.



# Rowan English, the New Head of the NCPO



Rowan English commenced as the Head of the National centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics (NCPO) in January this year. Rowan brings with him many years of experience from the health industry having worked extensively in clinical and senior management positions. Prior to his appointment at La Trobe University Rowan

was working in the role of Manager – Allied Health and Sub-Acute Planning at Latrobe Regional Hospital where, among a number of initiatives, he substantially redeveloped the Gippsland regional prosthetic service.

Rowan was also a leading force in the development of the Prosthetic and Orthotics Service in Ballarat and was pivotal in bringing it forward as an industry leader, nationally and internationally.

Rowan has had a long association with the NCPO and higher education. He completed his undergraduate education at the then Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences before returning to play a leading role in the re-development of the NCPO from 1994-97. During 1996 and 1997 he also coordinated the lower limb prosthetics unit at the University. Rowan went on to complete a Master of Applied Science (Human Movement) at Ballarat University analyzing the effect of three different knee mechanisms on trans-femoral amputee gait. Most recently, Rowan has completed a Master of Business Administration at Deakin University. He was Chairman of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics – Australian National Member Society from 1998-2001 and an Executive Committee member from 1995-2004.

Rowan comes to us well qualified and with a mix of experience well suited to lead the NCPO through the changes ahead and into the future.

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## What's Happening in P&O Clinical Education?

### 4th year, 2007

18 students have begun their first block placements around Australia and New Zealand. Students are allocated to facilities in Melbourne, Bendigo, Geelong, Ballarat, Brisbane, Adelaide, New Zealand and Perth. For the 2nd block placement beginning April 16 students will travel to Whyalla, Melbourne, Geelong, Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney, Albury, Ballarat, Darwin and Adelaide.

Most students attended a Pre-placement Symposium on February 5 for half the day. Mr Mark Graf from Royal Melbourne Hospital – Royal Park Campus, attended to speak with the students for ½ an hour regarding the expectations of a clinical supervisor and some of things that the students needed to prepare for in order to achieve a satisfactory placement. Kaisha also spoke with the students regarding Clinical placements e.g. aims, requirements, expectations etc. There was also some time spent discussing the clinical exam.

The student's clinical exams are scheduled for the week of June 18 and a call to nearby Clinical Supervi-

sors will be made for assistance in these examinations.

### Clinical Education Guidelines

Please check the NCPO webpage for the updated Clinical Education Guidelines.

### Clinical Supervisor's Meeting.

A clinical supervisor's meeting is scheduled for April. An agenda has been included with this newsletter.

### 1st year, 2007.

First year students will be deciding on their preferences for the placements in the next two weeks and placements will be allocated over the Easter break. Look out for confirmation letters in the latter half of April.

Further information about P&O Clinical Education can be obtained from the Coordinator, Kaisha Gurry, phone: (03) 9479 5864 or e-mail: K.Gurry@latrobe.edu.au



# AAOP 8th State of Science Conference on Biomechanics of Partial Foot Amputee Gait

Dr. Michael Dillon recently attended the American Academy of Prosthetists and Orthotists (AAOP) 8th State-of-Science conference (SSC) on the “Biomechanics of ambulation after partial foot amputation” where he presented the results of a systematic literature review co-authored with Research Assistant Professor and NCPO graduate Stefania Fatone (Prosthetics Research Laboratory and Rehabilitation Engineering Research Program, Northwestern University) and NCPO staff member Ms. Margaret Hodge.

“The systematic review was aimed at establishing what is known about gait and prosthetic/orthotic intervention in persons with partial foot amputation (PFA), and to identify what needs to be known to optimise gait and prosthetic intervention,” Dr. Dillon said. “Overall there was strong evidence that PFA affects gait but low evidence supporting a detailed understanding of the underlying mechanics; particularly concerning the effect of prosthetic and orthotic intervention.”

Given the increased incidence of diabetes and partial foot amputation which is now believed to af-

fect about 80,000 Americans per year, the push towards improving our understanding seems timely.

“The State-of-Science meetings highlight an impressive step forward by the Academy to improve the evidence base of clinical practice,” Dr. Dillon said.

“The SSC helps define and encourage current best practice and identify research priorities to strengthen the scientific basis for clinical decision-making well into the future.”

The outcomes of the consensus conference are provided to US funding agencies to help steer research funds to areas of priority,

Proceedings of the AAOP State-of-Science meetings can be found at [www.oandp.org/jpo/](http://www.oandp.org/jpo/) and are available free of charge. Previous meetings have explored a range of topics including: Knee-Ankle-Foot orthoses for ambulation, Outcome measures in lower limb prosthetics and Prosthetic foot-ankle mechanisms, to name just a few.

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## Kobe College Visits NCPO

Three weeks ago the NCPO was honoured by a visit from our colleagues from Kobe College of Medical Welfare. Rowan English, Michael Dillon and Wes Pryor held discussions with Machiko Saito, Executive Director of Kobe College of Medical Welfare and Mitsuhiko Uchida, Deputy Head of Kobe College of Medical Welfare. Plans were established for the continued close working relationship between the organisations given the potential for further development of education in prosthetics and orthotic education for the two countries.

Presently, the NCPO accepts Kobe College qualified students into an upgrade program whereby students study at the NCPO for two semesters to attain a Bachelor of Prosthetics and Orthotics from La Trobe University. The NCPO also organises and hosts a student visit of Kobe College students and teaches into the undergraduate program in Japan. In June this year, Rowan English will travel to Japan to lecture and hold further discussions with representatives from Kobe College.

Further developments will possibly include a closer collaboration between the NCPO and Kobe College in curriculum development, student visits from Australia to Japan and supervision of post graduate students. Opportunities for the NCPO to collaborate with international educational institutions such as Kobe College highlight the global nature of the P&O field and the high regard with which the NCPO and its staff is held.

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