Vice Chancellor’s Report to Council

Monday 3 March 2008

The year commenced on a very positive note with a most pleasing student admissions round through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) and the University Admissions Centre (UAC) in NSW. Griffith maintained the numbers of applicants in the majority of programs whilst improving cut-off scores in many - all in a highly competitive environment with declining overall numbers. More detail will be provided on the 2008 QTAC admission round in the dedicated Council agenda item.

In a university-sector first, students studying the new professional commerce degrees at the Logan campus were on campus before trimester one started, mixing with industry through a professional development program.

In 2008 the Griffith Business School (GBS) is introducing new "professional" commerce programs, specialising in accounting or financial planning, in response to industry demand for more qualified professionals and job-ready graduates. This three day Ernst & Young development program is the first of many initiatives built into the degree to ensure students are job-ready when they graduate.

The program was sponsored by firms including Marsh Primknell Chartered Accountants, KPMG, Infocus money management, and Tupicoffs, with additional presenting firms including WMS Chartered Accountants, the Financial Planning Association of Australia and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia.

The positive news kept coming with the announcement of our own internationally-renowned criminologist Professor Ross Homel AO being appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) in the 2008 Australia Day Awards. Professor Homel AO was recognised for service to education, particularly in the field of criminology, through research into the causes of crime, early intervention and prevention methods. (See Attachment 1)

In January I hosted two significant visits. On 24-25 January 2008, a delegation led by Professor Zhang Huijun, President of the Beijing Film Academy (BFA) visited Griffith to become familiar with Queensland College of Art (QCA) and Griffith Film School (GFS) and to discuss cooperative possibilities between the two institutions. I hosted a lunch for the President and delegation, who also met with Des Power, Chairman, Queensland Events as well as with the Vice President of Warner Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast.
On 26-28 January 2008, a delegation led by Professor Lin Jianhua, Executive Vice President and Provost, Peking University visited Griffith University. The delegation also visited Griffith’s key Research Centres to gain a greater understanding of the University’s research and academic strengths. Professor John Dewar, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) presented Griffith’s Academic Plan: Learning for Success. The delegation was also interested in Griffith’s organisational structure and human resource management systems including our employment strategies for academic staff and the processes involved. These details were addressed by Professor Cordia Chu.
On 30 January I attended the official opening of the Queensland Academy for Health Sciences, co-located on our Gold Coast campus, by the Queensland Premier, The Honourable Anna Bligh MP.

Former Queensland Premier Peter Beattie launched Griffith REVIEW 19: Re-Imagining Australia on Monday 4 February. The launch took place at Griffith University's South Bank campus, before Mr Beattie's departure from Australia to take up an appointment at the University of South Carolina as a visiting professor where he will lecture students on politics, tourism, trade and investment. Mr Beattie is one of the contributors to Re-Imagining Australia which paints the big picture of what it means to be Australian and how this might change. (See Attachment 2)

As I write this report, the construction work at the Smart Water research facility is commencing. Plans for our new building were unveiled at the ceremony by Queensland Minister for Natural Resources and Water the Honourable Craig Wallace MP and Gold Coast Mayor Councillor Ron Clarke. The new $18 million Smart Water facility is jointly funded by the Queensland Government, Gold Coast City Council and the University and brings to fruition the vision of nine consortium partners including local government, academic and private sector companies. The Smart Water facility will form the nerve-centre for water supply research and development in Queensland when completed.

We will be conducting a senior management development program in February for a number of academic and non-academic senior managers in order to provide briefings on the implications of the new Federal Labor Government policies; Griffith 2015: Implementing the Vision and the upcoming AUQA Audit. It is anticipated that more than 140 managers will be in attendance which will be held on the Gold Coast. This program will be followed later in February/early March by a number of meetings across each campus where I will meet with all staff across the university and share information about the University's direction and priorities for 2008.

As I briefed Council at the Retreat held on Friday 15 February, the new federal government agenda in education is becoming clearer. Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, in a number of forums, is increasingly sketching the details of government policy. I attach for Council members’ information the speech recently delivered by Senator Carr at ANU which is very similar to the speech he delivered at the recent Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRUA) conference held in Adelaide. (Attachment 3)
A number of professorial appointments have been made since the December Council meeting. Details are attached. (Attachment 4)

**Research**

**RQF Update**
The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator the Honourable Kim Carr announced before Christmas that he was abandoning the Research Quality Framework (RQF). He has also indicated that he will be pursing a more metrics based system but will be consulting with the sector in 2008 about what the system will be. He indicated that he would inform the sector about the timing of the new scheme and the process for consultation sometime early in the New Year. Griffith has not yet received this advice. At the IRUA conference on 7 February Senator Carr re-stated his position which is to de-couple the assessment of quality from funding at least in the first instance. In the meantime, as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) reported to Council at its final meeting in 2007, the University is seeking to complete the data collection that had been initiated for the RQF so that the University has this analysis in order to review our research strengths and prepare for whatever might replace RQF.

**ARC Discovery Projects and NHMRC**
There are a number of available grants within the ARC Discovery Projects and NHMRC grants scheme. A number of academics have been preparing their grant applications which need to be submitted throughout February for the NHMRC grants and by 7 March for the ARC Discovery Projects.

**2008 Endeavour Research Fellowship for Indigenous Australians**
University Postdoctoral Fellow Christine Morris has been awarded a 2008 Endeavour Research Fellowship for Indigenous Australians. This fellowship provides financial support for Indigenous postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows to undertake short-term research, in any field of study. The research is to be undertaken in participating countries within the Asia/Pacific region and the Middle East. Christine is intending to undertake her fellowship in Vanuatu and will investigate the manner in which the Indigenous peoples of Vanuatu use ‘Kustom’ to regulate climate change response in remote and vulnerable communities. The project will be hosted by the School of Law, University of South Pacific.

**Learning**

**Griffith’s Carrick Fellowship Applications 2008**
The aim of the Carrick Fellowship Scheme is to advance learning and teaching in higher education by supporting leading educators to undertake strategic, high profile fellowship activities in areas that support the mission of the Carrick Institute. Fellows are expected to develop a program that explores and addresses a significant educational issue; develop their personal skills and profile and to be ongoing advocates for excellence in learning and teaching in higher education. Fellowships emphasise collaborative activities and the building of national and international partnerships.

Following Griffith's success in 2007 in being awarded three Carrick Associate Fellowships, the University has submitted three applications for 2008 (one Senior Fellowship and two Associate Fellowships). Fellows will be announced by May 2008 and it is anticipated that Fellows will undertake their fellowship for a 12-month period between May 2008 and May 2009.

**Graduations**
The University held its second round of December Graduation ceremonies in 2007. 12 ceremonies were held over 5 days at venues in Brisbane, Logan and the Gold Coast. The table below provides a brief summary of attendance at these events:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Total Eligible</th>
<th>% Attended</th>
<th>Guests Attending</th>
<th>Staff Attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>71.03</td>
<td>4889</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>2879</td>
<td>69.36</td>
<td>7319</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>81.62</td>
<td>1194</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5209</td>
<td>81.62</td>
<td>13402</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those attending Graduation ceremonies were inspired by high calibre guest speakers such as Michael Searle (Gold Coast Titans), Judge Fleur Kingham (District Court Qld), Graham Carpenter (Tarong Energy), Colin Ryan (Brisbane Airport Corporation & Royal Children's Hospital), Cherrie Bottger (Network Ten) and the Hon John Mickel MP (Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment & Industrial Relations). One Honorary Doctor of the University was conferred upon Dr Bindu Lohani from the Asia Development Bank. Dr Lohani was recognised for his work in building links between the Asian Development Bank and the University, particularly in his work with Environmental Impact Assessment and the combination of economic assessment and environmental assessment of development projects.

**Mentoring@Griffith**
Griffith is committed to student leadership development and mentoring. The Mainstreaming Griffith Mentoring (MGM) Project, supported by a University Strategic Programs Grant, has facilitated the sharing of existing good practice in mentoring at Griffith and has supported the development of new peer mentoring programs through central mentor training, assistance to practitioners, and the development of a new website and on-line program management system called Mentoring@Griffith.

**Student Services 2007 Evaluation Project**
Every three years since 1995, Student Services (careers, chaplaincy, counselling, equity/disability, health and welfare) has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of its services and programs in addition to continuous routine evaluation. In the 2007 Evaluation Project, some 2353 (1802) individual responses were received via three surveys:

1. Client Satisfaction Survey – 788 current clients (students and staff).
2. Students Survey 2007 - 1299 users and non-users (hardcopy and on-line)
3. Staff Survey – 266 users and non-users (hardcopy and on-line)

Findings from these measures is summarised below. The 2004 figures are shown in italics.

Client Satisfaction Survey - Satisfaction with Services
There was a high level of satisfaction reported by current clients of services (students and staff) who completed the Client Satisfaction Survey (n=788) immediately following their consultation:
- 95% (97%) of respondents said they thought the service accessed was professional
- 94% (93%) said the service was "responsive to their needs"
- 95% (95%) said they would "use the service again"
- 95% (94%) said they would "recommend the service to others"
- 93% (91%) said they found "the assistance received helped them"
Student Survey
Satisfaction was also high amongst Student Survey respondents (n=1299) who had used one or more services (n=709) and who completed this survey sometime during the evaluation period (3-21 September 2007):

- 90% (83%) of users rated services as “user friendly”
- 84% (80%) of users rated services as “useful at the time”
- 95% (94%) of users said they would “use the service again”
- 94% (94%) they would “recommend it to others”.
- 82% (73%) rated their contact with Student Services as having had “a positive impact on their experience of study at Griffith”.
- 74% (74%) said their contact with Student Services had “had an impact on their staying at Griffith”.

Staff Survey
Staff satisfaction with services, as reported in the Staff Survey (n=266), where one or more service had been used (n=164) was similarly high:

- 93% (91%) of respondents rated the service they last used as “excellent” or “good” in terms of “user-friendliness” and 94% (91%) in terms of “professionalism”.
- 93% (89%) rated the service they last used as “excellent” or “good” in terms of “usefulness at the time”.
- 89% (83%) said it was “excellent” or “good” in terms of “having a positive impact on experience of working at Griffith”.

The Student Service 2007 Evaluation Project Report will be available in late February.

Automated External Defibrillators (AED's)
Four new AEDs will be located near the Security Offices on Nathan, Gold Coast, QCA & QCGU. AEDs are already located near Security office at Logan and Mt Gravatt. HRM will be arranging for staff members to be AED coordinators at QCA and QCGU and on Nathan and Gold Coast the new AEDs will be managed by the Health Service staff.

Griffith Green Steps
The inaugural Griffith Green Steps Program was piloted in Semester 2, 2007. Green Steps, an Environmental Education and Consultancy Program for university students, is a joint initiative of the Australian Greenhouse Office, the Monash University Sustainability Institute and the Careers and Employment Service. The Program is designed to develop students’ involvement in issues of sustainability and in finding opportunities to promote sustainability in their future employment. Fifty students from a range of disciplines applied and 12 students were selected to undergo a four-day training course to equip them with the attitudes, skills, knowledge and confidence to facilitate organisational sustainability improvement, and to undertake a minimum 12-day consultancy with a local organisation during the University vacation. While only 12 organisational placements were needed, 22 organisations expressed interest.

People: Staff
Queensland Smart State Grant
Associate Professor Dennis Burns, Director of the Griffith University Forensic Science Research and Innovation Centre, led a successful bid to gain funding of up to $738K, including a $100K Qld Government Smart State Grant (Partnerships-Alliances Facilitation Program), for the project ‘Queensland Smart Forensics’: Coordinating and Progressing Forensic Research for Improved Efficiencies in Forensic Analysis & Crime Prevention. Partners in the bid included: Griffith University Forensic Science Research and Innovation Centre (lead partner), National Institute of Forensic Science, Qld Health Forensic and Scientific Services, Qld Police Service, QUT, Bond University, Charles Darwin University, Genetic Technologies and Agilent Technologies. The bid also received formal support from the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security, National ICT Australia (NICTA-Qld) and the University of Technology, Sydney.
New York Academy of Sciences
Professor Ron Quinn, Director of the Eskitis Institute was invited to speak on "Developing a Drug-Like Natural Product Screening Library" at the prestigious New York Academy of Sciences in January 2008. Renewed interest in natural products as potential sources of hits and leads in the drug discovery process are now being re-examined because their structures cover unique chemical space and provide evolutionary advantages. Professor Quinn presented alongside experts in the field on the successes of natural products, the relationship between natural products and their interaction with proteins, new paradigms of modern natural products research in the pharmaceutical industry, efforts to develop marine natural products to drugs, and projections for the needs and future of natural products.

New Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator
On January 30, Tamara Whyte commenced employment with Griffith University as the Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator. Tamara will be working from the Office of HRM and assisting elements to achieve the goals in the Equity and Diversity Plan.

People: Students
Siemens Science Experience
Queensland students from as far away as Bundaberg and Stanthorpe swapped uniforms for lab coats for the Siemens Science Experience at Nathan and Gold Coast campuses in January 2008. These events are funded through state and federal governments and industry as an initiative to encourage students to take up science careers. The three day event was opened at Nathan by the Honourable Rod Welford MP, Queensland Minister for Education, Training and The Arts and started with a bang thanks to an explosive demonstration by the Young Scientist of Australia. Students learned about the chemistry of copper, isolated DNA from calf thymus, learned about UV protection, made their own bike lights, and studied creatures in our local "black lagoon". At the Gold Coast students designed bridges from balsa wood which were tested to the point of failure, learned chemistry tricks such as making slime from household products and were introduced to the fascinating world of forensics. Students also took part in exciting experiments in Griffith's laboratories, and talked with leading Griffith scientists about careers in science.
2007 Austrade Exporting for the Future Export Plan Competition

A team of Griffith Business School students were recently named National Winner of the 2007 Austrade Exporting for the Future Export Plan Competition. The students, Aleisha Norton, Kym Myers, Mark Bagshaw and Jennifer Wood beat more than 100 entries to take first place and $1,000 in prize money at the National Export Awards night. The team put together an export market plan for the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture (ACLH). The Centre uses a consortium approach to provide export opportunities to Queensland’s horticulture industry.

Griffith University Student Wins a Sports Management Association of Australia and New Zealand (SMAANZ) Bursary

Bachelor of Sports Management (Honours) student, Jeff Greenhill won a Sports Management Association of Australia and New Zealand (SMAANZ) bursary for his research into ways to coax female coaches to the elite level. Jeff is also a scholar with the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) Centre of Excellence for Applied Sport Science Research (CoE).

He will present his research findings to the Queensland Academy of Sport and Queensland Sport Organisations with recommendations that seek to influence organisational practices so they better consider career pathways for female coaches. As part of the bursary Mr Greenhill also presented his findings at the recent 13th Annual SMAANZ Conference in Auckland, New Zealand.

The bursary included free SMAANZ membership, $1,000 towards conference expenses to present his research and $500.

Student Success

International Relations graduates Zarah Kerley and Georgina Wind have featured in the media recently (Attachment 5), showcasing their success on being appointed the newest members of Australia's frontline defence against money laundering and terrorism funding. Zarah and Georgina have secured positions with the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre as part of its national graduate program. AUSTRAC is the country's anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing regulator and financial intelligence unit. The graduate program is being offered for the first time in 2008.

Zarah and Georgina recently relocated to Sydney to start their new positions. The graduate program runs for 12 months, after which permanent employment opportunities within the department would be offered.

Physical facilities and information resources

Information Services

Introduction

Information Services will conduct several projects in 2008 to enhance the University's messaging and collaboration infrastructure. These tools are essential to the success of many of Griffith’s research, teaching and administration functions. We recognise the need to continue to improve core applications like email which is consistently rated by clients as the most important service provided by Information Services. Email is supplemented with innovative new offerings such as desktop videoconferencing, instant messaging and mobilesync to help accelerate business
processes, reduce email overload and enable more efficient methods of conducting the business of the University.

**Sametime Upgrade**

Sametime provides instant messaging (IM), presence and geographical location awareness services to staff. The program was recently upgraded – key improvements include:

- an updated user interface making the application much easier to use;
- connection to Google Talk, AIM, Yahoo!, and ICQ public instant messaging networks. This eliminates the need to run multiple applications to chat with people in other organisations who use one of these public messaging services;
- chat history – to view and search past chat sessions.
- rich text messaging (including formatting and images) and in-place spell checking (much like Microsoft Word); and
- file transfer and screen capture tools.

**QuickPlace (Quickr) Upgrade**

QuickPlace is a web-based team place where members can collaborate, share information and documents regardless of their geographical location.

QuickPlace has also undergone a major upgrade with key improvements including:

- a redesigned interface making the application significantly easier to use;
- connectors which allow direct access to Quickr repositories from within Microsoft Office applications, Windows Explorer, Lotus Notes and Sametime; and
- wiki, photo gallery, idea discussion and task management capabilities.

**Lotus Notes 8 Upgrade**

Planning for a significant upgrade to the staff email service began late in 2007. Key benefits of Lotus Notes Release 8 include:

- a completely overhauled user interface making the application significantly easier to use;
- in-place spell checking of email messages (much like Microsoft Word);
- the ability to retract a sent email message (with some caveats);
- a conversation view that groups all communication about a single subject together;
- new meeting invitations will appear as ghosted entries in the calendar making management of scheduling conflicts easier; and
- the full Lotus Notes desktop application can be run from a USB key which will potentially solve some of the remote access difficulties.

Environments have already been built to test the upgrade process. We expect to begin deploying an upgrade to desktop computers from July this year.

**Community Partnerships**

**Development and Alumni**

Griffith Business School Alumnus Andrew Stone recently obtained the title of Gold Coast Ambassador. He was selected by an independent panel of local business men and women and is appointed for a 12 month term. The position is designed to promote the interests of the Gold Coast as the preferred Australian city to live, work, rest, play, and invest in. Andrew says it also allows him to work with several different charity interests within the community.

A graduate of the Bachelor of Business specialising in Sport Management, Andrew is currently employed as Operations Manager with V8 Supercar Events, the event management arm of V8 Supercars Australia. Andrew is actively involved with the GBS Alumni Network and participates as a member of the Alumni Advisory Group. He is also working with a sub-group of the AAG in developing a program of events specifically geared towards the School’s Gen Y alumni.

**Professional Women’s Network (PWN)**
On Friday, 29 February the PWN will launch its 2008 breakfast and networking series with "Money – it’s not what you make, but how you manage it that counts!" featuring Cathy McGuane, Executive Manager - Marketing and Business Development, Teachers Union Heath and author of the Financial Fitness series.

**International**

**Delegations**

In addition to the delegations from the Beijing Film Academy (BFA) and Peking University mentioned earlier in my report, Griffith University hosted some 23 international delegations between November 8 to February 6, 2008. Some of the highlights are as follows:

**China**

**Beihai College Beihang University**

On 14 November 2007, a delegation from Beihai College Beihang University (BCBU) visited Griffith for the official signing of the Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Griffith has with BCBU. The Annex details a pathway articulation program into Griffith's Bachelor of Information Technology program. The Delegates were particularly impressed with the work-place learning program offered to Griffith students and with Griffith's industry links with multi-national corporations such as Suncorp, IBM, Austar, and Boeing.

**Dubai**

**Edulink**

On 27 January 2007, Mr Riaz Ahmed Bava, Manager of Edulink visited Griffith University to discuss further possible collaboration. In December 2007 a Letter of Intent was signed between Griffith and Edulink to explore possible cooperation in Dubai. The partnership is backed by Sheikh Saeed bin Hashar Al Maktoum, from the Dubai ruling family.

**Vietnam**

**Vietnam Administration of Preventative Medicine (VAPM), Ministry of Health**

On 14-17 January 2008, a delegation led by Professor Nguyen Huy Nga, Director General, VAPM, visited Griffith to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Griffith University and VAPM, Ministry of Health and to further discuss areas of possible collaboration in public health, environmental health and environmental management. The MOU is the result of on-going negotiations since July 2007, which began with a very productive meeting between Professor Nga and Griffith staff, Professor Cordia Chu, Director Centre for Environmental and Public Health; Ms Ann Hammond, Deputy Director, International Business Development Unit; and Ms Michelle Walker, International Projects Officer. The signing of the MOU was witnessed by Mr Gary Fenlon, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honourable John Mickel, Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations.

**Partner Institutions:**

Other Griffith University partner institutions that visited during this period to further strengthen our collaborations included delegations from:

- Shanghai Normal University, China, 20 November 2007
- Seigakuin University, Japan, 22 November 2007
- CVU Midt-Vest University, Denmark, 23 November 2007
- Chengdu delegation, China, 6 December 2007
- Ocean University, China, 12 December 2007
- The University of Toronto, Canada, 19 December 2007
- Fukuoka University, China, 11 November 2007
- University of Washburn, USA, 6 December 2007
- Soka University, Japan, 7 December 2007
- Shenzhen University, China, 21 January 2008

**Other visits:**

Griffith University also received visits from other institutions that are not official partners. These included:

- Austrade, Pakistan, 19 November 2007
Korea Institute of Sport Science, Korea, 19 November 2007
Austrade, Bahrain, 12 December 2007
Australian Ambassador for Mexico, 14 December 2007
Australian Ambassador for Spain, 18 December 2007
National Equity Corporation of Malaysia, 5 January 2008
Jain Group of Institutions, 29 January 2008

Griffith English Language Institute (GELI)

GELI Enrolments
In January, GELI delivered English language [ELICOS] to over 1200 students across its three centres. This was a 37% increase in Brisbane and 20% for the GC over corresponding courses in 2007. GELI will also host 20 groups mainly from Japan and Korea from January-February, including 30 teachers from Ajou University.

HELP
The English Higher Education Language Program (HELP) will continue to be offered to international students studying Griffith degrees in Semester 1, 2008. Semester 2, 2007 saw approximately 400 international students avail themselves of the program and GELI expects this number to increase steadily as students become more aware of the benefits of this free (to the student) Griffith initiative.

IELTS Test Centre
The IELTS Centre celebrated its first anniversary on December 1. In the first year, GELI tested several thousand candidates over twenty sessions and trained over 50 staff (examiners/clerical markers/invigilators/administration staff). The IELTS Test Centre received a surprise audit from IELTS Australia Head Office in November. The Assistant Regional Manager was impressed with many aspects of GELI's operation and intends using photographs and samples of documents as examples of best practice.

GET Ready
GELI's new GET Ready program will commence from March 1st. GET Ready is the General Training IELTS preparation program designed for graduates wanting to improve their English language proficiency to IELTS 7 for Skilled Migration purposes.

Overseas Projects
GELI's contract with Qatar Petroleum continues to gain momentum with over 70 instructors now employed under the contract.

Over 40 students who participated in GELI's pilot DEP Partner program with UIBE in Beijing are now studying at Griffith.

International Business Development Unit (IBDU)
Fullcast Technology Co. Ltd. Japan
In January we received the third cohort of students taking part in the specialised “Embedded Software Engineering” program. The IBDU has been assisting the School of Engineering to coordinate this innovative program which has been especially designed for the Japanese company, Fullcast Technology Co. Ltd Japan (FCT). FCT sponsors the students to cover all their tuition fees and provides assistance with accommodation. At the completion of the one year program the students are guaranteed full time employment with FCT or their clients.

Marketing and Admissions
International Offices
Three Griffith University offices have been opened overseas in India, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates to process international student applications. The office in Kiev commenced application processing in September 2007 and has processed 128 applications. The office in Dubai started in August 2007 and has now processed in excess of 270 applications. The Mumbai office opened in December 2007 and has already processed 100 applications. These offices provide significant assistance in supporting and extending our in-country recruitment efforts.
ESOS (Education Services for Overseas Student) Act
A new National Code of Practice governing international student visa holders studying in Australia commenced on 1 July 2007. This legislation outlines international student governance across the spectrum of marketing, admissions and support. In November/December 2007 Dr Lyn Holman undertook a review of Griffith’s preparedness to meet the new National Code obligations. The University community is currently implementing the recommendations contained in this review report.

International Intake Semester 1 2008
The international student intake in Semester 1 2008 continues to climb above the Semester 1 2007 intake for the same time period. Applications last week were up 28% compared to Semester 1 2007, with a 14% increase in acceptances on the same period last year. The biggest current growth is Health of 43% (167), followed by Business with 19% (757), AEL 15% (486) and SEET 10% (202).

Media Analysis
Griffith’s successful bid to host the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility received wide coverage nationally, including the front page of the Australian HES (Attachment 7) and reports in Australian (general news), Australian Financial Review, The Courier-Mail, AAP Newswire, Gold Coast Bulletin, Newcastle Herald, Bendigo Advertiser, ABC 612 Brisbane, ABC Australia News, ABC Central Victoria, ABC Coast FM, GoldCoast.com.au, SBS World News, BrisbaneTimes, NBN Gold Coast, Channel 9 Gold Coast, ABC Mildura Swan Hill, Triple J Hack, ABC Southern Queensland, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Post, Hunter Post and Gold FM.

Griffith’s outstanding year of teaching excellence accolades was capped with wide coverage of Associate Professor Keithia Wilson winning the Carrick Institute’s Australian University Teacher of the Year — Australian HES (Attachment 8), The Courier-Mail IQ, Campus Review, Southern Star and Westside News. Australian HES ran an opinion piece by Vice Chancellor Ian O’Connor and Gavin Moodie on the need to engage youth in tertiary study. (Attachment 9)

Various Griffith experts contributed to public debate and media commentary, including Professor Lesley Johnson and Tony Shiel’s opinion piece in the Australian HES regarding the RQF and Dr Jem Bendall (Griffith Business School) discussing sustainability and luxury brands in Sydney Morning Herald, The Courier-Mail, Adelaide Advertiser, Canberra Times, AAP Newswire and Newcastle Herald;

Our full-house hallmark Griffith lecture by Justice Michael Kirby was well canvassed in national media, including Sydney Morning Herald (Attachment 10), ABC Australia News, ABC 702 Sydney (syndicated to 13 stations), Adelaide Advertiser, Launceston Examiner, Border Mail, Illawarra Mercury and Townsville Bulletin.

The Courier-Mail Q Weekend featured Institute for Glycomics Director Mark von Itzstein and Emeritus Professor of Science Ian Lowe as influential Queenslanders. Another edition of the magazine interviewed Professor Lyn Griffiths (Genomics Research Centre) in a feature article about genetics.

Griffith’s commitment and strong ties to the Gold Coast were demonstrated through coverage of the launch of the University’s sponsorship of the Jetstar Gold Coast Titans in The Courier-Mail, Gold Coast Bulletin, Herald Sun, NBN Gold Coast, Channel 9 Gold Coast, ABC Coast FM, BrisbaneTimes.com.au, Goldcoast.com.au and Hoovers Online.

Griffith’s expertise in work-integrated learning was reported in The Courier-Mail (Attachment 11) in a story on the proposal for a national scheme to arm students with practical work skills. Carol-Joy Patrick, Manager of Griffith’s Industrial Affiliates Program was interviewed for the story.

Coverage of the Griffith Honours College continued with a story in the Australian Financial Review (Attachment 12) quoting Professor John Dewar.

Griffith’s links to Asia were profiled through coverage in the Australian Financial Review and The Courier-Mail of the new Asia-Pacific economic research program launched by the Griffith Asia Institute. Australian also featured international business and Asian studies graduate Clinton Dines, who was selected as one of the top five Australians doing business in China today.
The diversity of research conducted at Griffith was canvassed nationally, including Changming He’s work in virtual reality in the CAV lab; Dr Richard Hindmarsh’s study on why wind farms are unpopular; Dr Suzanne Steginga (School of Psychology) and her research on coping with prostate cancer; Griffith’s Dustwatch program and Griffith School of Engineering’s Dr Nick Cartwright and his ARC grant to model storm surges. Australian HES also reported the Centre for Quantum Dynamics has achieved the world’s most accurate system of measurement.

The Courier-Mail, Brisbane Times, Bayside Star and Northside Chronicle reported QCA student Angela Rossitto won the Thiess Art Prize for her installation Mind Maze.

Australian reported on the Prime Times conference hosted by the Centre for Public Culture and Ideas.

The Australia Higher Education ran an article by Paul Draper (QCGU) about digital technologies revolutionising music.

Sydney Morning Herald, Age and Northern Star quoted Professor Peter Brown (Centre for Work, Organisation & Well-being) about his research which found young mothers found caring for their child the most stressful, boring or frustrating activity in their daily lives.

West Australian interviewed Dr Jayne Clapton, Head of the School of Human Services, in an article about disability.

The Gold Coast Bulletin Paradise Magazine profiled Griffith researchers, Professors Mark von Itzstein, Tony Moran, Ifor Beacham and Associate Professor Victoria Korolick in their article titled “The Science of Sugars”. (Attachment 13)

Television coverage included:

- Sunday Arts (ABC TV) interviewed Simon Wright (Griffith Artworks) about the works of up and coming artists — syndicated to six stations.
- Channel Nine Brisbane Extra interviewed Associate Professor Nigel Pope about retail strategies of factory outlets.
- Channel 10 Totally Wild ran a segment on Griffith School of Environment PhD student Jan-Olaf Meynecke and his fish-tagging project.
- Channel Seven Today Tonight interviewed Nicola Howell (Centre for Credit and Consumer Law) about interest rates and loan sharks ripping consumers off.
- Channel 9 interviewed Professor Lyn Griffiths (Genomics Research Centre) about new findings on the genetics of migraine.
- Channel 7 Today Tonight interviewed Dr Paula Brough (School of Psychology) about the impact of technology such as the Blackberry on work life balance.
- Channel 7 Sunrise and ABC Radio 720 mentioned the URP VAMPIRE index study of how mortgage and fuel stress affects households.
Life’s work is a safer world

Griffith University’s Professor Ross Homel has been recognised for his efforts to prevent crime and associated problems such as violence and child abuse.

DAYLIGHT saving ensured that the first call Ross Homel received on Australia Day was extra early.

And the phone continued to ring all day with congratulations from family, friends and colleagues on the announcement of his appointment as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

Nathan-based Griffith University’s Professor Homel was recognised in the Australia Day Honours for service to education, particularly in the field of criminology, through research into the causes of crime, early intervention and prevention methods.

He said he was moved so many colleagues had nominated him.

“It is a really terrific reflection on the priorities of the university in terms of acknowledging work that has a fair bit of community value,” he said. “(It is) gratifying to live in a country where people like me spend a lot of time analysing and solving social problems and that this country is prepared to support this kind of work.”

Finding the experience humbling, he said the award recognised the work of many people.

Throughout his career, the foundation professor of criminology and criminal justice at Griffith University has focused on the theoretical analysis of crime and associated problems such as violence, child abuse, injury, substance abuse and corruption.

His work also addresses the prevention of these problems through the application of scientific methods. Professor Homel is also co-director of a large early intervention scheme, the Pathways to Prevention Project, in a disadvantaged area of Brisbane.

The project, which he developed with Mission Australia, won equal first prize in the National Crime and Violence Prevention Awards in 2004. The research group he established at Griffith University won Australian Violence Prevention Awards in 1994 and 1998 for work on the causes and prevention of violence in drinking establishments.
Qld: Convention should realign the federation: Beattie

By Gabrielle Dunleavy

BRISBANE, Feb 6 AAP - A national constitutional convention should consider a model where state and territory leaders are appointed to the Senate, former Queensland premier Peter Beattie says.

In an essay for the latest Griffith Review, Mr Beattie suggests an agenda for a constitutional convention, to improve the performance of government in Australia by clearly defining the roles of the commonwealth and the states.

Mr Beattie will launch the quarterly journal, titled Re-imagining Australia, at Griffith University's South Bank campus, in Brisbane tomorrow.

It will be his final public engagement before he leaves Brisbane on Sunday to take up an appointment at the University of South Carolina, where he will lecture on politics, tourism, trade and investment.

In his essay - A Vision Beyond the Blame Game - Mr Beattie says the constitutional convention should clearly define the responsibilities of the commonwealth and state governments.

The commonwealth should assume full authority for indigenous affairs, national registration, workforce planning and training of health professionals, and hospitals.

Mr Beattie told AAP today having a reformist prime minister and all states under Labor governments offered a prime opportunity to make changes.

"We've got a unique opportunity to put the train wreck of federation back on the rails," Mr Beattie said.

He argues in the essay that the issue of a republic should be left for another time.

"This should concentrate on the removal of wasteful duplication to provide for smoother, more efficient and more accountable federation," Mr Beattie writes.

"A clearer definition of roles will provide for transparency and make buck-passing much more difficult."

Mr Beattie, who retired as Queensland premier last year, also argues for the states to have a recognised role in the functioning of the commonwealth government through the Senate.

He says the Senate follows the whim of political parties, rather than being a "states' house" as intended.

"One solution may be to follow the German model and appoint every state premier and territory leader or nominee to the Senate," Mr Beattie writes.

"This would force the states and commonwealth to work more closely together."

Other contributors to the review include legal scholar George Williams, and former West Australian Premier Geoff Gallop.

The latest Griffith Review will be released nationally on Friday.

AAP gd/pijo/cjh/de
There is More than One Way to Innovate: Research for Discovery, Understanding, and Application

Senator Kim Carr
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

Australian National University
7 February 2008
Cowra, New South Wales

Innovation and research flourish in an environment of freedom, openness, democracy and diversity. That’s what I’m determined to create.

An environment that sustains a variety of research styles and outcomes. An environment in which curiosity-driven research, user-driven research and bespoke problem-solving all have an equal chance to thrive.

The ANU is central to what I’m trying to achieve.

Its foundation marked the beginning of a new era in university research.

The early twentieth-century had its pioneers and heroes, but the overall research performance of our universities was modest before the second world war, especially in science and technology.
As Boris Schedvin observed in his history of the CSIRO, "Australian universities had been established as teaching institutions in the liberal tradition; writing and research were regarded as the private occupations of the exceptionally energetic or the eccentric." – and even they were hampered by ramshackle facilities (Shaping Science and Industry, pp. 12-13).

That’s why the CSIRO loomed so large.

And that’s why the ANU was critical to the Chifley government’s great nation-building project in the post-war years.

It was and remains a university dedicated to research and public service – not least by providing non-partisan advice to parliament.

There are many ways research can improve people’s lives.

Contributing to our technical and material progress is only one of them.

Research can also reduce inequality, deepen cultural understanding, expand opportunities for the least fortunate, support human rights and promote public health. It can foster social cohesion, improve the natural environment, increase psychological wellbeing, encourage tolerance and advance democracy.
Research that feeds directly into the work of industry will still be a vitally important part of the more diverse and pluralistic research environment I want to create. Improving links between researchers and businesses will still be a priority. But it won’t be the whole story.

We are building a national innovation system that has room for all sorts of research with all sorts of pay-offs, a system that contributes creatively to every dimension of Australian life.

**Academic freedom**

Most of you will be aware that my first actions as minister were aimed at safeguarding academic freedom and restoring the independence of our research institutions. I have appointed a new expert group representing a cross-section of the research community to advise the ARC on strategy and policy.

I’ve flagged the introduction of charters for our public research agencies that will guarantee their right to pursue lines of inquiry, publish results and participate in public debate without political interference. The terms of these charters are being negotiated right now.

And I’ve cancelled the former government’s Research Quality Framework, with its unverifiable, ill-defined and easily manipulated “impact” test.
What next?

**New portfolio**

The beauty of the new Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research is that it brings responsibility for all aspects of the research function – projects, infrastructure and training – under one roof.

It also sharpens the policy focus on research by disentangling it from general educational concerns.

School, vocational and undergraduate education are vitally important, of course, but that’s precisely the problem – when research is coupled with these responsibilities, it tends to be marginalised.

The new portfolio puts research centre stage.

More than that, by linking it to industry and innovation, we are making it very clear that research – in universities, in public agencies, and in the private sector – is critical to the government’s social and economic vision for Australia.

**Innovation review**

Last month I announced a comprehensive review of Australia’s innovation system. Professor Steve Dowrick is one of four distinguished scholars who have agreed to serve on the review panel. The others are Professors Glyn
Davis, Mary O’Kane and John Foster. I’m delighted to have them on board.
The panel is chaired by Dr Terry Cutler and also includes representatives from business and government.

The panel’s terms of reference are wide-ranging, and the important role of our universities in the national innovation system will be given the consideration it deserves.

The review offers us a chance to assess the cost of research at universities and the effectiveness of current funding programs for research training and infrastructure. The review will consider the role of basic research and interdisciplinary research within and between the sciences and humanities.

It will explore how we can build better bridges between universities and the world beyond the academy – by boosting technology transfer and take-up, by encouraging public-private collaboration to provide infrastructure, by improving access to researchers, by increasing the use of university know-how, and by engaging the community in innovation.

I have asked the panel to deliver a green paper by the end of July. The government will respond with a white paper setting out its policy priorities.

The review panel will shortly release an issues paper to focus discussion, before conducting workshops and inviting submissions. I am counting on the university
sector to take an active part in this conversation over the coming months.

**CRC review**

As part of the innovation review, a working group led by panel member Professor Mary O’Kane will examine the Cooperative Research Centres program.

The CRC program is one of the great legacies of the Hawke years, but there are signs that it has lost its way.

I’m keen to restore the original focus of the program, which was on long-term capacity-building rather than short-term commercialisation. Its primary objective must be to deliver public benefit.

As a participant in many CRCs, the ANU will have a strong interest in Professor O’Kane’s investigation.

The next CRC funding round will necessarily be delayed while the review is completed, but hopefully only for six months or so. I would like the selection process to be finalised by the middle of 2009.

**Research quality**

The deeply flawed Research Quality Framework is gone, but we still need information on what Australia’s universities are doing and how well they are doing it.
A robust quality assurance process is a precondition of institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

Researchers and universities – like governments – must be accountable for how they spend public money. If you want to be in control of your own destiny, you have to be prepared to justify the choices you make. That’s how it works.

We have a finite number of dollars for research, and we must be able to demonstrate that they’re being used to best advantage.

That doesn’t mean I’ll be looking over every vice-chancellor’s shoulder or standing at every researcher’s elbow.

What it means is that quality is king. It means the whole university sector will be expected to measure up against a quality assurance regime which is rigorous, transparent and fair.

This regime will involve both metrics and peer review. It will certainly have a strong international dimension. There is absolutely no point measuring ourselves against each other; we have to measure ourselves against the world.

Because there is no agreement on metrics for the creative arts, humanities and social sciences, we will have to use proxies. And because there are different views on what
the proxies should be, we will be consulting with the sector to identify the best model. People should be aware, however, that we have no time to waste. I want the new QA system bedded down by the end of this year. The consultation process will be announced within the next few weeks. If you want to have a say, do it quickly.

**Compasses**

It is essential that our universities become more responsive to the needs of the community that sustains them, whether those needs be social or economic.

While valuing the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, we also believe that Australia's intellectual resources must be marshalled to help us meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

With this in mind, we will be developing mission-based funding compacts with our public universities. These compacts will be instrumental in bringing about structural reform and cultural change, and in concentrating people’s minds on our international competitiveness.

They will enable us to manage the transition from the present centralised system to a more flexible environment in which each university can respond to the needs of its students, its community, the country and the global knowledge economy by exploiting its comparative advantages – by leading with its strongest suit.
The compacts – covering education, research and research training, community outreach and innovation – will give universities a greater say in priority-setting and establish a platform for future public and private investment.

And there will be future public investment. The inflationary legacy we've inherited limits what we can do in the short term, but it is a mistake to assume government funding will continue to decline.

Unlike our predecessors, we are not ideologically opposed to the public production and dissemination of knowledge. We actually believe in it.

Some of you will have heard me saying that the government wants to double Australia's R&D effort over time. That's a real commitment, and there is no question that our universities will play a big part in making it happen.

Having said that, a country of our size will never be able to fund every conceivable research interest at every institution. Each university will have concentrations of excellence in particular fields, and we would expect them to give those fields priority. The idea is that a university with good infrastructure and a critical mass of expertise in a given discipline would become the national hub for that discipline. Extending from each hub would be spokes going out to researchers
in other universities and linking them up with colleagues and resources at the centre.

I’m already attracting flack from people who assume that the current crop of research-intensive universities will automatically be the hubs in this model. They won’t. No university will be a hub. It is departments and research centres within universities that will be hubs. Any institution can become the national focus for a particular discipline if that’s where the best and most important work is being done.

Every university will have to justify its place in the system. Every university will have to perform. That’s why quality assurance is so important, and why I believe so passionately in peer review – there is no better way to keep the system honest.

Healthy rivalry and creative tension between universities will prevent complacency and ossification.

It will highlight strengths and – just as important – expose weaknesses, thereby giving us the best chance to get and stay internationally competitive.

**Open access**

We want the research conducted in universities and public research agencies to inspire and inform fresh thinking across the community. The more collaboration and interaction there is between researchers and the society around them, the better.
It follows that research and research data should be widely disseminated and readily discoverable. The results of publicly funded research should be publicly available. In December, I promised that universities would still receive the $15.6 million due to them in 2008 from the Australian Scheme for Higher Education Repositories and the Implementation Assistance Program, which formed part of the RQF.

ASHER was intended to support the creation of digital repositories and improve professional and community access to research. The IAP was supposed to help universities satisfy the RQF data and reporting requirements.

My promise to release these funds still stands, but I want to see the money – or a good part of it – being used to get us moving towards an open access regime for publicly funded research.

A lot of work needs to be done on sorting through the legal and infrastructure issues, including the implications for public-private collaborations.

However, it will be worth the effort. More accessible information equals more robust debate equals a stronger national innovation system.

A career in research
You can’t boost innovation and research without talented people. Australia’s success in attracting its best and brightest into research careers has been mixed.

Between 1983 and 1996, the number of students starting a higher degree by research increased by 9 per cent annually. In the decade from 1997 to 2006, the increase was less than 1 per cent a year.

PhD commencements rose 43 per cent during the ten years to 2006, but this was largely cancelled out by the collapse in Masters by Research commencements, which fell 28 per cent.

The shift from smaller masters projects to bigger doctoral projects may mean we are getting more from each candidate, but there is no escaping the fact that the number of students signing up to do higher degrees by research has flatlined.

The net effect is that we’ve been treading water while the rest of the world has powered ahead. A decade of opportunities has been squandered.

Australia has eight PhDs per thousand in the workforce, comparable to Canada but below the United States with eleven, Germany with twenty and Switzerland with twenty-eight (OECD 2007).

That’s why we are boosting research training by doubling the number of Australian Postgraduate Awards.
We are also halving HECS fees for new maths and science undergraduates in an effort to entice students – and potential future researchers – into these enabling disciplines.

We are mindful that what we are training people for is careers in research. Two new initiatives will create wider professional opportunities for researchers at different stages of their careers.

The first is the Researchers in Business scheme, which forms part of Enterprise Connect, the government’s program to link businesses with new ideas and technologies.

The scheme will support the placement of university and public research agency researchers in businesses with new ideas that will benefit from expert input. The primary aim of the scheme is to speed the dissemination of expertise, increase competitiveness, and create jobs.

However, one important side effect of the similar Knowledge Transfer Partnerships scheme in the UK is that four out of five researchers taking part have been offered employment by the host company on completing their project.

The second initiative is the Future Fellowships scheme.
As well as supporting important new research, the scheme will make it easier and more attractive for mid-career researchers to stay in the game. We also expect it to attract Australian researchers working overseas back to this country.

Both of these measures are part of our push to multiply professional opportunities for researchers inside and outside the academy.

**Conclusion**

My objectives for the university sector are no different from my objectives for the rest of the innovation system.

I want to build innovation capacity by concentrating resources to maximise efficiency; by connecting sectors, institutions and individuals to promote collaboration and knowledge transfer; and by increasing investment when fiscal circumstances allow.

I want to forge an environment which inspires creativity and produces innovation outcomes of the highest impact and quality.

The Australian National University will be an integral part of that environment. I look forward to working with you.

(ends)
PROFESSORIAL APPOINTMENTS

The following professorial appointments have been made since my last report to Council in December 2007:

**Professor David Weaver – Next Phase Appointment**
The Griffith Business School has successfully recruited a new senior staff member to the tourism research portfolio as part of the University’s next phase appointments. David Weaver, formerly Professor of Tourism and Travel in the Department of Health, Fitness and Recreation Resources, George Mason University in Virginia, USA, has accepted a Professorial appointment with the School. David specialises in the areas of ecotourism, sustainable tourism and destination management, and has authored three books and over 50 refereed journal articles and book chapters. He is also the editor of the Encyclopaedia of Ecotourism and sits on the Editorial Boards of four international refereed tourism journals and is the recipient of considerable grant funding.

**Professor Michael Dutton**
The Griffith Business School recently welcomed Professor Michael Dutton to the Griffith Asia Institute, where he has been appointed Research Professor of Political Cultures. Prior to joining the University, Michael was Professor of Politics with the Department of Politics, Goldsmiths College, University of London.

**Professor Peter Milburn**
The School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science has appointed Professor Peter Milburn, who will commence mid year, as Professor and Head of the School. Professor Milburn is currently employed as Associate Professor in Biomechanical Engineering and Associate Dean (Research) in Physiotherapy at University of Otago. He possesses an excellent track record in research and RHD supervision and is an experienced teacher. Professor Milburn is an experienced university manager and has an impressive research grant and publication record.
Grades join finance agency

BY KAREN COOLEY

MONEY laundering is not something you would normally want to get mixed up in, particularly when beginning your career. But for Griffith University graduates Georgina Wind and Zarah Kerley, this and terrorism financing will be just a part of daily life.

The students recently finished a Bachelor of International Relations and have been offered graduate positions with the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC).

This is the first year AUSTRAC, Australia's anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulator and specialist financial intelligence unit, is offering a national graduate program.

Ms Kerley said she was excited about being selected. "I had always wanted to enter a government graduate program after completing my degree," she said. "The AUSTRAC program is new, relevant to my area of study and a bit different, so it will be a great start to my career."

Her role in the international relations section of AUSTRAC means she will work as an assistant policy officer, while Ms Wind will be based in the International Technical Assistance and Training Unit. "The ability to co-operate and share information with international counterparts has become increasingly important to AUSTRAC," Ms Kerley said.

"Many of the business, politics, and counter-terrorism and crime courses we studied at Griffith are very relevant to the roles within AUSTRAC, and have provided us with a solid foundation from which to start our careers."

Both graduates majored in Asia Pacific studies and Ms Wind's second major was in European and international affairs. "AUSTRAC is involved in a lot of work overseas, helping set up similar units in South-East Asia," Ms Wind said.

"We'll be liaising with different government departments, both overseas and within Australia."
Top jobs ... Bachelor of International Relations graduates Zarah Kerley and Georgina Wind.
CARTILAND MINOR WORKS REPORT

Physical resources

Gold Coast Campus
The extension to the Link Building (G07) for the new Exercise Room should reach Practical Completion by the first week in March subject to weather conditions.

Logan Campus
Work on alterations to room 3.06 in the Hub Link Building to create a large seminar room has been completed. Electrical modifications required for the installation of audio visual gear have been completed in Community Place 1.01.

Nathan & Mt Gravatt Campuses
During December, 30 new projects were received for Nathan campus.

The following major projects are currently being carried out or were completed in December:

- Construct UPS room for Super Computer facilities at level -2 Science 2 - $977,000 (completed).
- Replace ceiling tiles to Willett Centre 3 levels (old side) - $104,000.
- Refurbish Physics laboratory level -1 Science 2 building - $250,000.
- Refurbish ensuites to Residential Advisors’ flats in Bellenden Ker College - $105,000.
- Replace three roof sections to Environment 2 building - $60,000.
- Replacement fill and drift eliminators to Chiller Plant Cooling Towers - $70,000 (75% completed).
- Replace Luke Chiller to Science 2 lab 2.52 - $93,000.

South Bank Campus
Throughout December, a number of minor works, alterations and additions were requested, organised, completed or cancelled by various Schools and Elements.

The main minor works, alterations and additions included:

- The project to construct a staircase and artwork at QCA direct from the Southbank Parklands Arbour is still progressing slowly. However, due to the increased patronage to the Parklands over the school holidays, the project will not commence until Feb 2008.
- The Music walk project at QCGU is progressing slowly. Anti-skating devices were installed in various areas in November to discourage skateboard riders.

The QCA has requested costings for 2 new projects:

- Refurbishment of the Liveworm area in S03 Grey Street Studios, at approximately $70,000. However, the project has since been down-scaled to approximately $35,000.
- Refurbishment of level 2 S02 Webb Centre where current UA Offices will be relocated and a postgraduate gallery and Campus Shop created.

Fire Management
Due to rain, there has been no possibility of conducting a Hazard Reduction Burn behind the Nathan Colleges before the start of semester 1, 2008. This reduction burn will now be held over until July. Tree pruning and pruning of deadwood around the Ridge Carpark at Nathan campus was carried out during December, as was maintenance slashing of the fire break between University property and residential neighbours.

The University’s Fire Service contract has been let to Chubb.

Water Management
Brisbane Water meter reading discrepancies at Mt Gravatt campus are being investigated.
WEMPS submitted for the Logan campus were approved. WEMPS are pending for the Gold Coast campus. Mt Gravatt and South Bank campus WEMPs have had Addendas submitted and are awaiting approval. The Nathan campus WEMP is still under consideration by the Council.

Campus Life organised water pressure refits to residential taps and showers at the Nathan and Mt Gravatt campuses and these were completed over the Christmas/New Year period.

**Capital Works**

*Eskitis Institute for Cell and Molecular Therapies (N75), Nathan campus:*
Practical Completion has been reached, with a few outstanding defects to be rectified over the course of the next couple of weeks.

Some external works, such as landscaping, are delayed by the weather. At this stage, the project is still within budget with a number of variations yet to be finalised with the D&C Manager to enable the final project cost to be confirmed. Building Approval and QFRS certifications have been obtained, and the users are moving into the building.

*Glycomics Expansion (G26), Gold Coast campus:*
External façade works have been delayed due to wet weather. This has pushed the scheduled completion date back to mid May 2008.

The site was closed for approximately one week when a number of workers reported sick after being affected by noxious fumes from an unknown source. Investigations by GU, the D&C Manager and regulatory authorities have failed to establish the source of the fumes. It was agreed by all parties that the site should open again for building activities, and any reoccurrence of the problem should be immediately reported and specific air monitoring procedures be enacted.

*Smart Water Research Facility (G51), Gold Coast campus:*
The Design consultants are close to finalising the design of the building and fitout with a Total Project Sum offer expected from the D&C Manager by the end of February.
Refurbishment of the Information Services & Graham Jones Centre buildings (G10/G18), Gold Coast campus:

- Work is progressing well with the first stage of the four-stage project due for completion in early March. The expected completion date of all stages is the end of July this year.
- The QFRS have insisted on an upgrade of the fire services to full smoke detection rather than thermal alarms, even though the Building Surveyor does not believe this is essential under the BCA. OFM has elected to comply with the QFRS requirements as it will provide an enhanced fire protection regime for the building.

Mt Gravatt Tennis Centre & Sports Facilities ($3.58m):
The Total Project Sum submission is expected within the next couple of weeks. There has been a delay with the Clubhouse geotechnical survey, which has resulted in a delay in the structural documentation.

The budget for the project at this stage is tight and the TPS submission will determine the scope of the project that can be provided within the budget.

Minor Projects
Centre of Excellence for Policing & Security Level 3 Social Sciences (M10), Mt Gravatt campus ($0.69m)
Practical completion was reached on 16 January 2008. There are still works to be undertaken in the building foyer at that level, but these will be carried out in conjunction with the refurbishment of the foyer at Level 2.

Upgrade of Video Conferencing Facilities, all campuses
A prototype test of the video-conferencing between campuses will be held on Friday 8 February between Logan and South Bank campuses for the VC to assess. If all goes well, the remaining rooms on other campuses will be linked.

Mt Gravatt campus – Water Main
The installation of the new water meter has now been carried out, and the final completion tasks can now be undertaken. A new enclosure to the pump is currently being designed.

Mt Gravatt – Refurbishment of Pool Change Rooms
The refurbishment of the pool change rooms is progressing well following the interruption of the building industry shutdown over the Christmas/New Year period. The inclement weather has prevented the completion of the new waterproof membrane to the grandstand cover. However the base coat has been completed and is providing adequate water protection for the works being carried out beneath so far. The weather is also holding up the installation of two 45,000 litre in-ground rain water tanks. These tanks will collect stormwater from the Recreation Hall roof for use in toilet flushing and water make-up for the swimming pool when this facility is back on line.

Mt Gravatt – Refurbishment of Laundry Areas
The work to the Bundara College laundry is now complete, and the builder will now move over to Lowana College to undertake the refurbishment works there. It has been necessary to stage the works to ensure that laundry facilities are available to all residents at all times.

Gold Coast – Bridge Shelter Structure
A contract for a shelter on the northern approach path to the Smith Street pedestrian bridge has been let.
This shelter structure will incorporate a prototype for a new style of information sign. If this new sign element proves to be satisfactory, it is intended to use it on all campuses when replacement of existing signs is necessary.

Nathan – Research Centre Refurbishments (Phase 2)
The second phase of Research Centre refurbishments is now complete with the handing over of the refurbished laboratory in Science 1 (N25) to CFHR.

Nathan – Refurbishment of Physics Laboratory -1.03, Science 2 (N34)
Works are now substantially complete and the laboratory will be available for undergraduate teaching in first semester.
Because of the current industry-wide resources problems with respect to joinery, the final installation of new benching and other joinery units will be postponed until the mid-semester break.

Nathan – Replacement of Data Centre Chiller, Science 2 (N34)
The installation of the new chiller for the data centre in Science 2 (N34) in the roof-top plant room was undertaken over the past weekend. This was necessitated by the need for adequate space for the mobile crane at ground level to unload and hoist the chiller without risk to pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
Facility to help us adapt to global warming

Brendan O’Keefe

CLIMATE change has arrived not just in reality, with wilder storms and longer droughts, but as an election issue. So the timing of federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s announcement of a new $50 million national climate change adaptation research facility, to be hosted by Griffith University, was apt.

But the centre’s director stressed the facility was not an exercise in waving the white flag in the face of climate change.

“One of the important things to bear in mind is that a lot of people have avoided adaptation research because it was felt that it was conceding defeat,” director Jan McDonald told the HES.

“But there is such a long tail in climate change impact flowing from the situation we are already in that it is wise to undertake a dual strategy of strong mitigation and at the same time start planning for (inevitable effects).”

“The real mandate is to identify the critical adaptation needs where they are across the hard sciences and social sciences, like urban planning and law,” Professor McDonald said. “It will also put together the best teams of researchers across the country: the facility will be a facilitator.”

Its first phase would be to develop adaptation plans in such areas as human settlements, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, water, health, biodiversity and emergency services, and disaster management.

Mr Turnbull said up to $50 million would be provided to start the centre and fund it for five years.

“The decisions we make about infrastructure, health, water management, agriculture, biodiversity and housing will have lasting consequences, so it is crucial that our decision-making is (based) on the best available research and advice.”

Griffith University, the Queensland Government and the state Department of Emergency Services won the Australian Greenhouse Offices competitive bid through establishing a consortium with seven other universities: Macquarie University, Murdoch University, Queensland University of Technology, the University of Newcastle, University of Southern Queensland, James Cook University and the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Timely gesture: Malcolm Turnbull with Griffith VC Ian O’Connor
Gandhian approach to teaching

Guy Healy

AWARD-WINNING Griffith University psychology teacher Keithia Wilson says her success lies in trying to live up to Mahatma Gandhi’s challenge of “being the change you want to see”.

Associate Professor Wilson’s efforts have just won her the Prime Minister’s Award for Australian University Teacher of the Year. Professor Wilson, whose students range from first-year undergraduates to postgraduates and who also researches in her field, told the HES she was “thrilled and gobsmacked” by the accolade. “The bottom line is I am passionate and dedicated about my teaching, which is aimed at helping students become effective practitioners in the world,” she said.

“The wonderful thing about teaching is you have the opportunity to work with the next generation of practitioners.”

Her psychology students are generally aiming for careers as human services professionals, including in counselling, clinical psychology and human resources, or as organisational changers and welfare workers.

All the objective evidence points to Professor Wilson being an outstanding teacher. Griffith says her motivational approach to student success has resulted in her being voted lecturer of the year by her students for the past five years. She was also the first recipient of the individual teacher award in the Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching two years ago.

Professor Wilson works in a department that has a longstanding commitment to quality teaching. The Graduate Careers Council of Australia’s course experience questionnaire placed the Griffith psychology program as second in terms of overall satisfaction and generic skill development in 2003.

One of Professor Wilson’s students, Stacey Vervoort, who has just completed her fourth year honours in psychology, is enthusiastic enough to have cut short her holidays in order to be photographed with her teacher. “She’s such a great student,” Ms Vervoort said. “She goes above and beyond what’s required of a teacher; it’s innate in her. She’s constantly trying to help and do more for you as a student.”

“Keithia’s such an advocate for creating positive social change in everyone she meets; she always wants to do something positive for you.”

Professor Wilson said there were five elements in her approach to teaching: giving students project-based work; treating students as colleagues and negotiating learning contracts with them individually to create a learning community; interactive lectures; pastoral work with students; and nationally recognised tutor training.

She said she researched and evaluated her own teaching and this ensured it promoted “deep learning”.

The course design was intended to facilitate communication, teamwork and analysis, and to process change in graduates, she said. “All these attributes are fundamental to being a good practitioner. I love the students, and if they know you are fair dinkum about your passion for your work, they know you want to be there and they learn better.

“I work with the whole person; I am interested in looking at their values of compassion, social justice and empowerment to promote social change.”

Accentuate the positive: Keithia Wilson flanked by Stacey Vervoort, left, and Emily Hurren
Next generation’s underclass on its way

Strenuous efforts must be made to engage our youth in tertiary study, say Ian O’Connor and Gavin Moodie

A

s welcome as the present resources boom is, an unfortunate side effect is its diversion of young people from education and training.

Australia is developing a missed generation of young people who are without tertiary education and therefore are ill-equipped to handle the big changes in the economy and society that may be expected during their lifetimes. Skills shortages for the future are mounting up as Australia fails to educate more young people to fill the jobs soon to be vacated by the retiring baby boomers.

On-time applications for university places reported by the state tertiary admissions centres show a continuing fall in applications, of 17 per cent for admission in 2008 following a fall of 1 per cent in the previous year.

There has been a small fall of under 1 per cent in applications from school-leavers.

The biggest proportionate fall of 8.9 per cent has been in applications from non-school-leavers who are new to higher education. These are students who are transferring from TAFE or who are admitted on the basis of work experience or by mature-age entry.

Applications from students transferring from or upgrading previous higher education studies are down by 4.5 per cent, following a big fall of 14.6 per cent in the previous year.

Figures extracted from the 2006 census by Bob Birrell and Daniel Edwards from Monash University’s Centre for Population and Urban Research show that 47.7 per cent of 18 to 20-year-olds are not participating in any form of education. Only half of the young people not engaged in education are working full time. Most of the rest are working part time (22 per cent), unemployed (11 per cent) or not in the labour force (13.5 per cent).

These young people risk being the next generation’s underclass unless efforts are made to engage them in further education.

Australia needs to take three steps to increase the proportion of young people proceeding to vocational and higher education. Our political leaders and ministers of education need to encourage young people to enter higher education.

Experience in Britain and earlier experience in Australia shows that young people respond to leadership if they receive a credible, consistent and sustained message valuing further education and respecting the highly educated.

That encouragement needs to be supported by solid measures.

New places will need to be funded for the new students to enter. Birrell and Edwards’s figures show that while 41 per cent of young people in capital cities aren’t engaged in education, 61 per cent of young people outside capital cities aren’t attending higher education. Since TAFE institutes are much better dispersed throughout the regions than more expensive university campuses, some of the new places should be in two-year associate degrees in TAFE institutes as well as universities. Associate degrees are not only valuable qualifications in their own right but are also pathways to full university degrees.

Finally, the Australian government will have to address student income support, that long-neglected but crucial part of higher education policy.

Universities Australia’s student finances survey found that in 2006 only 35.2 per cent of full-time undergraduate students received income support from Youth Allowance or Austudy. This was a decrease of 17 per cent over 2000 levels.

In contrast, the British Government has introduced a new student finance package, starting in 2008. It expects one-third of students will be entitled to a full, non-repayable maintenance grant of £2835 ($6400) a year and two-thirds are expected to qualify for some level of non-repayable support.

The mean income from Youth Allowance and Austudy for full-time undergraduate students was $2160 in 2006. Youth Allowance and Austudy contributed 36.5 per cent less to students’ total income in 2006 than in 2000. Youth Allowance was introduced in 1998, tying income support for students to income support for the unemployed.

If the nexus is retained, the issue becomes one of improving income support for all on low incomes, which is potentially very expensive indeed.

Nonetheless, several changes should be made. The age of independence for the Youth Allowance should be reduced from its present unrealistic age of 25 to a more reasonable age such as 18.

The means test for eligibility for the Youth Allowance and Austudy is far too low and should be lifted.

The reduction in allowances for earning supplementary income should be relaxed. This generates effective marginal tax rates of 60 per cent to 85 per cent, far higher than the top marginal tax rate of 46.5 per cent for people with incomes of more than $150,000.

While some of these changes are straightforward, others would be more difficult or at least more expensive. Nonetheless, they should be pursued, for the consequences of not undertaking them are likely to be much more costly for the missed generation, employers and all Australians.

Ian O’Connor is vice-chancellor of Griffith University. Gavin Moodie is a higher education policy analyst at Griffith University who writes regularly for the HES.
Selective tolerance is not tolerance at all

Micheal Kirby

Freedom of religion does not have an easy relationship with revealed religions. It is difficult for many believers to tolerate the postulate of error: the possibility that another God or earthly messenger may exist, different from their own, or indeed that there may be no God.

Lina Joy was born in Malaysia into a Muslim family. At birth she was given the name Azalina binti Jailani. In 1998 she decided to convert to Christianity. She announced her intention to marry a Christian man. Under Malaysian law she would be unable to do so unless her new status as a non-Muslim was officially recognised.

Azalina applied to change the name on her identity card to a Christian name. She was successful. However, the regulations required that the identity cards of Muslims state their religion. Therefore, when Lina Joy received her new identity card, the word Islam still appeared. In effect it stood as a barrier to her marriage.

She then applied to have the word Islam removed from her identity card. Her application was rejected. She contested the policy, invoking the Malaysian constitution, which provides that: “Islam is the religion of the federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the federation.”

Upon the rejection of Lina Joy’s application by both the High Court and Court of Appeal, she appealed to the Federal Court, the country’s highest judicial body. She argued the requirement that she must obtain the approval of a third party to exercise her choice of religion was unconstitutional. By a majority of two to one the judges found against her. Inevitably, it was noticed that the two majority judges were Muslim. The dissenting judge was a non-Muslim.

In earlier times Christianity had a very similar approach to renouncing religion. It was most evident during the bloody wars, forced conversions and burnings of heretics that accompanied the Christian Reformation and Counter Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church of my youth in Australia did not permit Protestants to marry in its churches. This was only 50 years ago. We have overcome this sectarian divide.

It is important for those who support the universality of human rights within Islam to realise that the primary source of Islamic principles, the Koran, expressly states that “there is no compulsion in religion”. The foundation of human punishment for apostasy by Muslims is essentially found in an interpretation not of the Koran but of the hadith, or recorded sayings, of the prophet Muhammad.

In Australia the case of Lina Joy has come as a surprise. We are entitled to express our concern about it. We know the one universal principle that is shared by all the world’s great religions is the Golden Rule. To do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you.

One of the foremost critics of the Lina Joy decision was Dr Thio Li-ann of the National University of Singapore. She observed: “There is a certain agony about this case, which at its heart concerns a woman who wishes to make a change in religious profession and to marry and have a family.”

When I read this critique I applauded Dr Thio’s views. Imagine my disappointment to read the Hansard record of remarks by the same Dr Thio, a couple of weeks ago, as a member of the Parliament of Singapore, opposing proposals to repeal the criminal laws of Singapore directed against homosexual men.

Speaking from a standpoint as a Christian believer, Dr Thio rallied the opposition to reform. She denounced “the sexual libertine ethos of the wild, wild West”. She declared “you cannot make a human wrong a human right”. She warned against “slouching back to Sodom”. We have all heard all this type of language from religious zealots in Australia. Fortunately, recent evidence suggests that we are growing up.

My point is that it is not good enough for Christians, or people of the Christian tradition, to be selective about tolerance and acceptance. We cannot selectively denounce Islam for its views on apostasy but then do equally nasty and cruel things to others by invoking imperfect understandings of our own religious tradition.

Universal human rights are needed to permit each and every one of us to fulfill ourselves as our unique human natures, intelligence and moral sense demand. For Lina Joy and her fiance this means the freedom to worship God as they believe, and to marry and live, in their own country. For a homosexual man in Singapore, it means freedom from the fear of harassment and humiliation by outdated criminal laws.

Lina Joy should have our support because she is a human being standing up for the integrity of her basic rights. Those rights are not, as the majority judges in Malaysia said of her case, her “whims and fancies”. They are precious manifestations of deep-seated human feelings that express part of the very essence of what it is to be a human being.
National drive for students to learn on the job

Kerrie Sinclair

AUSTRALIA’S peak university body has entered into the debate on the nation’s skills shortage with a proposal for a national scheme to arm students sooner with practical work skills.

The skills shortage is a hot federal election issue for industry, with organisations such as the Australian Industry Group and Queensland Resources Council urging political action to expand the workforce to meet demand in Australia’s white-hot economy.

Some analysts see risks to the economy from wage-push inflation given some forecasts that overall demand for labour will continue to outstrip supply despite a boost from migration and other efforts to boost workforce participation.

Universities Australia, which represents about 38 universities, has issued a discussion paper suggesting a nationally co-ordinated internship scheme to lift graduates’ practical work experience so they can hit the ground running.

“Our students often work because of the lower alternative income support for students in Australia, not to enhance their skills for the future,” the discussion paper says.

“They are scraping a living, not enhancing a career. And they cannot obtain as much work as they wish.

Universities Australia said a national internship scheme could build on existing industry and university initiatives by providing for more students to undertake structured work-based learning in industry.

It could involve more income support for students, delivered in a way that complemented their studies.

Indicative costings of such a scheme showed a high return on investment, possibly a benefit-cost ratio of six-to-one. Universities Australia says.

The scheme could cost about $122.7 million annually, based on hall-park estimates including the $105 million cost of a 10 per cent wage subsidy to employers for interns, and $17.7 million for universities to run scheme-related co-ordinator roles.

“The professions have long forged close links between the education process and the workplace,” Universities Australia chief executive officer Glenn Withers says.

“But there is compelling evidence of an even wider unmet need for generally trained, flexible graduates who are also work ready.

“Progress has been impressive but much more can be done. “Meeting this need would enhance national productivity and help address growing skills shortages.”

Queensland Resources Council chief executive Michael Roche recently said the state’s $25 billion-a-year resources industry wanted more education and training policies to address the “severe” skills shortage.

Carol-Joy Patrick manages Brisbane-based Griffith University’s program in organising final-year students to work on commercial or research projects.

Mr Young says it is critical industry plays its part by providing placements so students can match theory and workplace practice.

She says university-based internship organisers have sometimes struggled to find industry placements but there is now greater awareness by industry of the value of internships.

As part of Griffith’s final-year student placement program involving industry and research groups, student Geoff Young designed and produced a prototype of a world-first weed detector for Gold Coast company TechniGro. The project won an Australian award and as a result Mr Young is in Amsterdam where the prototype competes next Thursday in an international engineering and technology competition.

Griffith next year launches a Bachelor of Real Estate and Property Development under which its graduates will be the only ones in Australia to hold a licence from the Real Estate Institute of Queensland.

What is it?

• National internship scheme total annual cost $122.7m
• $105m to cover 10% wage subsidy to industry for interns
• Scheme investment benefit-cost ratio seen as 6-to-1
SUCCESS story ... Griffith student Geoff Young, right, and his university supervisor Charles Hacker with a weed detector prototype Mr Young produced for TechniGro while on a student placement program. It earned him a place in an international competition in Amsterdam.
Griffith sets up college for top students

Alexander Symonds

Griffith University will next year launch its first "leadership college", aiming to attract and retain high-achieving students with strong leadership skills and add to their international and industry experience.

Inspired by similar colleges overseas and to follow "top student" programs in leadership, additional subject, industry monitoring and international experience.

University deputy vice-chancellor for Honours and postgraduate studies Dr Lydon said the college would increase the employability of the university's graduates.

"They will be exposed throughout the honours college across a lot of ideas and information that will come from outside university leadership programs that have been developed in conjunction with the executive education unit of the Griffith business school," he said.

The leadership program will take place over two years and will include a postgraduate diploma.

Dr Lydon said the college would take up to 100 students, and half will hold scholarships.

"The leadership program will be a reorientation of the honours college experience and that will prepare them extremely well for whatever comes after graduation, particularly if they are going to go further in the community," he said.

Students will take part in a leadership workshop that will be a vehicle for providing this cohort of high-achieving students with the opportunity to access some enrichment experiences," Professor Dewar said.

"We will also work with these students if they want to identify internships and study abroad activities tailored around their interests." The first intake will consist of about 100 students.

If Griffith offers another top student college, the university would be in the process of forming through its elective to see what is suitable to offer participants in the honours college.

"We see it as a vehicle for providing this cohort of high-achieving students with the opportunity to access some enrichment experiences," Professor Dewar said.

Unis hit world heights

Among the world's top 450 universities, 21 are Australian institutions, according to the Times Higher Education Supplement's annual survey. Of the top 10 universities, ANU maintained its 16th ranking, followed by Melbourne and Sydney, which slipped to 27th. Sydney University ranked 57th, up from 63rd, and advanced to 33rd. Monash dropped to 43rd and UNSW fell to 44th. Adelaide and the University of Queensland maintained their positions. Australia ranked 62nd and 64th respectively.

Greens funds for HECS

The Greens' education funding policy would give students a break on HECS, including education, including $1.5 billion to boost public universities, and $2.5 billion to abolish HECS fees. Fairfax spokeswoman Laila Warsi said the funding would help reduce class sizes, improve completion rates through increased staffing, student time and flexible campus buildings and amenities to be upgraded.

Power to the people

Students at Central Queensland University received business training to support students in a program run by the Power Engineering Alliance, comprised of state government-owned Powarlik Queensland, ENERGEX, Ergon Energy, and CS Energy. The businesses are hoping to strengthen the state's energy industry and work experience during vacations periods.

Charles Sturt link opens

A high capacity telecommunications link now running north south through a tunnel under Charles Sturt University's campuses in Albury-Wodonga, Wagga Wagga, Canberra, Beesaro, Orange and Dubbo, as well as an other public and private partners across NSW. University vice-chancellor Ian Gouler said high capacity telecommunications link would be especially important to telemedicine.

Rachel Lehan
He was born on the back of a horse but ended up riding to the peak of world science. After co-developing the world’s first anti-influenza drug, Professor Mark von Itzstein could have worked anywhere on the globe. Ignoring warnings he would ‘wither’ on the Gold Coast, the brilliant scientist headed to Griffith University’s Southport campus and quickly proved them wrong. With $35 million slapped in his hand von Itzstein was told to ‘build your own institute and they will come’. He did and they are. At Griffith’s Institute for Glycomics, world-class scientists are using carbohydrates to fight a swathe of diseases. Rebecca Ovenden talks to the institute’s four professors.

Von Itzstein was on a huge career roll but surprisingly he told Quinn he would ‘never say never’.

Soon after returning to Melbourne from the Canberra meeting, von Itzstein took a call from Griffith’s then Vice-Chancellor Roy Webb.

“He said ‘Mark, what would it take to get you back here?’ I said ‘let me think about that’,” recalls the 49-year-old. Queensland obviously wanted the world-class scientist badly because in 2000 Peter Beattie’s State Government and Griffith jointly handed him $13 million to establish what would later become the first stage of the university’s Institute for Glycomics.

“I was humbled. Peter Beattie and Roy Webb took a huge gamble there’s no doubt to pump so much money into a single individual,” enthuses von Itzstein, today executive director of the institute, the only one of its kind in Australia and only one of six in the world.

“At the time I didn’t know another scientist in the world who had been given the opportunity to build their own institute, who was given a field of dreams and told, ‘build it and they will come’.

“I could have gone anywhere but I chose the Gold Coast and most people thought I was mad, particularly the southerners.

“They said ‘Mark, you are going to wither on the Gold Coast, Mark, there is no biotech infrastructure, Mark, there is nothing there that will allow you to continue at the highest international level, why are you going to the Gold Coast?’.”

But in the mid to late 1980s drug discovery experts were also warning von Itzstein he was wasting his time focusing his research on carbohydrates.

“Most thought the language of carbohydrates far too complex, too difficult, it was put in the too-hard basket and certainly in 1986, right through to ’87, ’88, ’89 most people said ‘Mark you’re mad, you’ll never get anything out of it’.

But he persisted and success followed, just as he turned a deaf ear to the nay saying Melburnians because he knew the Coast had something special to offer.

Von Itzstein shifted here in 2000, developed the institute’s first stage and in another phenomenal vote of confidence in the brilliant young professor, Griffith and Beattie slapped another $22 million in his palm to develop the second stage.

The new glycomics precinct, set for completion in May, will see the institute’s critical mass of scientists almost treble from 59 to 150 and will help the scientist achieve his dream of transforming the Coast into a power to rival the world’s leading biotech regions.

The earthiness of von Itzstein’s upbringing on the land seems a world away from the edginess of international science, but the discipline he developed from the age of five working on his family’s 80ha horse, cattle and crop farm at Archerfield would serve him well.

Von Itzstein had many different sides: the classic microscopist and chemistry set-loving nerd with the inquisitive mind, the music-loving piano and trumpet player, the accomplished horseman who spent a large chunk of his life in Australia and the US showing horses.

“I was effectively born on the back of a horse,” says the former Queensland volleyball representative and keen triathlete, whose love of animals steered him towards veterinary medicine.

Rather than complete senior at Brisbane’s St Laurence’s College, he began studying animal husbandry at the then Queensland Agricultural College at Gatton (now UQ Gatton) in 1974 at the age of 15.

“That was my first passion,” he says.

“But then I really got bitten by the science bug because obviously in those courses you’re not just learning about how to do minor surgery on animals, you’re also learning fundamental science and I became intrigued with genetics and chemistry.”

After completing his pre-vet studies at Gatton he switched focus and enrolled in a Bachelor of Science degree at the then new Griffith University in Brisbane in 1977.

“That’s when I fell in love with...
chemistry,” says von Itzstein, who shifted to Germany in 1984 after completing his PhD in organic chemistry.

“Obviously having German heritage I was keen to visit family and I moved to Marburg, a city north of Frankfurt.

“Originally our family came from an area known as the Rhineland and the city of Mainz. In the 1800s my great, great uncle Johann Adam von Itzstein was a leader of the German Liberal Movement in the first freely elected German National Assembly (Parliament). The family is well known in terms of German history and what they did to establish a free and liberal Germany.

“In terms of political life my family was engaged in the period immediately preceding Otto von Bismarck (Germany’s first Chancellor).”

Von Itzstein would later return to Monash University’s Victorian College of Pharmacy in 1986, with his team later discovering Relenza and having their outcomes published in the top international journal Nature in 1993.

Scientists seeking a cure for influenza long believed that the carbohydrate-decorated protein which gave the virus entry to the cell was the key to fighting the disease. Lock the virus out of the cell and you’d stop it in its tracks.

But rather than locking it outside the cell, von Itzstein’s group focused on locking the virus plugging it inside the cell, giving the immune system time to mount a defence.

They designed, made and tested the world’s first ‘plug drug’ and it stopped the infection progressing.

“That fundamental principle could then be applied to any disease so long as carboxydrates were essential in the progression of the disease and that’s what we’re doing, we’re applying that to a whole range of infectious diseases and cancers,” he says.

“A lot of cancers also use these decorations; these carbohydrates on their surface, but instead use them to protect themselves from the immune system.

“In men with testicular cancer, when cancer cells break off and spread around the body, they target the lungs as a secondary site.

“Such cancers do that by masking themselves with carbohydrates so when they move through the blood stream, the immune system says ‘oh, that looks like a normal, healthy cell’ and won’t remove it and then it lodges in the lung.

“So you can imagine if we can stop those metastatic cells as they’re known, masking themselves with carbohydrates... then hopefully these cells will be recognised by the immune system and cleared.”

Post-Relenza, von Itzstein was applying this science to a range of diseases when Professor Webb made the phone call.

“My colleagues were absolutely right. At that time, scientific infrastructure was virtually non-existent on the Gold Coast but you have to start somewhere and the example I portrayed to them was the San Diego-La Jolla region in the US,” he says.

“There were two very fine medical institutes in the area – Scripps and the Salk Institute – as well as the University of California, San Diego, but some 25 years ago there was no biotech industry whatsoever.

“But the advantage of San Diego and La Jolla is its beautiful coastline and the desert so the lifestyle is fantastic. You can do high-quality science and enjoy the whole environment as well.

“The Gold Coast has exactly the same potential but no biotech industry. But you have to establish a scientific critical mass first and that’s exactly what they did with Scripps and Salk and the University and then they brought the industry in and drove it.

“It’s now in the top three biotech areas in the world and it only took them 10 years to do that, okay, it might take us 15, but it will happen.”
In what is a huge coup, the internationally renowned and widely published scientist, Professor Tony Moran, has just shifted to the Coast from Ireland to become the institute's deputy director.

While many microbiologists focus on the disease process, Moran is focusing mainly on the body's immune response.

Recognised as one of the world's leading campylobacter and helicobacter (which causes ulcers and cancer) researchers, much of Moran's research has focused on campylobacter infections triggering Guillain Barre Syndrome (GBS, as explained by Prof Korolik overleaf).

"There are a whole range of auto-immune diseases based on genetic predispositions but this is quite interesting because this is now an infection triggering the immune system," says Moran.

"We decided to use the tools we have developed here in relation to multiple sclerosis (MS, an auto-immune condition affecting the central nervous system).

"What we've been looking at is a particular micro-organism known as mycoplasma (a lung infection).

"Some of our colleagues in Germany had looked at the surface of this organism and found very unusual lipids or fatty acid molecules.

"We have also been working with a neurologist in North Carolina who's spent many years studying MS and has discovered various glycolipids in MS patients which are quite different to the ones in healthy patients.

"There is a very great similarity between the mycoplasma lipids and these unusual lipids that you find in MS patients.

"For the past two-and-a-half years we've been looking at how these glycolipids activate the immune system. It's a growing area and is feeding into this idea relating to mycoplasma and MS."

In terms of infection being a potential MS trigger, Professor Moran points to the example of the Faroe Islands, part of Denmark, and situated halfway between Iceland and Norway.

The islands' population had been insular until the Allies moved in following Nazi Germany's invasion of Denmark during WWII.

"So then you have stationed there a garrison of US and Allied troops during the 1940s onwards. Interestingly, up until 1940 in that population there was never any MS. After the garrison was stationed there, there has subsequently been MS," he says.

"This is a good indication that infection of some kind, something brought in, which was maybe not prevalent there before has now become established, so again it's another line of reason that we use that maybe, in MS, there is an infectious trigger."

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Professor Tony Moran

Microbiologist Tony Moran is focusing on the body's immune response
Professor Ifor Beacham

The ‘Mud Bug’. It sounds kind of cute, but it can kill a human in 24 hours and is considered by the US government as a high-risk potential biological weapon.

The bug’s scientific name is Burkholderia pseudomallei and the disease it causes – melioidosis – can infect almost every organ in the body.

“It’s basically been called ‘a disease for all organs’ but it’s predominant in the spleen, liver and lung,” says Professor Ifor Beacham who is on a mission to defeat the killer bug.

“It’s acquired from the soil during the rainy season, and is probably inhaled (hence its bio-weapon potential) when there are tropical downpours.”

Affecting 50 to 100 people a year across northern Queensland and the Northern Territory, the bug can also cause a chronic infection making victims sick for months or even years.

“It can also lie latent, hidden, in the human so you’re okay, walking around, and then years and years later you will get melioidosis. The all-time record is 26 years later.

“It’s a problem relevant in the Australian context and is over-represented in the Aboriginal population.”

Professor Beacham’s research into Burkholderia pseudomallei and melioidosis has partly focused on where the bug actually adheres in its host.

“To successfully colonise the host, it has to adhere, stick to an epithelial surface . . . and replicate otherwise it will just be washed out,’ he says.

“We wanted to understand whether or not . . . it adhered to the surface layer, for example, of the lung, since it’s inhaled so . . . we genetically engineered the bacteria so it was luminescent (so by following the light source it could be traced).

“We think we’ve now found that it’s adhering in the nasal cavity.

“We think the surface layers of the nasal cavity might have sugars sticking out of the cells, if you like, which might act as a receptor for the bacteria to adhere.”

Professor Beacham is also working on developing an extremely quick serological test to identify the bacteria because the current test (the bacteria is grown in a Petri dish from a blood or urine sample) takes 24 to 48 hours ‘by which time you could be dead’.
Professor Victoria Korolik

Associate Professor Victoria Korolik is at the international cutting edge of carbohydrate science, but when she arrived in Australia as a Russian refugee almost three decades ago, the only English words she knew were 'mother', 'father', 'sister', 'brother' and 'bread'.

"We had 'English' at school but it was literally the proceedings of the last Communist Party meeting translated into English and you had to translate it back into Russian with the aid of a dictionary, so trust me, whatever it was, English it wasn't," smiles Korolik, who was born in the city of Kharkov in the former Soviet Union (now Ukraine).

"I'm an Eastern European Jew and left Russia in 1978 when the US actually purchased 30,000 Jews per year for two years in exchange for wheat because the Soviet Union had a really poor harvest, so I'm one of those really rare people who knows what they are worth in bushels of wheat."

During the 1970s, many Jews sought approval to join relatives in Israel under the then Israel Reunion Program, but could wait decades before getting the green light.

"We were just really lucky to have applied at the time the Americans had bought the 30,000 people, so in two months suddenly we had a permit to leave," recalls Korolik, then a 17-year-old school leaver.

Korolik, a stoic woman whose deep brown eyes seem almost lit up by the fiery streaks of red and orange in her hair, calmly tells of their frantic departure when crowds of immigrants loaded down with luggage and screaming children were given just five minutes to board their freedom-bound train.

"It was an overnight trip and we stood and watched the sun rise over the Alps as we crossed the boarder into Vienna," she says.

"In Vienna we were taken to a hotel which at one stage was shot at by Arabs, so everyone had to lie on the floor. We had three weeks there getting temporary documents sorted because when you left the Soviet Union you left as a traitor and you were stripped of citizenship. So for some time, we were citizens of the world.

"After Vienna we went to a type of Woomera Camp, except it was a little bit nicer. It was on the coast of Italy in a little town called Ostia. It took six months to be accepted as a refugee (in Australia)."

The dream of a good education for their children had been the driving force behind her parents' decision to leave Russia.

"There was an unwritten quota of the number of Jewish students in any university. It was about 0.3 per cent on average and zero per cent in certain universities, so the chances of me being admitted to any university, whatever my grades were, were nil to nothing."

Melbourne's Monash University opened the doors to a wonderful new world for the new refugee, who recalls going through orientation week and feeling strange because despite placards saying 'Muslim Society', 'Jewish Society', 'Buddhist Society', 'Christian Society', nobody was 'throwing stones'.

"I loved the openness, the fact I didn't have to hide who I was, that people were curious, not angry. People really wanted to know about you as a person, not about your background," says Korolik, who focused on microbiology and genetics at Monash.

But back then, lecturers didn't hand out convenient notes or summaries; they just wrote on the board or overhead transparencies, so 'whatever you caught was yours'.

Korolik's English was virtually non-existent and she laughs as she recalls her very first biology lecture delivered by a kilt and tartan sock-wearing Scottish professor whose accent was so strong that even English-speaking students' brows were knotted.

"I couldn't understand a word. The second lecture was physics and that was given by Professor Wong!"

It is a mark of Korolik's brilliance that she has risen to become an associate professor at the institute and is at the forefront of research into combating one of the most common causes of food-borne disease in the developed world: campylobacter.

Humans contract it mainly by eating undercooked poultry, with symptoms ranging from diarrhoea and vomiting for up to 24 to 48 hours to 'true dysentery' with high fevers, chills and crippling headaches that sometimes required a two-week hospital stay with intravenous fluids and antibiotics.

"Commoner than malaria, campylobacter affects 500-550 million people annually worldwide, with the 200,000 cases noted up in Australia each year considered an under estimate by the World Health Organisation."

"But the worst part about it is that a certain proportion of the population will then develop what's called a post-infection sequela, an auto-immune problem that causes partial or complete paralysis," explains Korolik.

"These neuro-paralytic syndromes are called Guillain-Barre Syndrome and Miller Fisher Syndrome and some people never recover from it completely."

"They are caused by the fact that the campylobacter bacteria can produce a carbohydrate-based molecule which is so similar to those we make on our own nerve cells that antibodies against the bacteria attack your own nerves and basically take out all the myelin sheath around the nerve or attack an actual axon (the signal-bearing part of the nerve)."

"Ours would be the main molecular biology campylobacter lab in the country and one of the things we are focused on is chemotaxis. Bacteria can sense their environment, they can actually taste the sugars if you like and can turn themselves around and go where the greatest concentration is. That's how they find their target cells."

After being ingested, the campylobacter bacteria must actually adhere to cells; otherwise they will just be secreted.

"They actually get to the cells on the gut's surface by sensory perception, by sniffing or tasting their environment..."
something here, we need to go in that direction', so the cell can turn around and go in that direction. That’s how they find their cells.

“We have an idea that if you can saturate all those receptors, it will confuse the sensory apparatus and the cell won’t know where it’s going.

“And if it doesn’t know where it’s going, it will just be secreted rather than attach and cause disease.”

In Australia, the economic burden caused by campylobacter through lost productivity, hospitalisation and its potential lifelong side effects is estimated at up to $2 billion a year.

While Europe, for example, has recognised the severity of the problem and has specialised granting bodies specifically for salmonella and campylobacter research, funding in Australia is scarce.

“This bacteria creates a huge economic burden in this country but no one wants to know about it because it’s not sexy, it’s not pleasant and (usually) it’s not lethal.”

**Glycomics at a glance**

The term glycomics is derived from the chemical prefix for sweetness or a sugar, ‘glyco-’, and was formed to follow the naming convention established by genomics (dealing with genes) and proteomics (dealing with proteins).

Glycomics focuses on the structure and function of carbohydrates (sugars) in biological systems. All cells in nature are covered with a dense array of carbohydrate chains – glycans, which are critical for the survival and healthy function of a cell and play a role in the life cycle of abnormal or diseased cells.

Griffith University’s Institute for Glycomics aims to discover the role carbohydrates play in diseases so new drugs and vaccines can be developed.

Glycomics is a rapidly emerging science, widely tipped as one of the most promising drug technologies of the 21st century, particularly for difficult-to-treat illnesses caused by viruses and multi-resistant bacteria.

As science’s ‘next big thing’, the potential of glycomics research is expected to eclipse even that of the human genome project. Diseases being studied include cancer, cholera, malaria, multiple sclerosis, food poisoning, ‘croup’, pandemic influenza, tuberculosis, diabetes and arthritis.