

ISSUE 01 MAY 2008

PANDEMIC Avian Flu — not if but when

CREATIVE CONTROL How to capture the energy of the innovation generation

ARRIVALS + DEPARTURES International students make a lasting contribution

Higher Education... Why Bother?

Growing numbers of students are deferring higher education to enter the job market.



VC

Griffith University
Vice Chancellor and President

PROFESSOR IAN O'CONNOR



Higher Education... Why Bother?

Universities play a vital role in solving the most difficult problems the world will ever face — often harnessing intensely

local experiences and knowledge alongside international and multidisciplinary research to be the catalyst for true innovation. They prepare future leaders equipped to manage tomorrow's global issues. They prepare all manner of practitioners with the skills necessary to meet our economy's needs. They enable social inclusion, where people from all walks of life have the opportunity to contribute to important cultural and political discussion.

Australia's new Education Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, has announced a review of higher education to inject diversity, choice and the highest quality into the sector. She sees education not just in terms of its obvious contribution to the economy, but its intrinsic value — "the capacity education builds in all of us for critical thinking and reflection and the capability to better understand our place in the world".

Our new Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, has also recently raised the spectre of Australia's skills shortage in science and research as holding back our future prosperity. We have an aging tenured academic workforce, combined with an overall decline in students starting higher research degrees — these are the very people who drive our quest for knowledge. These are the very people who need to engage with business and industry to secure future prosperity.

Minister Carr sees "mission based compacts" as aligning the government's expectations for education, research, research training, community outreach and innovation with each university's diverse strengths. In effect, each university will respond to the social and economic needs of the community it lives within and serves.

With all this in mind, *Red* opens a window on the world of research and learning underway at Griffith University. The impact of this reverberates far beyond our University.

This edition leads with an examination of the critical issue of declining demand for higher education at a time of skills-shortages in many industries. This has long term economic and social consequences, entrenching the social exclusion of some members of a generation.

I hope you enjoy *Red's* coverage of issues impacting on our world, and the opportunities for higher education to help build a prosperous and equitable society.



ISSUE 01 MAY 2008

Snapshots	1
Where Have All The Students Gone?	4
Arrivals + Departures	10
First Person	14
Game On	16
Viewfinder: Thies Art Prize	20
Creative Control	24
Sorry + Symbolism + The Sacred	28
The Next Flu Pandemic	32
Hallelujah	36
Letter from London	38
My View	40

The Griffith University Art Collection

Griffith Artworks (GAW) is a small organisation that provides cultural asset management, curatorial services and research publication services to Queensland College of Art and Griffith University on five campus areas between the Gold Coast and Brisbane. GAW is also the management authority for more than 3500 objects in the Griffith University Art Collection and administers the On-Campus Exhibition Program (OCEP) that displays the collection in thematic and curated groups on more than 120 approved sites between the Gold Coast and South Bank, Brisbane. Almost 20 per cent of the collection is on display at any given time, one of the highest rates of exposure for any public collection of art in Australia. In the past 12 months some very significant gifts have been made to the collection, including a suite of paintings and works on paper by contemporary Australian painter, Davida Allen, a graduate of QCA. A suite of her famous 'Sam Neill' series from 1986 will feature throughout 2008-10 in the Griffith Film School.



BACK COVER

Davida ALLEN
Portrait of Sam Neill
1986 oil on canvas 84x100cm.

Gift of Davida Allen under the Cultural Gifts Program 2007-8



Red is published by the Office of External Relations, Griffith University Nathan Campus, 170 Kessels Road, Nathan, Qld, 4111 Australia.

DIRECTOR: HILARIE DUNN MANAGING EDITOR: MAUREEN FRAME
EDITOR: KERRY LITTLE PHOTO EDITOR: CHRIS STACEY
COVER PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS STACEY DESIGN: MOODY DESIGN

Editorial inquiries to kerrylittle@chillcommunications.com.au

CRICOS No: 00233E ISSN 1835-7830



Red is printed on paper made from elemental chlorine-free pulp derived from sustainable forests. It is manufactured by an ISO 14001 certified mill and has been produced using waterless printing. This environmentally friendly process saves water and reduces toxins released into the air and entering our waterways.

Snapshots



Hair's-breadth to a whisker

Never tell a quantum physicist that near enough is good enough. Australian researchers have invented a technique that, for the first time, measures lengths as precisely as the laws of physics allow. In a recent paper published in *Nature* the Griffith University-led team used individual photons — single light particles — to measure length differences less than one ten thousandth the width of a human hair. Project leader Professor Howard Wiseman said there were fundamental reasons scientists continued the quest for ever-greater precision. "Measurement underpins all science. Through history we've seen that advances in precision measurement lead to unexpected scientific discoveries, which in turn lead to new technologies and applications."

Insect alert

Griffith University scientists are studying insects and plants in the depths of Lamington National Park to test the theory that rainforest species can act as climate change warning agents, much like "canaries in the coal mine" once alerted miners to the presence of methane gas. The last of the field surveys, which began in October 2006, was completed recently yielding valuable data on species distribution and change. The study will help to predict and measure early climate change impacts. Dubbed IBISCA (Investigating the Biodiversity of Soil and Canopy Arthropods), the Griffith study is the project's Australian arm, which also has sites in Panama and Vanuatu.



Animal ethics for schools

A report on humane education has recommended animal ethics be included in primary and secondary school curricula. Dr Gail Tulloch from Griffith University's Centre of Public Culture and Ideas said humane education aimed to create a more compassionate and responsible society by stimulating people's moral development. "Humane education is a way of introducing young people to the potential of animals' capabilities and their ability to experience emotions," she said. The report recommended developing guidelines for teachers and broadening the application of compassion to include all animals — research, farm and feral animals and fish — not just native wildlife and companion animals.

Shark's gasp helps humans

Fish species as diverse as coral reef-dwelling sharks and catfish from the Amazon River are providing clues to protecting vital organs such as the heart and brain during low-oxygen conditions. Associate Professor Gillian Renshaw, from Griffith University's Heart Foundation Research Centre, has shown these species can reprogram their metabolism to cope with variations in their natural environment. Their rapid but reversible onset of energy-conserving ventilatory and metabolic depression could be useful to humans in extreme environments such as high altitude or in clinical situations such as birth trauma, heart attack or stroke.



Below: Lorraine Mazarolle

Luxury loses its lustre

Luxury brands are failing the corporate social responsibility test. A report, co-authored by Griffith Business School Associate Professor Jem Bendell, and published by environmental organisation World Wildlife Fund, ranked the 10 largest luxury brands on their social and environmental performance. The report, *Deeper Luxury — quality and style when the world matters*, was based on the world's first systematic analysis of luxury brands' social and environmental responsibilities, performance and opportunities. Signs of this swing have begun — mass entertainment media have turned to social challenges without turning off audiences, with blockbuster films like *Blood Diamond* which examines the relationship between precious stones and conflict. Associate Professor Bendell said in future the highest quality product or service would be one which generates the most benefit to all involved in its production and trade, and consumers' knowledge of that benefit would be central to their elite experience, and the prestige ascribed to a brand.

www.deeperluxury.com



Guns less likely for suicide

A shift in the public's perceptions about firearms has reduced the number of shooting suicides over the last couple of decades. Young men in particular are now less likely to use a gun and now more likely to hang themselves. Director of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention Professor Diego De Leo said tighter gun laws had reduced access to firearms which may help protect more impulsive young people. Mass shootings, the association of guns with criminal acts, and a more negative attitude to firearms generally, had influenced the use of guns as a means to suicide.



Security world first

The world's first dedicated police and security research centre, the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security, is headquartered at Griffith University in partnership with the Australian National University, the University of Queensland, Charles Sturt University, the Queensland Government, Victoria Police and the Australian Federal Police. The Centre, headed by Professor Lorraine Mazarolle, brings international focus to the study of policing and national security to Australia and will enhance Australia's security role in the Asia-Pacific region and globally. Griffith Vice Chancellor Professor Ian O'Connor said the centre's world-class scholars would expand Australia's understanding of trans-national threats and help build new responses to the security challenges of the 21st century: "The \$32 billion per year national cost of crime and the pervasive nature of terrorism in the post 9/11 environment creates a real and urgent need for high-quality research of scale, focus and depth not previously undertaken in Australia."

www.griffith.edu.au/arts-languages-criminology/centre-excellence-policing-security

The 'ex' factor

There's a new "ex" on the scene — potentially more damaging and costly than an ex-spouse — the ex-franchisee. Recent changes to the Franchising Code of Conduct give ex-franchisees more scope to influence the future success of a franchise brand. In partnership with Franchising Advisory Council the Griffith Business School is delivering seminars on *The Ex Factor — How to stop ex-franchisees destroying your system* in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

www.griffith.edu.au/business/franchising

Rich-poor divide

A new report from Griffith University's Urban Research Program has named hot spots in Australia's escalating rich-poor divide and revealed those suburbs left behind by the economic boom. The study ranks hundreds of suburbs across all state capitals according to a unique General Deprivation Index, or GDI. This new index provides far deeper insight than income statistics alone, as researchers overlay many key indicators of disadvantage to reach a numerical rating. Sydney lays claim to the greatest divide; both Australia's most advantaged suburb, Milson's Point, and most deprived, Claymore, are located in the harbour city.

www.griffith.edu.au/centre/urp



Kangaroo cancer therapy

Kangaroo bacteria is the latest weapon in the war on cancer. Dr Ming Wei is setting up a state-of-the-art research lab at Griffith's Institute for Health and Medical Research to develop cancer treatment that uses bacteria from kangaroos to attack tumours. Dr Wei, winner of a Queensland Government Fellowship, will lead a team of scientists to genetically modify a common bacterium from kangaroos to develop a product that is expected to be effective in combating up to 90 per cent of cancers. The bacterium will be injected into tumours, releasing special enzymes which liquefy the cancer mass, shrinking it, and stimulating the body's natural immune forces.

Places for art

How Australians engage with the arts is the focus of a new Griffith University project. *Places for art: Redefining the dynamics of performance and location in Australia* will enhance the understanding of the connection between places and art in the 21st century. Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre director Professor Huib Schippers believes new sites of artistic creation and consumption are developing as cultural experiences moving from traditional artistic venues to less conventional spaces. "In cities, the city centre has conventionally housed large, traditional artistic venues designed for 'high' art such as museums, galleries, theatres and concert halls," he said. "But the rise of suburban centres and their distance to cities creates new realities with more emphasis on informal cultural venues." The three-year Australian Research Council project is a collaboration with the University, the Queensland Arts Council and the Australia Council for the Arts.

Performance: 3 Ps

Business leaders need to contribute to the creation of sustainable and inclusive markets, with people and planet now important performance indicators along with profit. As the first Australian university to sign the United Nations Global Compact *Principles of Responsible Management Education* (UNPRME), the Griffith Business School has incorporated universal values into their degrees and research, showing leadership and a commitment to the advancement of corporate social responsibility. The principles also involve interacting with businesses to explore solutions for their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities, and encouraging communication among educators, business, government and consumers on global social responsibility and sustainability issues.

www.unprme.org



Left: Dr Cartwright inspects his storm bunker on the Gold Coast's Main Beach.

Below: Professor Ross Homel



Recognition for Homel

Professor Ross Homel was made an Officer in the General Division of the *Order of Australia* (AO) in the 2008 Australia Day Awards. Professor Homel was recognised for service to education in the field of criminology, through research into the causes of crime, early intervention and prevention methods. He is Foundation Professor of Griffith's Criminology and Criminal Justice program and director of the university's Strategic Research Program in the social and behavioural sciences. Professor Homel's latest book *Raising the Bar* (2008) — (with Canadian colleague Kate Graham) draws on the best international evidence on the causes and prevention of bar violence, and makes particular reference to the intervention work he and colleagues conducted in Queensland nightclubs in the 1990s.

Popular music and the ageing fan

How does a long-term love of a particular music style influence people as they get older? Professor Andy Bennett from Griffith University's Centre of Public Culture and Ideas examines this question in his research on popular music and ageing fans. He looks at how music has influenced lifestyles in relation to issues such as body image, employment, family relations and political or spiritual outlook. If someone was a punk in the 1970s for example, how is that reflected in their current lifestyle? Professor Bennett's research suggests ageing fans' identities — as hippies, punks and rockers formed as youths — have continued to develop but are now expressed in different ways.



Storm chasers chart climate change

A Griffith University research team spent Queensland's recent cyclonic storm season bunkered beneath the Gold Coast's iconic The Spit, Main Beach. The subterranean concrete bunker, connected to a network of undersea measuring devices, is the nerve centre of a project examining the impact of climate-change-driven storm surges on Australia's beachfronts. Project leader Dr Nick Cartwright said urgent research was needed to respond to predictions of more frequent and intense storms. "Data exists on the interaction between wind and ocean offshore, but little is known about this in the surf zone — the zone closest to us. Coastal flooding is caused not only by rain, but by storm surge inundation and if this coincides with an astronomical high tide, it's very dangerous." This occurred in 1918 when a cyclone hit Mackay generating a 3.7-metre surge that flooded the town killing 19 people. "If we know the likely impact of, for example, a storm with 200kmh winds on a certain date we can better plan the location and height of homes, levee banks and areas that must be evacuated," Dr Cartwright said.



WHERE

HAVE

ALL THE



STUDENTS

GONE?

A future skills crisis and current high employment are confronting state and federal governments as young Australians turn away from higher education.

GEOFF MASLEN REPORTS

PHOTOGRAPHY **CHRIS STACEY**



Australia's booming jobs market appears to have convinced growing numbers of its young citizens to forgo a university education and take up high-paid work in industry.

The lure of a fat pay packet compared with the cost of sitting in lecture theatres with the HECS debt increasing by the day is clearly having a profound impact on school-leaver attitudes. Although science and engineering graduates are being offered \$100,000-a-year packages, this is in contrast to the meagre \$20,000 that a postgraduate on a research scholarship might earn.

"A significant proportion of a missed generation of young people does not have tertiary education and therefore is ill-equipped to handle the big changes in the economy and society that may be expected over their lifetimes," is how Griffith University Vice Chancellor Professor Ian O'Connor puts it.

Professor O'Connor says Australia is creating a skills shortage for the future by failing to educate more young people to fill the jobs soon to be vacated by the retiring baby boomers. "Once the minerals boom winds back, we will end up with a whole group of people excluded from higher education and their opportunity to participate in society will be significantly reduced."

In the banking and finance sector, opportunities for IT graduates at \$100,000–\$200,000 a year continue to grow. Likewise, demand for business analysts with banking product knowledge or people with niche skills in equity trading are experiencing annual salary increases upward of 15 per cent.

But this is happening at a time when enrolments in faculties of IT across Australia have experienced the biggest falls of any field of study. Between 2001 and 2006, IT departments suffered a collapse in student numbers of up to 50 per cent as the subject lost its popularity among school-leavers.

High unemployment in the sector back then meant almost one in three new graduates were still looking for work four months after leav-

ing university. That, coupled with increased HECS fees and changing attitudes to careers in computer science, profoundly affected applications for IT courses.

But it is not just IT. Despite the skills crisis generating alarm in government and business circles, applications for many university courses were down again this year, in some states by 3 per cent or more. Equally troubling is the fact that enrolments by young Australians starting university have barely increased over the past five years.

Unpublished data compiled by the federal Education Department show a staggering increase in international fee-paying students enrolling in Australian universities. From 2001 to 2006, their numbers rocketed upwards by 60 per cent to set a new record of more than 250,000. In the same five years, domestic enrolments rose 7 per cent — to 733,000.

The really worrying trend, however, is revealed in the number of new students beginning at university. In the five years to 2006, enrolments of commencing international fee-payers jumped 25 per cent whereas local student numbers crept up by a mere 1.2 per cent — and even fell between 2004 and 2005.

Apart from IT, which endured a startling 48 per cent fall in Australian enrolments, agriculture was down 22 per cent, food and hospitality 16 per cent, engineering 2 per cent and management and commerce, by far the most popular of all fields of study, dropped by 1.5 per cent.

Worse still for the universities themselves and other research organisations is the decline in young Australians undertaking higher degrees by research. Instead of increasing, the number of local students who began a research postgraduate degree fell by more than 2 per cent to fewer than 8800 in 2006. Yet these are the scholars universities rely on to fill staff vacancies as an increasing proportion of their academics reach retiring age, just as the research institutes need them to meet their demands.

Likewise, Australian employers are confronting a huge gap between the output of local university graduates and the skill demands

“If we are going to compete with other nations we simply have to get more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete 12 years of schooling and go on to further education and training.”

IAN O’CONNOR

flowing from the long economic boom. News headlines imply the skills shortages are restricted to the trades and medical and allied health areas. Not so — significant shortfalls also exist in business for qualified people such as accountants.

A review undertaken by the federal Education Department last year into the impact of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)* attracted more than 100 submissions. One from the council representing deans of business schools said the current resources boom has disguised a growing shortage of business graduates.

“However, many business schools are reluctant to bid for additional places because under the current funding arrangements, the revenue from additional undergraduate students would often fall short of the cost of educating them,” the submission stated. “Moreover, business students face the disincentive of very high HECS charges. With modest graduate salaries, the current system works against solving the skills shortage.”

The Business Council of Australia says the shortfall is a significant constraint on companies expanding their existing markets and growing new ones. The BCA’s director of policy Patrick Coleman says Australia’s resources sector has been particularly affected and also the finance services areas where demand for skilled people is high.

“It is not possible to quantify the costs of not having enough skilled people but they are significant and an important part of the restrictions on business growth,” Mr Coleman says.

“A contributing problem is infrastructure and there is a strong relationship between the lack of infrastructure and the skills shortages.”

From the moment the former Coalition government took office in 1996, it capped the number of places for Australian students it was prepared to subsidise. Almost all of the much touted ‘new’ Commonwealth places were simply replacing marginally funded places. The inevitable result? Demand for graduates now far outstrips the supply.

Universities are for every Australian

GILLARD

“We don’t see our universities as places for an elite but as places where every Australian can aspire to excellence in whatever field they choose,” Australia’s new federal Education Minister Julia Gillard declared last month. “We see them as the engine rooms of innovation and economic and social progress; as places to be respected and nurtured.”

In a stirring address to a higher education conference in Sydney, Gillard offered the nation’s weary academics hope for a new approach to higher education. She condemned what she said were the wasted years of the Howard decade and promised a new era of freedom from “a seemingly random blend of neglect with occasional bursts of ideologically-driven interference”.

Gillard said Labor’s goal was to “inject” diversity, choice and the highest quality into the higher education system to make it globally competitive and contribute to boosting economic productivity. Announcing a review of the entire sector, she said the four-member expert review panel would advise on a number of key objectives for higher education.

These included creating a diverse set of high performing, globally-focused institutions, each with its own distinctive mission; a widening of access and improving student support; and the development of “funding compacts” between the Government and institutions.

“And I am announcing a new long-term goal for our post-secondary education system: guaranteed access to higher education or skills training for every young Australian with the talent and willingness to give it a go,” Gillard said.

Instead of responding by boosting spending on higher education and creating more places, the Howard government opened the doors to an increasing number of migrants. Australia's skilled migration program more than doubled in the six years to 2007 with an additional 100,000 newcomers arriving in the country.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that the overseas born now comprise more than a third of all those with degrees. And a significant proportion is made up of former overseas students who remained in Australia after obtaining permanent residency.

Critics of this reliance on migration to overcome the skills shortfall point out that using migrants or foreign students — especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds — to fill the gaps has failed to solve the problem. In many professions, barely one in three migrants with degrees from foreign countries, or even Australian universities, end up employed in their field or in other professional or managerial occupations.

As the majority of Australia's migrants now come from developing countries, they often lack the training and work experience employers want, as well as the necessary communication skills. In any case, tens of thousands of young Australians who would benefit from a university education are denied the chance because of the restrictions on entry and the financial barriers they face.

Despite claims by former federal Education Minister Julie Bishop that universities are now experiencing historically low levels of unmet demand for places, there is in fact no shortage of potential Australian applicants. Demographers point out that the number of 15 to 19-year-olds has risen in recent years and will continue to increase until at least the end of the decade. Yet while most students now complete year 12, only about four in every 10 go on to university.

The reason is not because they lack the required tertiary entrance scores but rather that the number of subsidised places — and the financial incentives — are totally inadequate. Only a small minority of students now qualifies for a youth allowance and the money it provides is so tiny that almost all have to work to support themselves, with some spending more time at their jobs than they do on campus.

As prospective Griffith University student Monique Anast says (see accompanying story), the thought of enrolling this year and struggling on a limited income for another three or four years made her decide to find a job and start earning some money.

"There are a lot of things I want to do this year that I'd have to wait years to do," Monique says. "By getting a job and working for a year, I'll have some money behind me when I do go to uni."

A survey by the vice-chancellors' association, Universities Australia, found that in 2006 only 35 per cent of full-time undergraduate students received income support from either the Youth Allowance or Austudy — a 17 per cent drop from 2000 levels.

As well as trying to survive on incomes that are below the poverty line, students who go to university and graduate may then be saddled with a large HECS debt that some will spend a significant amount of their working lives repaying.

Dr Gavin Moodie, Griffith University's higher education policy analyst, recalls Australia's previous experience of a fall in demand for tertiary education — which also coincided with volatile labour demand in the late 1970s under the Fraser government. Dr Moodie says an important response to those circumstances was the universities' introduction of mature-age entry which gave adults who had not transferred directly from school to higher education a second chance.

"Universities will have to be equally innovative and flexible to deal with the current falling demand and develop the aspirations of the 'missed generation' this time round," Dr Moodie says. "I don't know what that innovation might be — maybe an adaptation of work integrated-workplace based learning."

Will the election of a Labor Government make much difference? Possibly, given the Rudd Government was swept to power in part on Kevin Rudd's promise of an "education revolution". Julia Gillard, the new multi-portfolio Education Minister, now has the challenge of reversing many of the previous government's most contentious policies.

Labor says it will scrap full-fee degrees for Australian students, create 11,000 extra government-supported places, double the number of undergraduate scholarships as well as the number of postgraduate PhD and masters by research scholarships, and establish 1000 mid-career fellowships for Australian researchers to lure expatriate academics back home.

Prime Minister Rudd says the Coalition's chronic under-investment in education over the last decade is the key contributor to the skills shortage. He describes Australia's overall spending on education as lack-lustre. "While other nations have substantially increased their investment in human capital in recent years, Australia has followed

"It is not possible to quantify the costs of not having enough skilled people but they are significant and an important part of the restrictions on business growth."

PATRICK COLEMAN

a different path,” Rudd says. “We now rely more on private financing for tertiary education than all but three other OECD countries. Australia can do better.”

The BCA’s Patrick Coleman agrees but says reforms to the education and training system are important priorities. He makes the point that many young people leave school without the skills needed to take up existing job opportunities or go on to further education.

“There are more than 300,000 Australian 15 to 25-year-olds who are unemployed or only working part-time and not undertaking any education and training,” Mr Coleman says. “We need improvements so that students learn effectively and are encouraged to go on to further education, including university.”

Two days before last November’s federal election, Julia Gillard released Labor’s policy on “social inclusion”. “The fact is that school completion rates among low socioeconomic groups in Australia are far too low,” she said.

Although the media largely ignored the announcement and its contents, Ian O’Connor believes her statement to be highly important, noting that Gillard had highlighted how education was critical to social inclusion.

“If we’re going to compete with other nations we simply have to get more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete 12 years of schooling and go on to further education and training,” he says.

Professor O’Connor has made a study of social inclusion and points out that the issue was a key topic to be discussed at the Prime Minister’s 2020 summit, together with strengthening communities and supporting families. He says that in an age of mass higher education, not participating means being excluded from medium and high-status occupations and therefore from medium and high incomes.

“But it also excludes people from the highest level of engagement in society — from society’s sophisticated cultural and political conversation, and therefore from a level of political engagement, influence and power.”

As part of the Government’s social inclusion agenda, regions where participation in higher education is low should be targeted to raise primary school children’s interest in going to university, and to provide support programs to assist with the transition. It is far too late by the time students are in the senior years of high school, Professor O’Connor says.

Is he optimistic then or pessimistic about the future? “I am enormously optimistic: I see the long-term future of Australia as having an educated workforce — we can never just compete on labour. But we are going to have to put in a lot of effort in lifting our productivity and the smartness of the population. I can’t see us forever being a minerals-driven economy. We need to take the opportunities given to us at present to re-tool for the future.”

Geoff Maslen is editor of University World News, the world’s first online higher education newspaper. He is a regular commentator on education for newspapers and magazines in Australia and overseas.



To defer or not to defer

Eighteen-year-old Monique Anast is one of more than 46,000 Australian students who did not take up the offer of a university place this year. The thought of struggling on a limited income for another three or four years persuaded Monique to find a job and start earning some money.

Not that she has given up on the idea of further study, just that she wants to build up her savings, move out of home and buy a car before preparing for another four years of learning.

“I took part in the Griffith University Early Start to Tertiary Studies program in first semester last year which allowed me to do one subject in the bachelor of communication degree,” Monique says. “I earned a credit in effective writing and that guaranteed me a place when I completed year 12 at school.

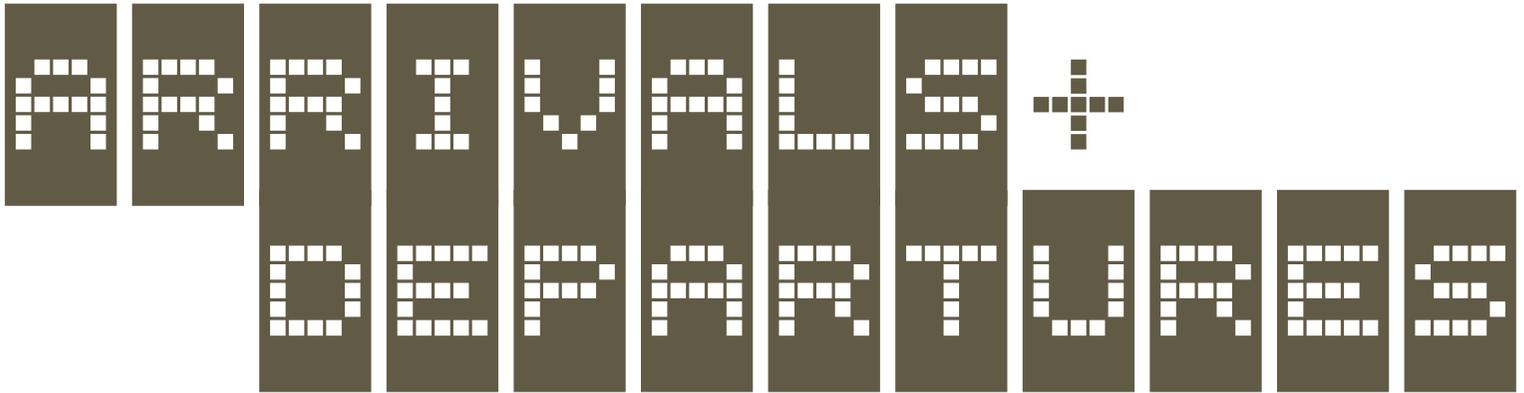
“But I worked really hard last year and felt I would burn out if I had to go on with more study. There are a lot of things I wanted to do this year that I’d have to wait years to do if I went to university.”

Monique hopes to earn \$18,500 over the next 18 months. If she is not living at home when she starts at Griffith she will be eligible for the Youth Allowance of \$350 a fortnight — which is close to a pittance but she says it will cover the rent and “a bit of petrol”.

“We had a lecture at Griffith where we were encouraged to get as much experience as we could in the workforce so it would give us an edge when we graduated and started applying for jobs,” she says. “That’s another reason why I deferred — to get some more experience in the world outside education.”

Griffith University has bucked the tightening trend in the higher education market experiencing growth in first preferences and in the overall quality of applicants offered places in the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre’s (QTAC’s) major offer round this year.

QTAC applications across all universities in Queensland dropped 2.1 per cent this year compared with last year, however Griffith University’s applications increased by 6.04 per cent, and its first preferences increased by 6.7 per cent.



International students inject more than cash into the Australian economy. They make a lasting contribution to Australian society.

GUY HEALY REPORTS

PHOTOGRAPHY **CHRIS STACEY**

Griffith University PhD candidate Sankalp Khanna came to Brisbane as an overseas student from India five years ago and is now designing an artificial intelligence system to help combat the intractable problem of hospital waiting lists.

Born in Delhi to a policeman father who himself studied overseas to achieve a PhD in criminology, the 33-year-old Sankalp worked and struggled to save, but only got to Griffith with the aid of an Indian bank educational loan and help from his family.

Sankalp now works with other researchers at the CSIRO/Queensland Government's joint venture, the Australian E-Health Research Centre, which is focusing on using intelligent systems to reduce hospital waiting lists. It is known that in Queensland 34,583 people were waiting for elective surgery last year, of whom 27.5 per cent had waited longer than a clinically desirable time.

Sankalp says he is passionate about using his expertise to help reduce suffering. "My research is focused on improving scheduling for large distributed problems in the complex dynamic hospital environment to help achieve optimal utilisation of the public health system."

International Development Program (Education), Chief Executive Mr Tony Pollock says export education has grown from a tiny minority of students in Australian universities at the start of the Colombo Plan in the 1950s,



Above: Sankalp Khanna

to one now valued at \$12.5 billion. It is now worth more than all other Australian export industries except coal (\$20.8 billion) and iron ore (\$16 billion) last year.

Mr Pollock notes Australia's effectively not-for-profit education sector should be proud to have leveraged its intellectual capital so successfully. The presence of such large numbers of overseas students studying at Australian universities is having a profound effect on the country's research agenda.

Mr Pollock says overseas students now comprise 25 per cent of students in Australian universities, suggesting that a quarter of all academic staff are there to teach and supervise international students. "The presence of overseas students, even if they are not enrolled in research-related degrees, increases the research capacity of the university, because of the staff employed to teach them. After all one third of an academic's time is meant to be devoted to



ARRIVALS

Australia has become
the largest per capita
migration country as
well as the largest
per capita overseas
student country within
the OECD

research. Well, you think of all the academics across the country; it's a massive amount of research horsepower," he says.

Mr Pollock believes Australian export education, and the ubiquity of Australian academic contacts with their overseas counterparts in Malaysia, India and Indonesia, have provided a "second-tier" diplomacy which has been crucial during times of strained or broken relations.

Despite former Australian prime minister Paul Keating branding his then Malaysian counterpart Dr Mahathir Mohamad a "recalcitrant" in 1993, educational dialogue "kept bubbling along" with tremendous interaction because the people-to-people relationships are so strong. "There are hundreds of thousands of Australian graduates from Malaysia and they have deep, deep connections into this country," Mr Pollock says.

Griffith University Pro Vice Chancellor, International, Professor Chris Madden, says international students contribute to the internationalisation of Australian universities and provide an opportunity for Australian students to learn and work with peers from all over the world: "The curriculum tends to become more globally-focused and therefore broader and more relevant to our domestic students, who will be competing

in an international marketplace after they graduate. Both international and domestic students become exposed to diverse cultures and viewpoints that enrich their educational experience and that ultimately allows them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to operate effectively within a global economy.

"The same effect can be seen on the communities that the international students live in while they are studying in Australia. The increased understanding and tolerance of different cultures contributes to the multiculturalism that Australia has embraced to its great benefit."

Professor Madden says one of the objectives of Griffith International is the "promotion of cross-cultural understanding" and the university achieves that not only by enrolling international students, but also through the study abroad and exchange programs, international collaborations in research, and projects with AusAID, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, local governments and agencies, and commercial organisations.

More specifically, Professor Madden says a pervasive but largely hidden benefit to Australia is the international contacts that develop between our international and domestic students, or international students who decide

to settle in Australia but retain ties with their homelands. "The networking that results can contribute to increased multinational business and trading enterprises, and collaboration in research, education and the arts. These networks connect Australians to innovative applications of knowledge and business techniques."

Universities Australia Chief Executive Officer Dr Glenn Withers (AO) says Australia's long cultivation of overseas students has helped the country accelerate its shift to a knowledge-based society by helping to fund the shift from 10 traditional universities in 1960 to 39 much larger and more dynamic universities by 2000. "This transition required economies of scale and scope not otherwise achievable in a country of a small and widely dispersed population. It has also helped Australia to defeat its tyranny of geographical distance by bringing a regular flow of new ideas and ways."

Dr Withers believes personal interaction transmits new knowledge in ways that even modern internet technology does not. He says: "International student education flows demonstrably are, along with business visitors, a major source of innovation, creativity and productivity improvement. The overseas student presence has enhanced Australia's international integration and understanding,

with payoffs in global standing and influence and trade, as well as the domestic standard of living and quality of life.”

Dr Withers, the architect in 1988 of the Australian immigration points system, says at a time of ongoing skill shortages in our economy, over half the increase in skilled migration since 1999 has come from former overseas students. “Australia has become the largest per capita migration country as well as the largest per capita overseas student country within the OECD. Cuts in government funding of Australian universities have fuelled the pursuit of international markets, itself a worthy consequence, but restoration of balance by an increased core public funding is now overdue.”

Australian overseas student spokesman, National Liaison Committee Convenor Mr Eric Yenz Pang says Australia’s education sectors have changed during the past 57 years from being a development program, “the Colombo Plan”, to a revenue program, “the international education industry”. “Sadly, the financial success of the industry is usually the main focus for most media and stakeholder attention and the broader benefits to the Australian community are usually overlooked. A far richer cultural curriculum is steadily being introduced in many courses throughout Australia to ensure that the education is internationally recognisable and globally adaptable for the graduates.”

Mr Pang suggests many institutions have focused on adapting teaching and learning styles to more culturally diverse students, and through this, students from many different cultural backgrounds benefit.

Guy Healy is a Higher education writer for The Australian, and an Australian correspondent for BBC Wildlife Magazine.



Exporting Education

The export education industry has been one of the most successful by any Australian sector since its genesis as an economic aid program — the Colombo Plan — in 1951. Educators believe the many hundreds of thousands of mainly Asian graduates of Australian universities who have returned to their home countries constitute an enormous bank of goodwill towards Australia, and one that has also certainly increased its geopolitical influence in the region.

Overseas student numbers in universities reached record numbers of 250,794 in 2006, representing about a quarter of all students in Australian universities.

Overall, there have been continued declines in enrolments from large traditional markets such as Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong as these countries’ university systems continue to mature.

However markets that contributed to the rise in commencements include China, India, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

In 2006, the Australian Government established a new \$1.4 billion program, Australian Scholarships, to provide more than 19,000 overseas student scholarships. It includes a new leadership component to target future leaders in the region for advanced study.

This article is an extract from
The Griffith Lecture 2007, entitled
*Fundamental Human Rights and
Religious Apostasy*, delivered by
The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG.

*“As with many fundamental rights, the
right to freedom of religion is not an
absolute one in any society.”*

Justice Michael Kirby
explores possibly the
oldest human right.

first person

The Lina Joy Case

Azalina binti Jailani was born in Malaysia into a Muslim family. In 1998 she decided to convert to Christianity and announced her intention of marrying a Christian man. Under the Malaysian Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976, she would not be able to contract such a marriage unless her new status as a non-Muslim was recognised by the authorities.

Azalina applied to the Malaysian National Registration Department (the NRD) to change her name on her identity card to a Christian name. She was successful in having the name changed to Lina Joy. However, in the year 2000, amendments were made which came into force retrospectively, altering the National Regulations. The amendments required that the identity cards of Muslims should state their religion. Therefore, when Lina Joy received her new identity card, reflecting the change of her name, the word “Islam” still appeared on her card.

Lina Joy unsuccessfully applied to the NRD in 2000 to have the word “Islam” removed from her identity card. She then contested the policy of the NRD in the High Court of Malaysia raising the administrative law point that the National Regulations did not, and should not require an order or certificate of apostasy. She argued that the NRD’s insistence on its policy infringed her right to freedom of religion under the Malaysian Constitution.

Upon the rejection of her application by both the High Court and Court of Appeal, Lina Joy appealed to Malaysia’s highest court, the Federal Court of Malaysia which found against her. Inevitably, it was noticed that the two majority judges were themselves Muslim and included the Chief Justice of Malaysia. The dissenting judge was a non-Muslim.

Freedom of religion and conscience is possibly the oldest of the internationally recognised human rights. It is enshrined in a number of international human rights instruments and also guaranteed in the constitutions of many nations and in other domestic legislation.

Much attention has been given in recent years to the special challenge said to be presented by the resurgence of Islam as a major global religion and to the apparent difficulty of reconciling the universal right to freedom of religion with a supposed tenet of Islamic faith that forbids apostasy, that is, the renunciation or abandonment of the religion which one was born into, or later came to profess. A recent decision of the highest appellate court in Malaysia in the *Lina Joy* case, where a Muslim woman was unable to convert to Christianity under Malaysian law (see accompanying story), draws attention to the apparent difficulty of reconciling these concepts.

In order to appreciate fully the serious impact on religious freedom in Malaysia occasioned by the decisions in cases such as *Lina Joy*, it is important to notice two significant practical implications that the case bears.

First, apostates in Malaysia are subject to a range of penalties under state legislation. In some states, apostasy is a criminal offence.

Secondly, if Lina Joy were to apply to a *Shar’ia* court for a declaration of apostasy she would face a number of impediments. Islamic principles discourage Muslims supporting or facilitating renunciations of the Islamic faith by other Muslims, therefore it would be difficult for Lina Joy to find a lawyer, specialising in *Shar’ia* law, who would be willing to represent her in such a case.

In contrast to the generally individualist traditions of Western liberal social theory, Islamic tradition presents a communitarian view. It is not unique in this respect. (The Confucian view of society likewise lays emphasis on the community prevailing over the individual.) In Islam, individualism must be realised within the *umma*, or community, which is of paramount importance. Accordingly, from a Muslim perspective, the renunciation of the Islamic faith does not simply affect the particular individual concerned. It is harmful to the community as a whole.

As with many fundamental rights, the right to freedom of religion is not an absolute one in any society. A distinction is often drawn between the

A distinction is often drawn between the right to hold religious beliefs and the right to manifest, or demonstrate, those beliefs.”



right to *hold* religious beliefs and the right to *manifest*, or *demonstrate*, those beliefs. The right to *hold* religious beliefs is generally considered as an absolute right. However, as the right to *practise* one's religion can impinge upon the rights of others, it may sometimes be appropriate to restrict at least some of the manifestation of such beliefs.

Rules that prohibit or seriously impede the renunciation of the Islamic faith appear difficult or impossible to reconcile with the right to change one's religion, which freedom of religion contemplates in international human rights law.

It is very important to appreciate that a fundamental objective of a right to freedom of religion, in any society, is the protection of the rights of *minority* religious groups in that society. In most parts of the world today that includes adherents to Islam. In most countries, they remain in the minority. They are, as such, entitled to the benefit of this precious freedom. Rightly, they expect and demand it.

Lina Joy's situation is an example of where protection ought to be afforded by courts. On this occasion, in a neighbouring land that we respect and admire, the civil courts did not uphold the supremacy of the constitutional right to freedom of religion.

Dr Thio Li-ann, an Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore became one of the most prominent critics of the *Lina Joy* decisions. Amongst her telling criticisms of the earlier rulings she pointed out:

‘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. Lina Joy is not a religious provocateur out to defame or denigrate a religion which is constitutionally recognised; she is simply a person who wishes to marry and lead a quiet life, which the current legal regime poses obstacles to.’

When I read this critique I applauded the wise words in which Dr Thio expressed her views. Therefore, imagine my disappointment, soon after, to read the *Hansard* record of the same Dr Thio's remarks,

not one year subsequently, as a Nominated Member of the Parliament of Singapore opposing proposals (drawing some support from recent observations of Lee Kwan Yew no less) that the criminal laws of Singapore against homosexual men, inherited from Britain, should at last be repealed. Making her contributions on penal reform for homosexuals from a standpoint as a Christian believer, Dr Thio rallied the opposition to the enlightened and long overdue reform proposal.

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, at home or elsewhere, by invoking imperfect understandings of our own religious tradition and texts.

So in Australia, at least, we must be truly committed to the principle of mutual respect and acceptance that lies at the heart of the world-wide movement for the protection of fundamental, universal human rights. Not selectively. For all.

Universal human rights are needed to permit each and every one of us to fulfil ourselves as our unique human natures, intelligence and moral sense demands. For Lina Joy and her fiancé this means the freedom to worship together as they believe, and to marry and live, in their own country. For the homosexual man in Singapore, it means freedom from the fear of harassment and humiliation by antique criminal laws. For the Aboriginal child born today in Australia, it means an expectation of truly equal opportunities with the rest of us in this much blessed country.

Universal human rights are awkward and challenging. They exist in people who are not exactly like ourselves. In minorities we do not quite understand or even know. And in all people: all human beings, just because they are human, including: Australians and Malaysians, Christians and Muslims, people of other faiths and of no faith. People who are fair and dark, rich and poor, old and young, straight and gay.

The full version of this article will be published in (2008) 17(1) Griffith Law Review.



There's a war on
recreational drugs
being fought on
the fields of play

GAME ON

JOHN HARMS REPORTS
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS STACEY

Former rugby league champion Andrew Johns and West Coast Eagles brilliant mid-fielder Ben Cousins provided two of the most memorable images from the 2007 football season. Footage of the arrest of Cousins led news bulletins in the AFL states, while Andrew Johns's confession to Phil Gould on Channel 9's *NRL Footy Show* was riveting television.

Looking quite pathetic, boyish, almost lost, Johns admitted that he had been a recreational drug user for some time. He just hadn't been caught, until a London bobby nicked

Professor Kristine Toohey heads the Department of Sports Management. "Figures show that recreational drug use is higher in the younger age groups," she says. "Especially in Gen Y. There is greater access. There is a cornucopia of drugs available. Certain drugs are associated with certain cultures: rave, dance."

Anecdotal evidence suggests that drug use is a significant issue in elite sport. Speaking on ABC Radio's *AM* program at the time of Johns's admission NRL chief executive David Gallop admitted: "We are well aware it's a

ing is firmly entrenched in football. But clubs are now using breathalysers (although AFL clubs are no longer permitted to breath-test after agitation from the AFL Players' Association) and the players' great fear, the fat calipers. Some sportspeople find recreational drugs more attractive than alcohol: they are cheaper, quicker and you can train the next day (sometimes you train better the next day; the question of recreational drugs as performance-enhancing adds a layer of complication which we'll ignore here.) Often players use both.

The issue of recreational drug-use in the community is complex, particularly in relation to elite sportspeople

him for fare evasion, and discovered a little more. Phil Gould played the role of stern and paternal housemaster, and didn't give Johns an easy time. It was a telling exchange. But fans wondered: how much had those close to Johns, and close to the game, known all along?

The situation of Ben Cousins was just as fascinating, just as sad, only it was played out over many months. Wrapped in rumour and speculation, it was never as clear-cut, largely because the young man in question wouldn't tell it how it was. Nor would his club. When, early in the season, Cousins flew to an American detox centre (was there no facility in Australia?) no admission of recreational drug use was forthcoming. So why was he going? Many fans (although not so many Eagles' fans: they wanted their man on the field) felt they were being taken for a ride by a man, his club, and even the AFL. Fans didn't know what to believe. Their trust in the administration of the game, if not the game itself, was being eroded.

The issue of recreational drug use in the community is complex, particularly in relation to elite sportspeople. It is of intense interest for Griffith University scholars, particularly to those who research and teach in the area.

problem in our game, and in the community." The AFL and, after much poking, prodding and a couple of major inquiries, the West Coast Eagles, have made similar acknowledgements. Yet firm figures are impossible to ascertain. Who will speak frankly about this issue? Dr James Skinner from Griffith's School of Education and Professional Studies is conducting research to identify those with a propensity to be attracted to drug use. "The problem is more widespread than the public thinks," he says.

It is reasonable to assume that, as members of Gen Y, the degree of drug use among elite sportspeople of that age, is at least comparable. Griffith sociologist and senior lecturer Dr Dwight Zakus says it would be surprising if it were not higher among athletes. He says it varies from sport to sport but that athletes seek release from the physical and mental torture of elite performance. He also argues that the celebrity that comes with professional sport has an impact. "Elite athletes get caught up in this world. They are easy targets. So much of this is about celebrity," he argues.

Referring specifically to the NRL and AFL Dr Zakus says that the culture of drink-

Alcohol blurs their judgement, at which point other substances become attractive.

Sporting organisations send mixed messages. Carlton United Breweries sponsored this past season's one-day tournament. Clearly Cricket Australia was happy to have Australian selector and legendary in-flight boozier David Boon cross-dressing in a VB commercial, while preaching the gospel of moderation for spectators.

We shouldn't be surprised. Professor Toohey argues that sporting organisations don't handle these matters well. "Clubs want premierships," she says, suggesting they have a motive to protect their own, and deal with matters in-house. "They may do enough to tick the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) and ASADA (Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority) boxes."

Leagues also find themselves in a difficult situation. They argue that their position relates to the law of the land, their duty of care to players, and to matters of player welfare. However, it seems obvious to critical observers that administrators are motivated to act once the image of the game is being affected.

That is certainly the view of Michael Jeh from the Griffith Sports College, a department established by the university to help athletes enrolled at Griffith University deal with the demands of student life and elite sport. He believes athletes are consistently exposed to recreational drugs. "With Gen Y," he argues, "there is no point dealing with this as a moral issue. The ethical argument holds no sway. Gen Y is motivated by self-interest. You have to treat it as a personal health issue. I am pragmatic enough to realise that if the outcome we want is no drug use, then we have to make athletes aware of the cost — to them."



Dr Skinner's research (which is concerned with both performance-enhancing and recreational drugs) starts with the premise that traditional methods of drug testing are not having an impact on drug use. He and his colleague, forensic psychologist Dr Stephen Moston (James Cook University), have developed a questionnaire designed to establish attitudinal norms in relation to drug use. The questionnaire is being delivered to elite athletes, and to the general population, so a comparison can be made.

From here Dr Skinner hopes to identify concerns, and the gaps in understandings, in order to develop an educational package. "We must be educative, not punitive," he argues. "We must get to the root of the problem. We must put systems in place to prevent behaviours."

Professional sporting organisations owe this to their athletes. Athletes cannot be treated as the mere playthings which allow massive sporting enterprises to thrive. But equally athletes have a responsibility to stay off the gear. If it is only self-interest which motivates them they might spare a few moments to look at their contracts.

John Harms has written extensively on sport for magazines and newspapers and can be seen on ABC TV's Offsiders.

A Positive Approach

Griffith University and the Gold Coast Titans



Over the past few years Griffith University has developed a program which encourages elite athletes to enrol at one of its campuses. Swimmer Libby Lenton is working towards a Bachelor of Communications. Nine Queensland Reds players and six Brisbane Broncos study at Griffith.

The Griffith Sports College has been established to facilitate that initiative. The manager, Griffith graduate Michael Jeh, knows exactly what it takes to balance the rigorous demands of sport and study. Jeh completed a postgraduate degree at Oxford University, where he won a blue in cricket.

These days he acts as administrator, organiser and mentor for those elite sportspeople who are enrolled at Griffith. He helps students in many ways: from liaising with lecturers in their particular courses and negotiating timetable, assessment and examination issues, to one-on-one counselling. He also runs a 16-week course, *Lifeskills For Elite Athletes*, for young players in the major clubs of south-east Queensland.

One of those clubs, the Gold Coast Titans, joined the NRL last year. They have acted quickly to formalise their relationship with Griffith University. Jennifer Cross looks after player welfare and community programs at the Titans. "The club insists that players involved in the Under 20 competition must be studying, training, or employed," she says. "Griffith is the preferred education provider."

Luke Swain is completing a Bachelor of Sports Science, Samuel Stewart is involved in biomedical science, Alexander Behns in civil engineering. Altogether six Titans are enrolled.

Griffith University enjoys sponsorship and signage benefits.

These are important community links, and demonstrate that clubs are making an effort to consider the holistic development of young footballers.

THE THIESS ART PRIZE 2007

Exploring the life, cultures and landscapes of Queensland. A nationally recognised community partnership between Thiess and Griffith Artworks, exhibited annually at DELL Gallery, Queensland College of Art (QCA).

INTRODUCED BY SIMON WRIGHT

Notions of "Queensland" are as physical as they are portable and conceptual, and so, for the sixth year running the Thiess Art Prize provided an exciting opportunity for QCA students to put forward various possibilities investigating these ideas.

Queensland does not stop at the border, but permeates the rest of the world. Our cultures, life and landscapes are independent, interdependent and dependent on global and local forces, unable to exist without such exchange. Artists might argue a defining role for the state in our identities, others offer an insight from the vantage point of an alternate state, and a few argue the irrelevance of such propositions altogether.

More than 100 entries were received from QCA students, with 28 finalists selected for the exhibition and award, bolstered in 2007 by further support from leading art dealer Philip Bacon (AM) and Espresso Garage. Each year finalists and award recipients benefit greatly from what is usually their first public gallery showing, with cash prizes, media exposure, public programs, sales and feedback in abundance.



Simon Wright is the Director, Griffith Artworks and DELL Gallery at Queensland College of Arts.



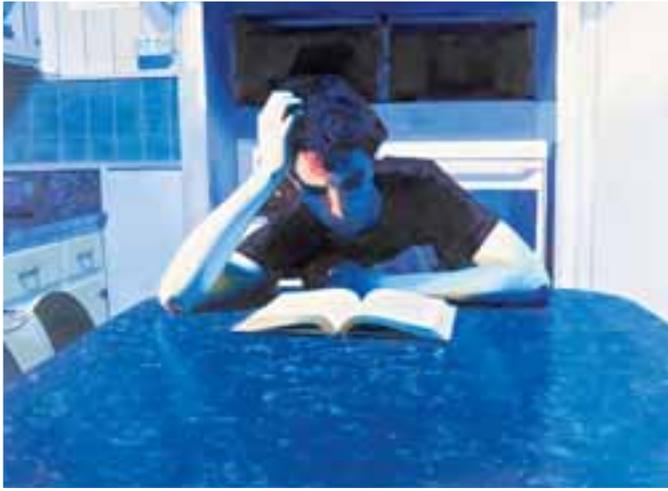
Griffith University acknowledges the support of Thiess. If you would like to contribute to the success of Griffith University's arts program please contact the Development and Alumni Office at Griffith University on 61 7 5552 7218.



PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS STACEY

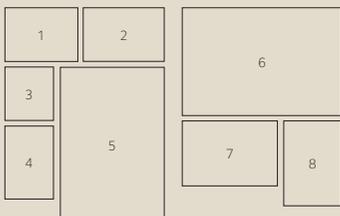
ANGELA ROSSITTO *Mind Maze* — *Thiess Acquisitive Award*

A cross-section of the highly commended and finalist work follows.





PHOTOGRAPHY MICK RICHARDS



- 1 CHRIS BENNETT *Untitled (Reading Man 2)*
- 2 SONYA PETERS *To draw breath* — Philip Bacon Commendation
- 3 CHRISTIAN FLYNN *Landscapes*
- 4 LOUISE BRISTOW *Holy Moly*
- 5 CARLY SCOUFOS *Transitional Viscosity* — Thiess Highly Commended
- 6 SOROUR FATTAHI *Repeating Minutes*
- 7 TILO REIFENSTEIN *The Travels of Young Stephen Ikaros* — Thiess Highly Commended
- 8 ADRIANE HAYWARD *[Never completing the list]*

Bernard Arnault admitted he was “shocked” when he saw what his star fashion designer John Galliano had done: sent expensive models down the catwalk for an important show wrapped in newspapers.

Mr Arnault quickly added: “shocked — which is good of course”.

In an interview with the *Harvard Business Review*, he explained his philosophy: “A new product is not creative — it is not important — if it does not shock when you first see it.

“I don’t have alarm bells when it comes to creativity. If you think and act like a typical manager around creative people — with rules, policies, data on customer preferences, and so forth — you will quickly kill their talent,” he said.

Bernard Arnault of course runs LVMH, the most famous luxury brand conglomerate in the world, so for him creativity is really the core business.

[creative] control

Yet that is no less true in even the most mundane of industries. Today globalisation means not just almost any product but any process or technology used to produce it can be rapidly duplicated. Marketing campaigns face a fragmented world and good ones are ambushed. Even many services can be outsourced and off-shored.

That is why fostering creativity in an organisation is so critical. Not only does it drive innovation, it is the ultimate defensive strategy, the only way an organisation can continually refresh and reinvent itself to stay ahead.

Businesses must
chart a creative
course to innovation

ANDREW CORNELL REPORTS
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS STACEY



“ Too often organisations only realise they have not been innovating when it is too late.”

PROFESSOR MICHAEL POWELL

Griffith University Pro Vice Chancellor, Business Professor Michael Powell says too often organisations only realise they have not been innovating when it is too late — the “burning platform” response. But today constant reinvention is vital not just for the business model but to attract the talent necessary to compete.

“The trick is to be doing the innovation before your business starts to plateau, you have to keep refreshing,” he says. “It’s hard to know the top of your business model or product, that’s why it must be a cultural thing, you must be encouraging creativity all the time. Your competitors can copy anything you do and you can’t really protect it.”

It is this “creative destruction” of modern capitalism that is driving the most successful companies to try to understand how they foster creativity. Such organisations are not just good at doing what they do but think about what else they must do. In effect, become “right brain” companies.

Rather than study the theories of Taylor or Porter’s Five Forces or even the most enlightened McKinsey & Co analysis, more organisations recognise it is not the template that’s important but the thinking behind it. Rather than just great companies, they are trying to learn from artists and writers.

Terms like “creative capital” and “emotional intelligence” pepper their thinking. They refer to Richard Florida’s defining book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, and Dan Pink’s exhortation “the era of ‘left brain’ dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, is giving way to a new world in which ‘right brain’ qualities — inventiveness, empathy, meaning — predominate”.

Dan Pink sees a seismic but as yet undetected shift in the corporate world. “The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind — computer programmers who could crank

code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers...

“The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind, creators and empathisers, pattern recognisers and meaning makers.”

Pink’s is perhaps the view of an evangelist yet there is no doubt, even in the mainstream, the need to harness the artist, the maverick, is widely recognised.

Griffith Business School is about to launch a *Creative Strategic Thinking* program. Director of Executive Development Frank Pollard says the course aims at bringing the creative aspects of the arts and design into the business world.

“We want people to think outside the box,” he says. “For example, intuition and instinct are often correct but we stifle it with process and external consultants. It may sound a bit flaky but to trust intuition you need the experience and knowledge first. It’s about letting the ideas come first, then look at developing them strategically.”

Paris-based director of The Boston Consulting Group, Luc de Brabandere, author of *The forgotten half of change: achieving greater creativity through changes in perception*, says an organisation doesn’t need to do anything particularly mystical. Rather, creativity can be harnessed and innovation driven by responding to day-to-day realities.

“Innovation is about changing the world, creativity is about changing the way you look at the world,” he told *Red*.

“The critical thing is harnessing the two sides and this is what Arnault did (at LVMH). The creativity of men and women is fostered but on the other side he organised innovative processes, the structure to bring these ideas to market. This is marketing and logistics, good organisation — good pipes. Creativity is about the pressure in those pipes but you need good pipes.”

Indeed, this is precisely what Bernard Arnault says. “When the (newspaper) dresses came out, you could hear the whole audience gasp. There was a buzz — an excitement. Galliano was thrilled, the audience was thrilled.

“But once the idea was out there, we had no problem reproducing the dresses in fabric and selling them, and they did very well. The important point is you cannot compromise creativity at its birth.”

The “pipes” at LVMH are constructed and maintained with the rigor of a precision instrument maker: “The atelier (workshop) is a place of amazing discipline and rigor.”

Mastering this organisation, where creativity is indulged but with a clear eye to channeling it into innovation and finally sustainable profits, is at the heart of the modern challenge.

Griffith’s Professor Powell notes there are a number of strategies. Most famous is the “skunk works”, a quarantined zone within a company where creative people are given freedom to think, away from the normal organisational bureaucracy. It is how Apple famously adopted the model for the iMac. “The idea is to give people space and room outside the structure,” he says.

Even where no such definite creative space is designated, Professor Powell says companies need to create the room for right brain thinking. Such was the case when Sony created the Walkman at a time when radio appeared to be disappearing. Frank Pollard adds the mobile phone camera: “People said why would you need a camera on a phone?”

Creativity though is no answer in itself, it must create value. This is the true challenge. “You have to have some metrics, some limits, timeframes, outcomes,” Professor Powell says.

According to the Fujitsu Innovation Index 2007, Australian organisations have made little progress towards improving their

performance on innovation over the past 12 months despite increasing spending on innovation by a considerable 37 per cent.

The survey found the major barriers to innovation continue to be lack of personnel dedicated to innovation (41 per cent) and insufficient budget (38 per cent). Resistance to change (13 per cent) and short-term mindsets (10 per cent) increased significantly over 2006.

But Tom Dissing, Fujitsu's principal of consulting, says the decline highlights the fact that innovation is not something which can be bought but something which needs to be approached holistically.

"Organisations must provide strong leadership and a business environment in which innovation can flourish if we are to increase our overall innovation performance," he says.

"Organisations need to stop thinking about the next quarter and instead focus on their long-term future if they are ever to become truly innovative."

Professor Powell has seen that lesson in his own backyard.

Some of Griffith's own business programs were fading. "It was really a burning platform and we gave some people some time and resources to really think about it," he says.

The result was a complete restructure and much closer integration with the commercial sector in their regions. For example, students became interns with local firms, higher intensity courses were introduced.

"The results of that have been exceptional but we probably should have started thinking about it two or three years earlier," he says.

Andrew Cornell is a leading business journalist and author of books on business and Japan. He is a senior writer and columnist for The Australian Financial Review and its magazines.

Finding talent

Phrases like McKinsey's now famous "war for talent" have entered the management lexicon but as organisations grapple with instilling a culture of creativity, the critical element is also the kind of talent.

Griffith's Michael Powell says it's easy to slip into fixed thinking about talent and particularly generational differences. "People have ideas about Gen Y and now Gen Z but you have to allow for creativity, you have to move out of the mould of how you deal with people, out of the comfort zone," he says. "This is the challenge for people running organisations today, the baby boomers especially. How do you encourage the creativity of the next generation?"

This is the challenge LVMH's Bernard Arnault has embraced not just for himself but in the managers he employs to shepherd his creative talent. "What is just as important, to allow creativity to happen, a company has to be filled with managers who have a certain love of artists and designers — or whatever kind of creative person you have in your company," he says.

One of Australia's great success stories is Macquarie Bank. Macquarie has focused on getting the right talent — this is where its controversial profit sharing model comes in — but more importantly allowing them to take business risks without risking the whole enterprise.

Korea is one of Macquarie's most remarkable success stories. After the Asian economic crisis in 1997-98, Macquarie wound back many ventures in South-East Asia but allowed two executives who felt Korea represented an opportunity to relocate and explore, building upon an existing joint venture. Today Macquarie has more than 300 staff in Korea and a business spanning a dozen fields.

The head of Macquarie's Korea business, John Walker, says the key to success has been "new ideas, technologies, services, understanding the market, the opportunities to introduce new products..."

And that comes back to employing creative individuals and allowing them to operate in an innovative structure.





SORRY + SYMBOLISM + THE SACRED

The apology to the stolen generations has people talking about the importance of symbolism in Australian culture.

BY PHIL BROWN

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS STACEY

It was strange that the symbolism of reconciliation was lost on former Prime Minister John Howard for so long.

For years John Howard claimed an apology from the government to indigenous people for past wrongs would be merely a symbolic act and, therefore, pointless. This from a man whose political philosophy and rhetoric was shaped by a curious mix of nationalist mythology and symbolism. Gallipoli, Kokoda, Don Bradman — these were among the symbols of nationhood he embraced, mainly because they reflected his world view. He could not, however, grasp the symbolism of an apology as an important milestone in the reconciliation process for Australians, both black and white, and admitted he had difficulty relating to the issue.

“The challenge I have faced around indigenous identity politics is in part an artefact of who I am and the time in which I grew up,” Mr Howard told an audience at the Sydney Institute in October 2007. In casting around for symbols to enshrine Australianness and Australian culture Howard had both misunderstood and ignored the original Australian culture. In an Australia Day editorial earlier this year *The Age* newspaper claimed “the Howard Government had become hopelessly lost in the search for what it means to be Australian” which was partly because Howard had become attached to outdated symbols of the past and could not grasp the important symbolism of an apology.

“Symbolism plays a large part in a nation’s identity,” the newspaper claimed. “This act of symbolism would repair a flaw in the glass that mirrors our past.”

The fact is that our nationhood has been built on symbols, national archetypes that often reflect the changing mores and cultural values of the day.

When the Monty Python team lampooned Australian culture, or the lack of it, back in the 1970s they were working with symbolism that was already on the way out. In the famous Bruce sketch, a group of Australian academics, members of the philosophy department at the mythical University of Walamaloo, all named Bruce, saluted the wattle as the symbol of Australia. “This here’s the wattle, the emblem of our land, you can stick it in a bottle, you can hold it in your hand,” one of the Bruces chanted.

In 2005 former Howard government minister Amanda Vanstone tried to revive the wattle as “a symbol of our nationhood” but she was flogging a dead flower. Like Howard she identified with symbols of the past, many of which no longer retain any potency for most Australians.

According to Professor Ross Fitzgerald, Emeritus Professor of History and Politics at Griffith University, only Australians over 40 still associate the wattle with Australianness. “Wattle Day on September 1 used to be one of our most important national days,” Professor Fitzgerald recalls. “This just goes to show how national symbols change over time”.

The Melbourne Cup is another important Australia symbol but it has endured and is still powerful enough to stop the nation when it is run.

“Some of our most potent symbols are actually symbols of defeat and struggle: Eureka, Gallipoli, and our best loved song, Waltzing Matilda, which many would say commemorates the death of a striking shearer. Even alcohol is considered a symbol of Australianness by some and many would regard the VB or XXXX brands as symbols they identify with.”

Professor Fitzgerald points out that some of our national symbols are ambiguous and therefore problematic. “Australia Day is a national symbol but from my perspective it is misplaced,” Professor Fitzgerald says. “It either celebrates the invasion of the continent by Europeans or the setting up of a penal colony in or near Sydney. In reality, it has little to say as a national symbol.”

But people are attached to it and like John Howard many Australians find it hard to embrace new symbols and to accept the rationale and symbolism of reconciliation. John Howard’s argument for many years was that an apology would not actually advance reconciliation simply because it would be symbolic rather than practical but Professor Mick Dodson, co-chair of Reconciliation Australia, says there is a “false divide between so-called symbolic aspects of reconciliation and practical issues like health and education”.

...the exploits of diggers have been held up as symbolic of our nationhood and the places where our soldiers have fought and fallen have become sacrosanct...

Barbara Livesey, chief executive of Reconciliation Australia, agrees and sees the symbolic and practical elements of reconciliation as inseparable. "The apology was a symbolic gesture but it was about building respect and understanding and without that it's fairly difficult to address the practical problems," Ms Livesey says. "Some see the idea of symbolism as having a lesser value and yet our culture is full of symbolic acts."

Professor Anna Haebich, of The Centre for Public Culture and Ideas at Griffith University, points out that symbols can bring us together as a nation.

"John Howard used old-fashioned symbols and tried to resuscitate them," Professor Haebich says. "Gallipoli, Simpson's Donkey and Kokoda — these were symbols he embraced but symbols can limit and exclude people and Howard's vision excluded indigenous people and many migrants."

"Symbols are only really as good as their shelf life. Howard's symbols were out of date but Kevin Rudd is giving us new symbols. Because we are a diverse nation we need to accept a whole range of symbols."

If you go searching for Australian symbols on the Internet you may come up with things like Uluru, Vegemite, the Sydney Opera House or even the Akubra hat. Meanwhile, for some Australians the world of sport supplies all the metaphors and symbolism they need. For many the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the MCG, is the ultimate symbol of Australianess.

Sports historian Harry Gordon claims the MCG is "where the heart and soul of Australian sport resides" and in a sport-obsessed nation that means something. Melbourne Cricket Club librarian David Studham, who is based at the MCG, describes the stadium as "a national symbol" that has quasi-religious overtones.

"Radio National did a program on sacred sites and the MCG was one of them," Mr Studham points out. "I think its role is similar to that of a cathedral in medieval society. It's not just a place where sport is played, it's also a meeting place and a place where a very diverse range of sports have been played."

For others sacred places symbolic of Australia are to be found in the natural world in iconic treasures like Tasmania's wilderness or the Great Barrier Reef.

But perhaps the most enduring national symbols are those attached to the ANZAC spirit. Certainly the exploits of diggers have been held up as symbolic of our nationhood and the places where our soldiers have fought and fallen have become sacrosanct with successive governments seeking to preserve and defend them. When these sacred sites are threatened there is usually public outcry.

For example, when road works threatened to erode part of the Gallipoli site in 2005 around the time of the highly symbolic 90th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, there was outrage. While John Howard, whose father and grandfather fought in World War I, was desperate to maintain the Gallipoli legend and attach himself to it, he was also blamed for allowing the Turkish authorities to proceed with road works that might diminish the integrity of this sacred site.

It was proof that powerful symbols can also occasionally become powerful millstones, as exemplified in *The Sun-Herald's* headline 'Howard's symbolism sinks on Gallipoli's broken beach'.

"That such a thing could have happened on Howard's watch is extraordinary," Michelle Grattan wrote in the accompanying news report. "He, more than most prime ministers, has tapped into the sentiment over Gallipoli emotionally and used it politically."

Kevin Rudd, for all his differences with Howard, is careful to continue to align himself with these potent military symbols and various, far-flung sacred sites. His defence of the Kokoda Track, which was reportedly threatened by a mining project earlier this year, shows that, like Howard, he intends to continue to support these national symbols.

Unlike Howard, Kevin Rudd has embraced the new symbolism of reconciliation through his apology to the stolen generations. This will shape Government strategy and policy on indigenous issues in the coming years and has already created an atmosphere of action and reform. Queensland Premier Anna

Blyth has made the policy of *Strengthening Indigenous Communities* one of her Government's top priorities.

This includes promoting and recognising the strengths and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; creating real choices and opportunities and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build pathways to education, training and employment and to improve delivery of services to these communities.

At the Cultural Minister's Council in Adelaide in February the meeting endorsed a series of strategies to strengthen indigenous arts, especially indigenous music proving that the new atmosphere of respect for indigenous Australians is bearing fruit.

Bruce McLean, Associate Curator of Indigenous Art at the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, says symbolic acts such as Kevin Rudd's apology lay the groundwork for such policies and are appreciated by indigenous Australians particularly because symbolism is intrinsic to indigenous art and culture.

"Symbolism has always been important in indigenous culture and cross-cultural contact between Aboriginal people," Mr McLean says. "Even the simplest things, such as crossing onto somebody else's land, required symbolic gestures to engender trust and endear themselves to the other party. So Aboriginal people understand the symbolic gesture well. It is rooted in the culture and has been since time immemorial."

As for Kevin Rudd's apology being merely symbolic, Mr McLean believes symbolism is, in itself, sometimes sufficient. "People say it's not going to help, but it's not supposed to," he insists. "It's symbolic. We understand that. It's there to create an element of trust and we can go forward from there."

Phil Brown is senior writer with the lifestyle magazine Brisbane News. He is a regular contributor to the Griffith Review and his most recent book is Any Guru Will Do (UQP, 2006).



For them Kokoda has become an important symbol of freedom, a symbol of a hard-won victory and they don't want to see that jeopardised.



THE LATEST BATTLE FOR KOKODA

When it was reported earlier this year that part of the Kokoda Track might be lost to a gold and copper mining operation many felt an important symbol of Australian nationhood was under threat.

The 96-kilometre trail in Papua New Guinea's rugged Owen Stanley Ranges was where more than 600 Australians died fighting the Japanese in World War II and those diggers are credited with saving us from invasion.

The series of battles they fought, now remembered simply as Kokoda, became a potent national symbol and considerable public angst accompanied reports of the mining threat. For 95-year-old Stan Bissett, a former Wallaby who fought at Kokoda as a soldier in the 2/14th Battalion of the AIF, the battle and burial grounds along the Kokoda Track are sacrosanct.

"These are sacred places that should not be disturbed," Stan Bissett reflects. "I've been there a number of times since 1998 and organised a pilgrimage there for our battalion, kinfolk and supporters."

The fact that Stan, who lives on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, uses the word "pilgrimage" is instructive and many other Australians regard the Kokoda Track with equal reverence.

For Stan Bissett, Kokoda shaped the rest of his life. His brother Butch died in his arms there on August 30, 1942, at the height of the battle of Isurava and for that reason Kokoda is enshrined in his memory as holy ground. Former Prime Minister John Howard understood the

symbolic power of this Kokoda legend and in 2002 he personally dedicated the memorial to the fallen at Isurava, erected not far from where Butch Bissett fell.

Michael Ralston, president of the 2/14 Battalion Association says the perceived threat to the Kokoda Track has stirred up strong emotions among the association's members. "Most are against the track being disturbed by mining," Michael Ralston says. "For them Kokoda has become an important symbol of freedom, a symbol of a hard-won victory and they don't want to see that jeopardised."

Whether the mining goes ahead or not the incident highlights the passion that many have for a national symbol like Kokoda.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd understands this and has discussed the matter with the Papua New Guinea Government and Environment Minister Peter Garrett has confirmed the Australian Government is seeking World Heritage listing to keep the track intact. "The Kokoda Track is of enormous heritage value to Australians," Garrett told *The Australian* newspaper. "It is a symbol of the mighty effort by our diggers to stop the Japanese invasion and it is a powerful emblem of the bond forged in wartime between our two countries."

Around 5000 Australians make their own pilgrimages to Papua New Guinea to walk along the Kokoda Track each year and it has become a significant rite of passage as well as an enduring symbol of nationhood.



H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1 H5N1



H5N1 H5N1

THE NEXT FLU PANDEMIC

H5N1

NOT IF BUT WHEN

Disease pandemics, more than any other single event, have the power to severely damage the fabric of human society.

LYNNE BLUNDELL REPORTS

PHOTOGRAPHY **CHRIS STACEY**

Pandemics have no regard for national, cultural, political or socioeconomic boundaries and can destroy populations with deadly abandon. From the Black Death of the 14th century to the Spanish flu of 1918 and influenza pandemics of the mid 20th century, they have caused massive social and economic upheaval. The current avian influenza virus, H5N1, with its high mortality rate, rapid adaptation and ability to infect multiple species, presents a formidable threat to humans. Add to this the current unprecedented levels of global travel and human interconnectedness and we have the recipe for one of the most daunting of global pandemics.



“The mutation of just one amino acid in the protein-binding site appeared to determine the 1918 virus’ preference for human carbohydrates.

There’s no reason why H5N1 couldn’t do the same, resulting in a human pandemic.” PROFESSOR MARK VON ITZSTEIN

According to World Health Organization (WHO) Director General, Dr Margaret Chan, an influenza pandemic in the near future is inevitable. With pandemics occurring on average every 25 years, the next one is likely to infect 20 per cent of the population and require the hospitalisation of at least 28 million people over a short period. Work absenteeism would likely reach 35 per cent or higher.

“We have no reason to believe that anything about the behaviour of influenza viruses, or anything about the way we inhabit this planet, will protect the 21st century from influenza pandemics. These are recurring events spanning at least five centuries,” Dr Chan told an international conference on avian flu in New Delhi recently.

Best case scenarios from WHO put the number of deaths of the next flu pandemic at between two million and 7.4 million. But many scientists believe the numbers will be much higher as the characteristics of the H5N1 virus closely mimic the 1918 flu virus, which killed more than 50 million people worldwide.

And, while 95 per cent of countries have a pandemic preparedness plan, in poorer nations where the virus is entrenched, the response is more patchy, Dr Chan says. It is here that the bird flu virus has the most chance of adapting for more effective transmission between humans.

Of all avian influenza viruses H5N1 presents the most immediate danger to humans. It has so far killed 226 people and infected 359 since 2003, representing a mortality rate of 63 per cent, the highest of any bird flu. It has also been very efficient at crossing the species barrier, infecting a number of different species including humans. To cause a pandemic the virus needs just one more characteristic — the ability to spread efficiently and sustainably between humans.

There are signs that H5N1 has already developed this ability in a limited form. Early this year the World Health Organization (WHO)

Economic impact

The economic impact of an avian flu pandemic will be huge, potentially as high as US\$2.5 trillion to \$3 trillion in one year, according to World Bank estimates. This represents 3.1 per cent of global GDP and takes into account the impact on global output of deaths, hospitalisation of the ill, work absenteeism and behaviour modification such as reducing travel and avoiding public places.

Dr Andries Terblanché, head of financial services and an insurance partner for KPMG, believes that these are only the obvious costs at the time of a pandemic. What is harder to estimate is the future impact caused by the high death rate of 24 to 34-year-olds, the age bracket most affected by pandemics. It is something akin to the effects of World War II, which removed millions of young adults from society, resulting in an exponential reduction in population growth and economic productivity.

“This age bracket is the entry age into the economy. It is when people really get traction and begin to add value to society after years of study and skill acquisition. The economic contribution of that generation can be effectively nullified by a pandemic,” says Dr Terblanché.

In previous pandemics such as the 1918 flu, global mobility was in its infancy. Today the world is connected as never before. Dr Terblanché points out that following the immediate impact on travel and other service industries, including manufacturing and retail supply chains, there would be an extended period of downturn in global trade, investor risk appetites and consumption demand. Deep shifts in social, economic and political relations are possible.

And while Australia is ahead of many countries in terms of government-led health management plans, the business sector is less consistent in terms of detailed planning.

“Our historical experience shows there will be periods of complete shutdown. In addition people will avoid public places and high-rise buildings. Businesses must start looking at their infrastructure to ensure basic services could continue. This includes facilities that allow staff to continue working from remote locations. In NSW particularly directors would be faced with legal liability under current OH&S laws if they allowed employees to risk exposure to a lethal virus in the workplace. These aspects need to be looked at in detail,” Dr Terblanché says.

reported a possible case of human-to-human transmission between an Indonesian woman and her daughter. In another earlier case reported by WHO, a large cluster of cases in a single family on Indonesia's Sumatra Island also appeared to be through limited human-to-human transmission.

WHO has been developing and coordinating global containment strategies for bird flu since the emergence of the H5N1 virus in 2003. Australia is well prepared for a pandemic, according to the Department of Health and Ageing. As of April 2006 the Federal Government committed \$555 million over five years for avian influenza and pandemic preparedness measures. In the event of an outbreak there is enough stockpiled antiviral drugs, says the department, to treat 44 per cent of the population.

Scientists around the world have also been racing against time to develop drugs to help combat H5N1 and other forms of avian flu. At Griffith University's Institute for Glycomics in Queensland, Professor Mark von Itzstein and Dr Thomas Haselhorst have developed a technique to help in the fight to "crack-the-code" of the H5N1 virus.

The technique allows influenza virus specialists to study one of the virus' key surface proteins without risk of infection, a major benefit for countries such as Australia, which tightly restricts the import of the live virus for scientific study. The Griffith team collaborated with researchers at the Hong Kong University Institut Pasteur led by Malik Peiris who developed a method to insert the bird flu's H5 protein into a harmless vehicle for research purposes.

With evidence mounting that H5N1 has evolved to the stage where it can cause limited human-to-human transmission, Professor von Itzstein says there is increasing urgency to develop new drugs to combat the virus.

"The H5 protein is located on the surface of the bird flu virus and acts like a biological glue enabling it to recognise and bind to certain carbohydrates on living cells," Professor von Itzstein says.

"The emergence of a pandemic human influenza virus from a bird flu parent appears to involve this protein developing an ability to switch from binding to the most common carbohydrate in a bird's digestive

tract, to binding to the common carbohydrate in the human upper respiratory tract."

A major threat to current containment strategies is the ability of flu viruses to develop resistance to antiviral drugs. So far 19 flu viruses have developed resistance to the most commonly stockpiled antiviral for H5N1, Tamiflu. The other main antiviral drug stockpiled for flu treatment is Relenza, which was co-developed by Professor von Itzstein. A carbohydrate-based influenza treatment, Relenza targets the flu virus by blocking the function of one of the proteins on the virus' surface, thus preventing it from reproducing.

The ability of influenza viruses to shift and change makes the search for a broad antiviral treatment of the utmost importance, Professor von Itzstein says. He points to the striking similarity of the current bird flu virus to the Spanish flu virus of 1918.

"The mutation of just one amino acid in the protein-binding site appeared to determine the 1918 virus' preference for human carbohydrates. There's no reason why H5N1 couldn't do the same, resulting in a human pandemic."

And with no effective broad-spectrum vaccine for emerging deadly pandemic-like influenza strains available, Professor von Itzstein believes casualties from a pandemic of bird flu or similar virus could rival 1918 figures.

The Griffith research team will use the new technique in their quest for novel antiviral "plug" drugs that block the ability of disease to replicate and spread through the body.

In the meantime world health and economic authorities are urging countries to improve their pandemic readiness. *The Third Global Progress Report* on the world's state of pandemic readiness, produced by the United Nations System Influenza Coordinator (UNSIC) and the World Bank, calls for nations to expand from emergency, short-term responses to sustained medium and long-term strategies. Much more focus is needed on sectors other than health, the report says.

Lynne Blundell is a freelance writer and journalist who writes about finance, health and current affairs. She is a regular contributor to BRW and Property Australia.

The front line of defence

The Institute for Glycomics has received immense support to construct a new centre which will allow for:

- Research laboratory and office space for 150 staff members.
- A new infection control animal holding facility specifically designed for PC2 and PC3 experimentation.
- A glycochemistry facility for synthesis of organic compounds for use in drug design and development.
- A glycobiochemistry facility for molecular biology and biological screening of lead compounds for drug development.
- A glycobiology facility for studying microbial glycomics in pathogenic viruses, bacteria and parasites.

This ambitious expansion program will significantly strengthen the Institute's existing research programs in Mammalian Glycomics, Microbial Glycomics and Enabling Glycotechnology. Your support to the Institute for Glycomics is vital in fighting human diseases that cause many millions to die each year and to prevent the next pandemic that could have dramatic socioeconomic impact.

For further inquiries or to make a donation please contact the Development and Alumni Office at Griffith University on 61 7 5552 7218.

Donations of more than \$2 to Griffith University are tax deductible.



Professor Mark von Itzstein



MARTIN BUZACOTT talks to
Griffith University Alumnus,
JONATHAN WELCH

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS STACEY

Hallelujah

Last year, as Australia entered a period of national reflection, a story emerged reminding the affluent nation that material success was never a substitute for social justice and simple, humane inspiration.

From the filthy, syringe-riddled streets of Melbourne, the Choir of Hard Knocks, consisting of vagrants, drug-addicts and the mentally ill, raised its croaky yet powerful, conviction-filled voice in front of ABC television cameras. Over five gut-wrenching weekly episodes, relaxed and comfortable Australia laughed and cried with those who'd been left behind in the consumer stampede, raising their untrained voices to sing Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and anthems of hope and determination.

Out the front, conducting his rag-tag band of wastrels with unflinching commitment was a conductor named Jonathon Welch, a former Opera Australia tenor-turned-teacher-and-community-campaigner whose frequent behind-the-scenes tears became his trademark, indicative of the passion which drove him to help improve the lives of others.

A year on, and post-Sorry Australia has passed its judgement on both its own previous unthinking excesses and on Jonathon Welch himself. In a more just and outward-looking society, the soon to be 50-year-old is Victorian of the Year, Local Hero award-winner in the Australia Day honours, Limelight magazine's Personality of the Year, and while not yet approaching the status of St Jonathon of Yarraville, there's no doubting that he has become the face of a compassionate and tolerant Australia.

"My mother was a church organist and was very community-minded," he says as he prepares for his regular Wednesday afternoon rehearsal with the choir, with whom he's employed on a three-day-per-week basis. "She was always playing for fund-raising concerts, knitting and making cakes for World Vision and having little parties at home where she'd invite people from retirement villages and put on lunch for them. Friends who were singers would come around and perform for them, so I got that sense of community through music from a very early age."

The breeding was Victorian, but much of Jonathon Welch's training as a musician occurred in Queensland.

Having worked in the Victoria State Opera Chorus since 1981, he joined a touring production of *Pirates of Penzance* three years later. At a performance in Adelaide, the Lyric Opera of Queensland's director David Macfarlane offered him a contract, part of which included the premiere opera season at QPAC and a North Queensland tour with the young Lisa Gasteen and others.

He enrolled at the Queensland Conservatorium where he studied with Australia's greatest tenor Donald Smith. Jonathon remembers arriving at the Con at eight in the morning to sounds of Smith belting out scales, and leaving late in the day with his hard-working mentor still at it, constantly working at his craft. More than that, the inspiration provided by the former Bundaberg canecutter included a down-to-earth attitude that saw Smith eschewing the affected manner

Welch was sorry to leave Queensland in 1988, but the offer of leading roles with Opera Australia, including supporting Dame Joan Sutherland in *The Merry Widow*, couldn't be turned down. But through his six years as a principal with the national opera company, Welch's discomfort with the concept of art-for-art's-sake only began to make this most socially aware of singers reflect on his own role in life.

"I had a break from singing for two or three years, beginning when I was 35. I think I needed a break from the intensity of working at that very high level at a comparatively young age, and I felt I needed to get some perspective on the world at large and to find out things about me as a person and not just as a singer. I didn't go into the Opera House for two years."

Eventually he returned to music, first as part of the vocal trio Tenor Australis but increasingly as a director of community choirs, spending a particularly fruitful stint with Sydney's elite Gay and Lesbian Choir. "The sense of isolation that I'd been experiencing as a gay man from Melbourne living in Sydney seemed to disappear when I became involved with this community choir," he says. "It was much more than being about music."

But it was on a trip to North America that his true calling in life became apparent, after he read about a choir of homeless men operating in Montreal. He formed the Sydney Street Choir on his return to Australia, which in turn led to the establishment of the Choir of Hard Knocks and the television series that made him famous.

"Music was where I could make my living but my heart was really in social justice work."

"Music was where I could make my living but my heart was really in social justice work."

And to top it all off, his choir's self-titled first album has sold well over 100,000 copies and the second, pointedly entitled *Songs of Hope and Inspiration*, is on its way to emulating that Platinum status.

Yet for all the sudden showering of honours, and the natural suspicion that it might all be a nine-month wonder, anyone who's observed Jonathon Welch's 30-year career in the arts knows that the mutual passions for music and a kinder society have been with him from the very beginning, bred into him within a family environment where tunes were great and melodies that helped people were better.

of some opera singers in favour of a natural demeanour that allowed him to relate to the man-in-the-street.

"I was pretty much an unknown at that time and I saw my studies at the Con as being a really big opportunity for me to take on huge roles like that of the celebrant in the Australian premiere of Leonard Bernstein's Mass where I was onstage non-stop for an hour-and-a-half and with a big mad scene at the end! As a young tenor I was presented with just so many opportunities at the Con and at the Opera, which were closely aligned in those days."

I really wanted to work with the homeless and disadvantaged but it wasn't going to make me a living, but now I've managed to marry the two together.

"I really feel that I'm where I'm meant to be. I'm as happy now as I was in those days in the 1980s when I lived in Brisbane and had the great joy of studying music at the Conservatorium with the amazing staff they had and with the wonderful opportunities we were given."

Martin Buzacott is the current John Oxley Library Fellow and was an Executive Producer for ABC Classics on the Choir of Hard Knocks' album Songs of Hope and Inspiration and Jonathon Welch's solo album With a Song in My Heart.

LETTER FROM LONDON

Trade commissioner and Griffith alumnus Kylie Hargreaves relates her journey to Australia House in London.

PHOTOGRAPHY SLATER KING

Several years ago, the Australian National Library released the findings of a 1963 Commonwealth review into the suitability of women as trade commissioners. It included some of the following insightful comments: *"It is extremely doubtful if a woman could stand the fairly severe mental and physical strains and stresses, which are a part of a trade commissioner's life."*

"A man normally has his household run efficiently by his wife. A woman trade commissioner would have all of this to do on top of her normal work duties."

And my favourite:

"Should she fail to get married and stay in the service, it should be noted that a spinster lady can, and very often does, turn into something of a battleaxe."

In an environment like this, why would I choose to be a trade commissioner? The answer is quite simply, because sometimes it feels like one of the best jobs in the world.

What other job gives you a chance to make a real difference to Australia's economic future by helping hundreds of companies to grow, innovate and employ more and more Australians, all while you get to see the world and experience moments that can shape who you are?

For me, some of the standout moments and events in my life can be classified into:

- **"aha" moments** — times that may not be immediately remarkable but had a significant impact,
- **inspiring people** — who through their words and deeds made you a better person, showed you a new way or helped you achieve more than you ever thought possible,
- **magical memories** — people, places and events that make you smile each time you think of them.

Two of my most vivid "aha" moments had to do with patriotism and racism.

As the nomadic daughter of a trade commissioner who completed 10 postings in 22 years, I spent a lot of time in US schools. One day in Venezuela I went to school and the day started as it always did with rollcall and the Pledge of Allegiance.

For some reason, this time as I said the words, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands," it struck me that this wasn't my flag and this wasn't my country.

That's when I first started to understand what it is to say I am Australian, and really mean it and to this day to be Australian fills me with a quiet and constant pride.

My second "aha" moment is not one of my finest, but I am thankful it happened at a very early age.

We were living in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1976 and the government of the day tried to enforce the use of Afrikaans language in all schools.

High school students who marched in protest were greeted with tear gas and gunfire. Three students died in the initial confrontation and in the riots that followed hundreds of black African lives were lost, many of them students.

The black resistance warned they would kill a white child for every black child killed in the Soweto riots and security at my school was on high alert with armed parents guarding the school. As a six-year-old, I wasn't concerned with the political happenings of the nation, yet the fear and distrust this situation engendered must have filtered down to me.

One day I came home and confidently announced to my mother that "all blacks smell". My mother challenged my logic: "Does Jacob smell? What about Charles?" and so on, through a number of black people I knew.

Each time, I had to pause, think and answer truthfully: "No, they don't". By the second and the third "no", I felt angry and stupid that I had taken a piece of information as "fact" without thinking about it myself. I now always challenge things based on my own experiences and logic.

My first two inspiring people are my parents, who told me I could be anything I wanted.

I was fortunate to work for two other inspiring people, Barbara Higgs and Charles O'Hanlon, before they left Austrade.

Barbara was one of Austrade's earliest female trade commissioners. At first glance she was an intimidating individual, tough as nails but extremely intelligent and she won respect

through her exceptional trade craft, strategic skills, logical problem-solving and tough decision-making. What many people don't know is Barbara also has a very big heart, a sharp wit and a big smile.

Charles then taught me that managers can become real leaders, if they are willing to share parts of themselves with their team, not just their expertise and hard work. He gave me the freedom to add my own personality to the professionalism and trade craft that Barbara had role modelled so exceptionally well.

I'm frequently asked if I find it hard to be a constant nomad. It is hard to uproot yourself from everything you know every three to five years but the trade-off is access to an amazing number of magical moments that I would never experience otherwise.

I remember standing in Moscow's Red Square at midnight with snow lightly falling and not another soul in sight; and riding a wicker basket sleigh, with no brakes, down near-vertical pebbled streets in Portugal.

I'll never forget the magic of launching Australia Week: *G'day LA* (USA), which has become the largest annual promotion of any foreign country in the US, where I experienced the mayhem of a red-carpet entrance, along with the likes of Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman, Keith Urban and Cate Blanchett!

For me it's clear that all our individually different magical moments, inspiring people and "aha" moments, impact deeply on our character. To recognise these moments and to embrace them is a wonderful thing, to seek to provide some of that inspiration to others is a noble thing.

For me being a trade commissioner helps me live up to that definition of success, even if my fate is to become a battleaxe!

Kylie Hargreaves is Australia's senior trade commissioner in London. She holds an honours degree in International Relations from Griffith University.

“I now always challenge things based on my own experiences and logic.”

KYLIE HARGREAVES





My View

RALF BUCKLEY
on tourism, climate
and sustainability

Economy, society and the environment face some giant changes over the next couple of decades, all of which will affect the tourism industry. India and China are emerging as global economic powers. Terrorism and oil prices continue to rise. And climate change is the big uncertainty: how much, how fast, and with what consequences and responses?

Over the past two decades, the key issue for sustainability in tourism was simply to introduce existing corporate and government environmental management and land management tools into the tourism sector. This has been a slow and reluctant process, especially in the large-scale property development sector.

The world's leading ecotourism companies deliver a positive triple bottom line by making net positive contributions to conservation and local communities as well as to their shareholders. However, these leaders are few in number and small in size. The vast bulk of the tourism sector still pays little more than lip-service to environmental management or accountability. This is unsurprising: corporations are profit-making entities, and we should expect them to comply only with enforceable government regulations. Calls for self-regulation are political lobbying, not realism.

Climate change, however, cannot be ignored so easily. It will affect the tourism industry worldwide, in several ways. Tourism generates greenhouse gases, so mitigation measures and offsets are the first link. These

measures increase travel costs, on top of increases due to oil prices, and that is the biggest concern for airlines and for long-haul international destinations. Airlines are actively lobbying national governments at present regarding the types of mitigation measures they favour.

Climates are changing where people live, as well as where they go on holiday so those people who currently travel to escape a cold wet winter or a hot dry summer may in future just stay home. That might mean less tourism in total, or it might mean less long-haul but more local tourism.

Climates are changing at tourist destinations, making them more or less attractive to visit. Large-scale tour operators that are affected will simply take clients to new destinations. Cities will cope with the change as they have urban attractions with artificial climates. But for mid-scale tourism destinations which rely on natural attractions, there will be major economic and social impacts.

As mountains get less snow, ski resorts have repositioned themselves as four-season mountain resort-residential developments, with more summer than winter visitors, and revenue streams relying more on retail and land sales than lift tickets. In many national parks the main risks are drought and fire, which damage infrastructure and close off access. On tropical and subtropical coasts and islands there may be storms and floods, drinking water shortages, coral bleaching and increased health risks.

In these destinations, planning for climate change impacts is quite critical. The first need is protection against more extreme weather events, which involves engineering measures and close cooperation with local governments.

There will be social and environmental impacts as well as economic costs and equity issues, and these will have to be estimated and balanced between different stakeholders.

The second is to consider how natural attractions will change and how this might be reflected in tourism products and the destination's image. The tourism industry will need to consider how it can support efforts to maintain natural attractions such as national parks and World Heritage sites. This will require close cooperation with governments, conservation interests and local landholders.

Climate change is not the only issue. Tourism is also affected by social sustainability issues, especially political instabilities. If, for example, major western nations, or a majority of western tourists, boycott the Beijing Olympics because of concern over Tibet, what effect will that have on business for tour operators? And this is possible. It happened at the Moscow Olympics two decades ago.

So, sustainability in tourism just got a whole lot more complicated. Tourists, and tour operators, and government tourist regulators, and tourism researchers need to appreciate global patterns and trends in order to make their own decisions and plan good local strategies.

Griffith University hosts both the new National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) and the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) and International Centre for Ecotourism Research.

Professor Ralf Buckley is Research Director, Climate Response Program, Griffith University and Foundation Chair in Ecotourism, Griffith University.

Personal, political, [un]predictable.



Griffith REVIEW delivers insight and analysis into the issues that matter the most.

Four times a year, each themed edition of Griffith REVIEW presents Australia's most exciting established and emerging authors who tease out the complexities and consequences of current events, paradigms and trends.

Subscribe online with the promo code **RED2008** for a special subscription offer.

www.griffithreview.com

Griffith REVIEW. Join Australia's best conversation.

