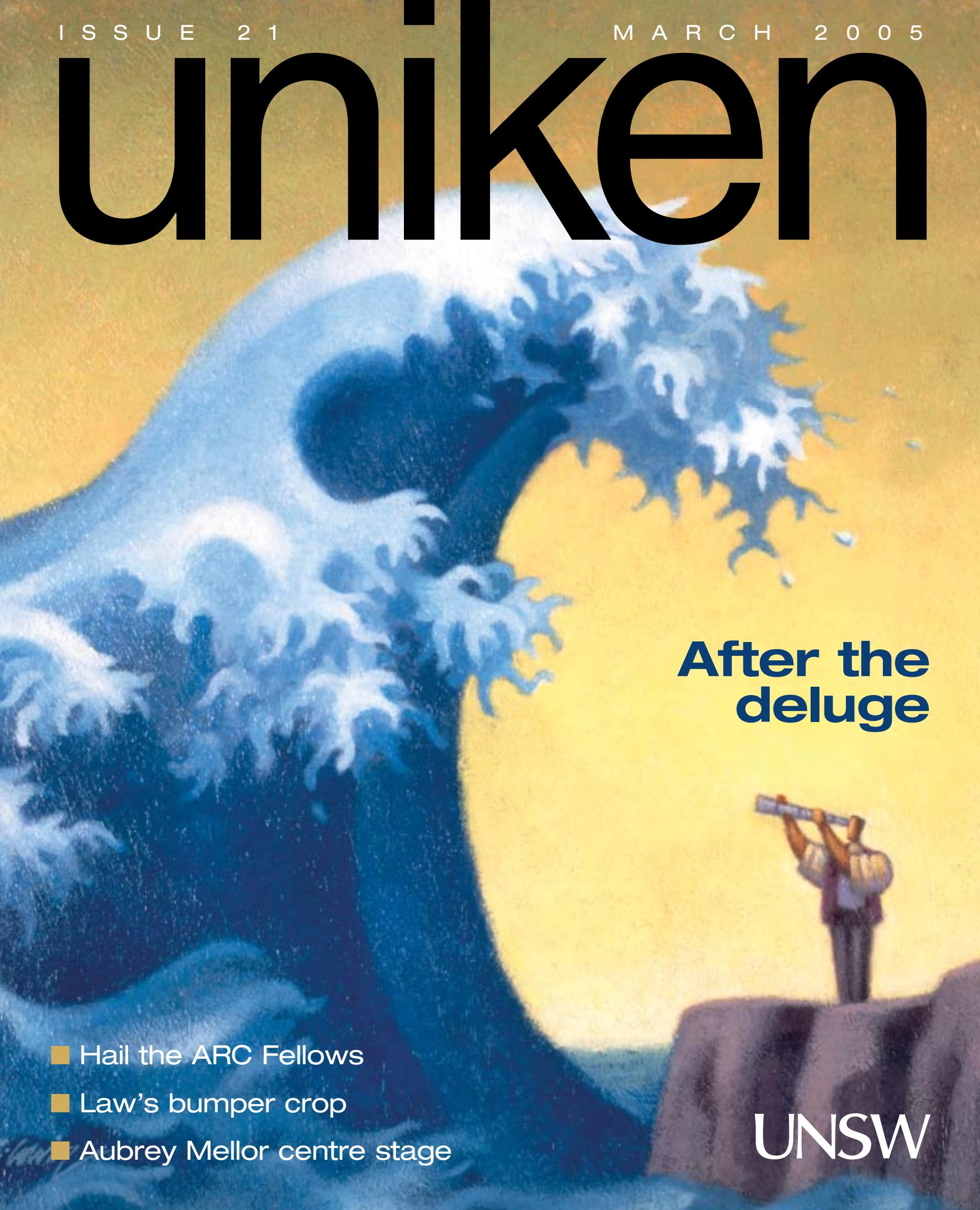


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MARCH 2005

uniKen



**After the
deluge**

- Hail the ARC Fellows
- Law's bumper crop
- Aubrey Mellor centre stage

UNSW

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Trent O'Donnell

Rhodes to success

UNSW's 2005 Rhodes Scholars are science/law graduate David Winterton and arts honours graduate Jeni Whalan. David will undertake a coursework Master's degree in law (BCL) at the University of Oxford followed by a one-year research thesis (MPhil). "One of the areas I'd like to examine as part of my thesis is ways that private law can be used to deal with public wrongs," he said. Jeni, who received first class honours in politics and international relations in 2003, will use her scholarship to study for a doctorate (DPhil) in international relations, examining peace diplomacy and human security. ◆

Eureka! Do you have it?

Entries have opened for the 2005 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes for outstanding science, research, business and ICT innovation, education and science communication, and research into critical environmental and sustainability issues facing Australia. Twenty-three prizes will be awarded in four categories: education, innovation, research and science communication. UNSW is the sponsor of the Eureka Prize for Scientific Research, awarded for outstanding curiosity-driven research by an Australian scientist under the age of 40.

Applicants can enter themselves or be nominated by others. Entries close 13 May and entry forms are available at www.amonline.net.au/eureka. ◆

Teaching excellence

The UNSW Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Teaching Excellence for 2004 have been announced. Recipients in the general category are Dr Tracie Barber and Associate Professor Robin Ford, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (Team Award); Associate Professor Jeffrey Braithwaite, School of Public Health and Community Medicine; Dr Anne Junior, School of Organisation and Management; Dr William Rifkin, Science Communication Program, and Mr Leon Wolff, School of Law. Recipients in the sessional teaching category are Ms Lisa Coleman, School of the Built Environment and Dr Alexander McColl, School of Rural Health. The awards recognise and encourage sustained excellence in teaching and postgraduate research supervision. ◆

Three, two, one, go

Three UNSW medical students were the world's first recorded case of triplets graduating together from medicine, when they received their testamurs at last December's graduation ceremony. Tamara, Veronica and Martina Preda have started work at Liverpool Hospital, alongside fellow UNSW medical graduates, twins Anne and Dianne Tran.

In the same graduating cohort was Casey Wadwell, the first Indigenous student to complete UNSW's Pre-Medicine Program and go on to become a doctor. She has returned to her home area to begin work at Tamworth Base Hospital. The Pre-Medicine Program, now in its seventh year, is designed to address the national shortage of Indigenous doctors. ◆

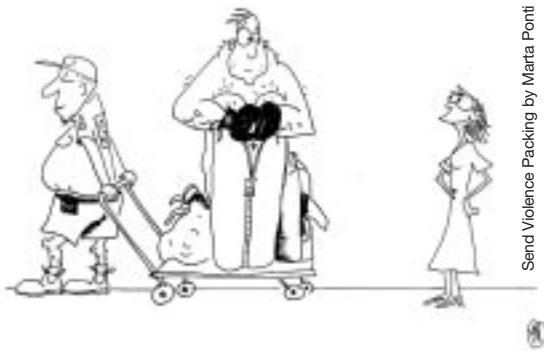


Drs Martina, Veronica and Tamara Preda

Dean of Medicine

Professor Peter Smith is UNSW's new Dean of Medicine. His research interests include molecular genetics and childhood cancer, cancer clinical trials and the measurement of quality outcomes in clinical practice and education. Presently Dean of Medicine at the University of Auckland, Professor Smith has held professorial appointments at the University of Queensland and more recently the University of Melbourne where he was the head of the Department of Paediatrics as well as director of Haematology and Oncology at Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital. He will take up his appointment later this year. ♦

Staying home – leaving violence



Send Violence Packing by Maria Ponti

Pilot programs are underway in response to a report from the UNSW Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. *Staying Home Leaving Violence* examines how women leaving a domestic violence relationship can remain safely in their homes with their children, in four key steps: removing the perpetrator from the home; keeping the perpetrator out of the home over time; the provision of immediate and longer-term safety initiatives for women and their children; and longer-term support for women and children and prevention of further violence.

In response to the report's recommendations the Department of Community Services is implementing three pilot projects to provide support to women and children who choose to stay in their homes in Bega, inner Sydney and Mount Druitt. For the full report see the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse website www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/. ♦

Galaxy gold

A team of British and Australian astronomers has found the missing link between the Big Bang and the structure of the modern universe. The discovery has emerged from a 10-year effort to map and measure the distribution of 220,000 galaxies by a consortium of astronomers using the Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT) at Coonabarabran in NSW. The survey revealed subtle features in the large-scale structure of the universe, confirming that galaxies are not evenly spread out across it but occur in subtle 'lumps' and 'wiggles'. "There is a definite pattern," says Professor Warrick Couch, head of the School of Physics who was part of the team. ♦



Les Field

Les Field, currently Professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Sydney, has not waited until his formal start later this month as UNSW's new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). He is already a presence on campus, attending functions and meetings and thinking about the challenges and opportunities that arise at a major research institution.

He has been an Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty of Science, Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and deputy chair of the Academic Board in his nearly 25 years at the University of Sydney and now is very enthusiastic about the opportunity to lead the research effort at UNSW.

"I hope we can harness the real strength of research at UNSW and pull together our truly outstanding researchers to put UNSW on top of the research league," he said.

To achieve this, he plans to ensure that the research environment is world class to allow people to reach their full potential, to attract the best researchers and to ensure UNSW is the partner of choice for elite international researchers. "I am committed to making sure that our research infrastructure and facilities set us up with the capacity to undertake leading-edge research and attract the absolute best researchers and research students," he said.

The third arm of his strategy inside the University is to focus on the needs of postgraduate students.

"We are already well down the track of appointing a Dean of Postgraduate Research and establishing a Graduate Research School," he said. "This will mean better co-ordination of postgraduates and an overall improvement in the infrastructure needed to support their research programs. I am really hoping to better integrate the postgraduate students into the academic life of the University."

Professor Field's agenda does not lie wholly within the campus. With an eye to the success of other states, particularly Queensland and Victoria where there is an active engagement between government and research-intensive institutions, he would like UNSW to achieve real input into government policy formulation, particularly in driving issues with an impact on research.

"[Federally] there are major issues on the horizon, such as the way large pieces of equipment and the major facilities are supported, a review of how research performance is monitored and the proposed changes to main granting schemes," he said. At a state level, Professor Field points to the absence of a Chief Scientist in NSW (a key position in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia) and the need to recognise the importance of research in the future of NSW.

As a first step, Professor Field hopes to look carefully at the 'big picture' of research at UNSW, reviewing mechanisms for supporting research to ensure maximum effectiveness. "Developing our research reputation isn't something that happens overnight. I will be looking at the whole package with a view to providing some long-term stability and longer-term horizons," he said.

Professor Field, who intends to continue his own research work in organometallic chemistry when members of his research team make the move to Kensington later this year, takes up his position on 29 March. ♦

Louisa Wright

Lacking protocol: Australia outside Kyoto

By Sarah Wilson

While the Kyoto Protocol is considered by some to be a modest start to combating global warming and by others a flawed piece of legislation that gives developing nations a long leash, it remains the first and only international approach to climate change. Frank Muller, Adjunct Professor at UNSW's Institute of Environmental Studies, questions whether Australia can afford to stand outside this unified effort.

The United Nations' Kyoto Protocol, ratified late last year by Russia, took effect in February. The Protocol has been signed by 140 countries, including most industrialised countries and the developing economic superpowers China and India.

The big hold-outs from Kyoto are Australia, the industrialised world's biggest per capita producer of greenhouse gas emissions, and the United States, the world's biggest emitter. Together they account for 38 percent of industrialised-country emissions.

Kyoto aims to reduce industrialised nations' emissions of six main greenhouse gases by five percent (from 1990 levels) by 2012. It gives effect to the principle agreed at Rio in 1992 by world leaders, including then-US President George Bush Senior, that high-emitting and wealthy industrialised countries should take the first steps in combating climate change.

Professor Muller believes that with so much of the world heading in one direction, Australia's failure to do so will have important economic and environmental consequences. "The government is not sending a serious signal to our economy that the future will be different – that the world is beginning to head in a new direction. As a result, we risk missing out on substantial economic opportunities and environmental benefits."



projects that reduce or offset emissions, but only if we join Kyoto.

Australia's inability to participate fully in emissions trading is just one of a number of consequences of not being involved in Kyoto, according to Professor Muller. "Do we really believe Australia's coal and aluminium will be allowed a free ride on the international market?" he said. "There will be consumer and government action that penalises countries who freely emit, and still sell their products on the international market.

"We are already starting to see this occur. The Japanese Government, for example, is talking about adopting a carbon tax, which would apply to imported Australian coal. We face a double jeopardy: on the one hand, we can't insulate our traditional exports from a shift in global markets towards accounting for greenhouse emissions and on the other hand, we may end up having to import greenhouse-friendly technologies and expertise that we could have commercialised ourselves."

So where can Australia go from here? "At UNSW, cutting-edge research is being carried out in the renewable energy fields of solar hydrogen and photovoltaics. Research and development opportunities in new energy sources need strong government support but if we are to realise our potential, strong 'market pull' policies will be needed, in addition to the 'technology push' of research and development support. Policies might include a national emissions cap and trading scheme, a more effective mandatory renewable energy target and reform of energy utilities from their current 'supply-side' orientation."◆

See Last Word p16 for an opinion piece on the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

Style your healthy life!

By Susi Hamilton

UNSW staff and students now have access to a unique exercise and lifestyle program. The Healthy Lifestyle Clinic, which is run as part of the Health and Sports Science program, offers lifestyle change as well as preventative rehabilitation programs.

"There are very few, if any, clinics doing what we do," said head of the Health and Sports Science program, Associate Professor Steve Boutcher. "It is totally different to a gym because we focus on an individual's lifestyle and rehabilitation."

Accredited exercise physiologists supervise the clinic with senior students helping to run the programs.

"A lot of the work is home-based and

participants are able to choose what suits them," Professor Boutcher said. "In addition to exercise programs, we also look at factors such as stress, eating habits, posture, flexibility and lifestyle."

The lifestyle change component of the Clinic is a five-week program that includes a two-hour screening and a one-hour weekly session with the program supervisor. The two-hour assessment which the volunteers complete at the beginning and end of the program included measuring blood pressure, blood lipids, body composition, diet, aerobic fitness and pulmonary and heart function.

"Each client's data is summarised in a comprehensive portfolio and each week,

positive changes are monitored in coloured graphs and tables," Professor Boutcher said. "There is a significant education component in each program, where people learn lifestyle skills."

The Clinic also functions as a research centre and provides other services such as preventative and neuromuscular rehabilitation. The Clinic has been operating on campus for two years, but has to date only been used as part of the studies of the Health and Sports Science undergraduates.

The Healthy Lifestyle Clinic will take up to 50 clients for each five-week period, when it starts in April. For further information, please see <http://sportscience.med.unsw.edu.au>. ◆

Sultan of Brunei visits UNSW

UNSW literally rolled out the red carpet last month for the first visit by a royal head of state in more than 30 years. His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei was welcomed by Vice-Chancellor Professor Mark Wainwright and senior academics for his only visit to a university in Australia during his official state visit.

In his welcome, Professor Wainwright said he was pleased that UNSW had been enrolling high-achieving students from Brunei for a number of years. He told His Majesty that UNSW's School of Petroleum Engineering was not only the first established in Australia but was also outstanding by world standards.



The Sultan of Brunei with Professor John Ingleson and the Bruneian entourage on campus last month.

Given our strong international orientation, UNSW was delighted when His Majesty indicated he wanted to visit

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development), Professor John Ingleson, spoke about UNSW's engagement with the region and said that UNSW was Australia's most international university. Professor Ingleson said that the tradition of hosting students from the region had made a highly multicultural campus and described plans for UNSW Asia's campus in Singapore.

His Majesty met UNSW's two dozen students from Brunei and spoke briefly to each of them. Bruneian students from other universities were also invited to attend the welcome in the Council Chambers. On his tour of the campus, His Majesty visited two of UNSW's internationally recognised research centres, the Centre of Excellence in Advanced Silicon Photovoltaics and Photonics and the Centre of Excellence in Quantum Computing Technology, as well as the Scientia building.

"Given our strong international orientation, UNSW was delighted when His Majesty indicated he wanted to visit," Executive Director of UNSW International, Jennie Lang, said. "We are looking forward to forging strong ties with Brunei as a result." Ms Lang pointed to the bilateral trade agreements signed during the Sultan's visit to Canberra that have enabled direct flights between Australia and Brunei as being an advantage for prospective students.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, is the 29th of his line, which dates back to the fourteenth century. He has been head of state since 1967. As well as being Sultan and Ruler, His Majesty is also Brunei's Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Finance Minister and head of the religion of Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei has a number of educational links with Australia and in 2004 had more than 700 students at Australian institutions. At UNSW, they are overwhelmingly enrolled in petroleum engineering. Brunei Shell Petroleum, which assesses Bruneian students and offers scholarships, sponsors the petroleum engineering students at UNSW in return for a commitment to work for the corporation in Brunei for five years after graduation. UNSW students from Brunei are also enrolled in marketing, pathology, surveying and art programs. ♦

Louisa Wright

For the record

Scientists do not work in isolation. Of all the areas of intellectual activity, science is absolutely dependent on the free exchange of information... science could not now survive without the internet.

Professor Peter Little, School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences – Sydney Morning Herald

Formally recognising the day gives a lot more weight to the recognition that this terrible thing did happen.

Professor Richard Bryant, School of Psychology, on the tsunami day of mourning – The Age

Our ability to suppress our true feelings is disrupted under demanding conditions.

Professor Bill von Hippel, School of Psychology – Sydney Morning Herald

John Howard is very much his own man when it comes to appointing judges. He has looked for people who are likely to decide cases the way he would like and in this he has not been disappointed.

Professor George Williams, Faculty of Law, on the current High Court – Sydney Morning Herald

The air temperature doesn't affect the sea temperature; in fact it's the other way around.

Professor Jason Middleton, Department of Aviation, on cool water temperatures in December and January – Daily Telegraph

I find it exciting to work with hot, fiery furnaces. My kids tease me about this. But I know I have ended up in the right place.

Professor Veena Sahajwalla, School of Materials Science and Engineering, on working in sustainable materials processing – Sydney Morning Herald

Permanent residents are Australians for tax purposes so they should be for HECS too.

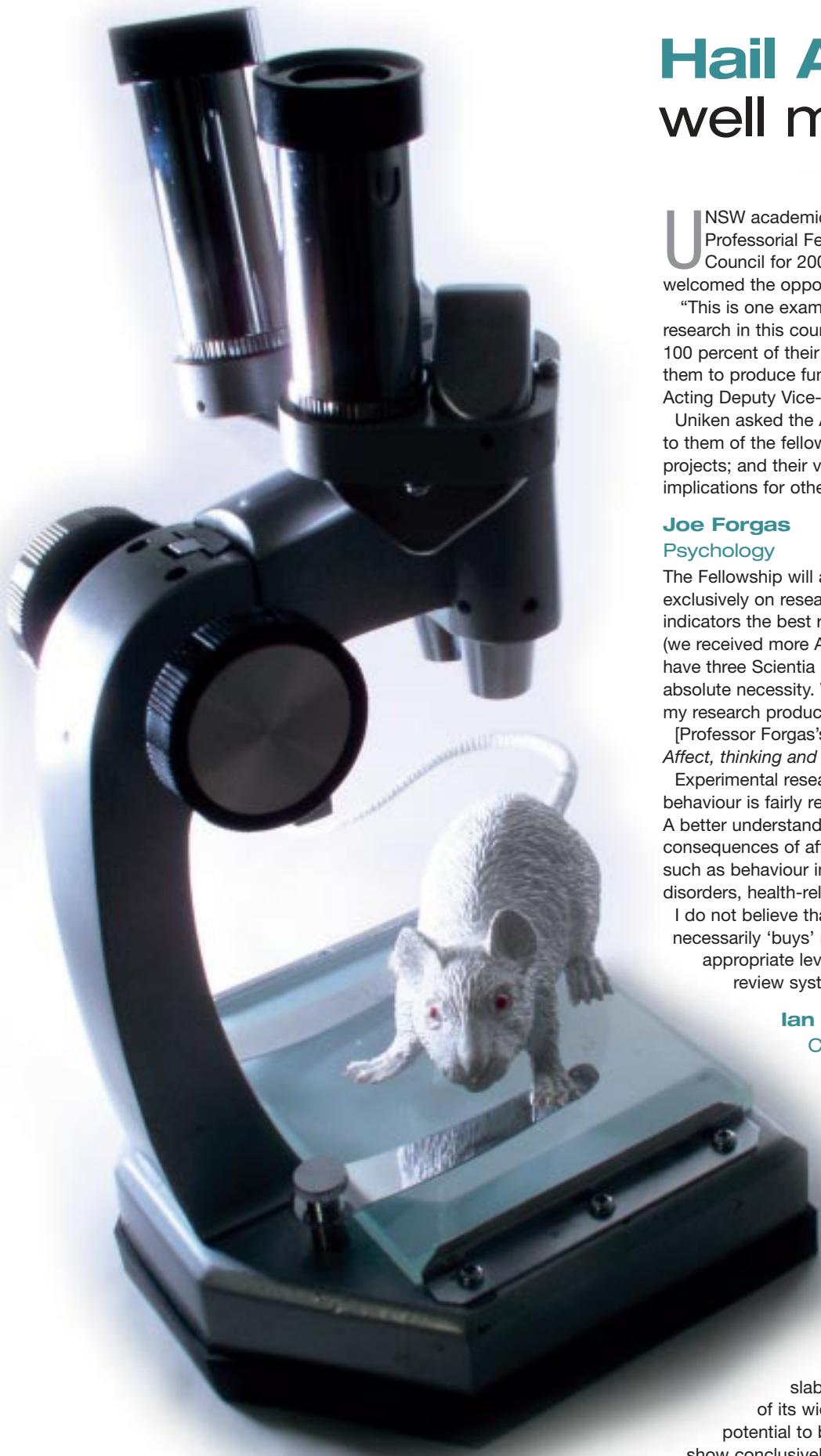
Sarah-Jane Collins, National Union of Students, on the requirement from 1 January that permanent residents must pay their university fees up front – Sydney Morning Herald

If it is not being elitist to support kids who are talented in sports or music, then why is it elitist to help kids who have talents in maths or science?

Professor Miraca Gross, GERRIC – West Australian

The person who, for instance, is good at negative hallucinations, at blocking out some experience that is there, is probably very good at managing pain.

Professor Kevin McConkey, School of Psychology – Medical Observer



Hail ARC Fellows, well met!

By Louisa Wright

UNSW academics won seven of the 23 prestigious Australian Professorial Fellowships awarded by the Australian Research Council for 2005, and the successful researchers have welcomed the opportunity to focus on their research.

"This is one example of the great things the ARC is doing for research in this country – allowing top-level researchers to devote 100 percent of their time to deep research questions and allowing them to produce fundamental new research discoveries," the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Petersen, said.

Uniken asked the ARC Professorial Fellows about the significance to them of the fellowship; the potential impact or benefit of their projects; and their views about large-scale funding and its implications for other researchers.

Joe Forgas

Psychology

The Fellowship will allow me, for the very first time, to focus exclusively on research. Even though our School is by most indicators the best research department in psychology in Australia (we received more ARC funding than any other school, and we have three Scientia Professors), heavy teaching loads are an absolute necessity. Without a Fellowship, I could not maintain my research productivity.

[Professor Forgas's project is titled *Hearts and minds: Affect, thinking and behaviour*.]

Experimental research on affective influences on cognition and behaviour is fairly recent, and this is a very exciting field to be in. A better understanding of the cognitive and behavioural consequences of affect has widespread implications in many areas, such as behaviour in organisations, personal relationships, affective disorders, health-related behaviours and educational psychology.

I do not believe that large-scale funding is a panacea and necessarily 'buys' more or better research. Decisions about the appropriate level of funding should always be left to the peer review system.

Ian Gilbert

Civil and Environmental Engineering

The Fellowship will give me the opportunity to step down as Head of School, to devote myself full-time to research, to work on an exciting and important project and to make significant contributions to the field of structural engineering.

[Professor Gilbert's project is *The implications of low-ductility reinforcement and strain localisation on the strength and ductility of reinforced concrete two-way slabs*.]

The recent introduction in Australia of low-ductility, deformed welded wire fabric reinforcement (Class L) has resulted in concrete slabs with relatively brittle failure modes. The impact of its widespread use in two-way concrete slabs has the potential to be disastrous. It is expected that the research will show conclusively that the Australian Standards concerned with

the ductility of steel reinforcement are inadequate (dangerously so) and that steel of higher ductility is required to ensure adequate safety.

In my field, heavy structural testing requires expensive equipment, skilled technical staff, large amounts of space and expensive infrastructure. It cannot be done without external support. For junior colleagues, large-scale funding provides very significant opportunities to take on an active role in the project and, therefore, build up their track records and further their careers.

Ian Petersen

Information Technology and Electrical Engineering, UNSW@ADFA

[The Fellowship] means I can devote 100 percent of my time to research and focus on deep research questions and interact with postdocs and PhDs who I can fund from the grant as well. It also relieves me of my undergraduate teaching responsibilities.

Mine is a fairly technical project [*Uncertain Systems Theory applied to Nonlinear Robust Control and Filtering*] and my research is mainly on the theoretical side. The applications are relevant to the more technical parts of electrical engineering as well as to automotive, manufacturing, engineering, defence, IT and communications.

[The Fellowship] is also good for my school in general as the increase in research intensity in the school, also employing new postdocs and bringing on new PhDs, will add to the research activity in the school. The flow-on to other colleagues can range from roles as co-supervisors to more research seminars. Obviously there are also direct benefits from the employment of junior researchers as postdocs.

Victor Flambaum

Physics

Of course, this Fellowship is very significant for me. It gives me time which is always not enough, the possibility to attend conferences which are usually scheduled conveniently for researchers from the northern hemisphere and sometimes during most inappropriate times for people who teach in Australia, the possibility to work efficiently with my numerous collaborators from USA and Europe, and with my local collaborators and PhD students. [Professor Flambaum's project is titled *Test of unification theories in atomic and nuclear phenomena*.]

Aibing Yu

Materials Science and Engineering

This Fellowship offers an opportunity for me to concentrate on research for five years, which may lead to the solution of some core problems in granular dynamics, a field which has rapidly developed in the past decade or so and probably now reaches a critical point to generate a significant breakthrough.

My project [*Granular dynamics: theories, modelling and*

simulation]

will tackle the core problems in the field of particle science and technology. Granular research is particularly important to Australia. Mining and agriculture industries contribute more than 50 percent of Australia's export income. As much as 70 percent of the products of these industries are in particulate form. The cost of storing and transporting these products alone is estimated to be in the order of 40 percent of GNP. An improvement of only one percent in handling/process efficiency can result in savings of more than \$100m per year for the minerals industry alone. This research program addresses the physics underpinning particle packing and flow. Such fundamental research plays a critical role to advance particulate science and technology.

Large-scale funding is necessary if we want to advance science and technology which is strategically important to Australia.

This is one example of the great things the ARC is doing for research in this country – allowing top-level researchers to devote 100 percent of their time to deep research questions



Brett Neilan

Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences

This [Fellowship] allows me to make one last big discovery in the field of blue-green algal toxicity, something we have been working on for the last eight years, and move on to the next stage of our research. So for another five years I will be focusing on my group's research and trying my best to avoid the temptation to lecture and administrate.

Once we have found all the genes responsible for toxin production by cyanobacteria we will have a very rapid and sensitive method for assessing urban and rural water quality. We are already partnering the commercialisation of these tests that are some of the first in the world to use DNA fingerprinting for environmental safety issues.

Large-scale funding is great for the people who get it but I wouldn't like to see the prospects for individuals with less grand ideas compromised by any bulk funding policies. Personally, I have treasured my research independence and think that diversity and a passion for one's own field will, in the end, naturally form larger successful research clusters.

[Dr Neilan's project is *Sodium homeostasis and the molecular basis for neurotoxin production by bacteria and algae*.]

Yong Zhao (Materials Science and Engineering)

is UNSW's seventh Australian Professorial Fellowship winner for his project *Improvement of Critical Current Density of High Temperature Superconductors by Reforming Microstructure at Nanoscale*. ◆

After the **deluge**



The Boxing Day earthquake, west of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, measured 9.0 on the Richter scale, making it the largest quake worldwide in four decades. Six weeks later, the number of people killed in the subsequent tsunami was estimated to have reached 295,000.

The UNSW response has been on a number of levels. Individual researchers with links to affected countries have already been to the region to lend their expertise, and others are actively involved in projects on the ground. On campus, a cross-faculty working group, the UNSW Tsunami Response Group, has been established to supply a forum through which academics and other staff members can contribute to the post-tsunami effort.

A prime driver of the group, Professor Anthony Zwi, sees extensive possibilities for the group. Professor Zwi, head of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and a co-author of the WHO's first *World Report on Violence and Health*, said that academics from his own school, as well as Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Social Work and Faculty of the Built Environment had attended a meeting intended to help shape the UNSW response.

"We recognise that any response needs to be congruent with our educational mandate and should be sensitive to realities on the ground," he said. "With the depth and breadth of expertise and research interests on this campus, we have a great deal to contribute if we can establish partnerships which work closely with in-country institutions, add value and support the enhancement of local capacity."

"The Tsunami Response Group is keen to develop cross-faculty initiatives which offer something with an educational and training component and with a medium-term horizon."

Louisa Wright and **Susi Hamilton** spoke to academics who have responded to the aftermath of the tsunami.

The early response

Three UNSW staff were in Sri Lanka almost immediately after the tsunami swept through, to help develop health and psychosocial programs for the survivors. Professor Zwi, Dr Chinthaka Balasooriya and Natalie Grove, all from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, contributed to the development of a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) work plan, which will be used for longer-term planning in response to the tsunami.

"In many ways, we are just at the beginning of this crisis. While most people will cope with the extremely adverse situations they have



Before the deluge... on a traditional Maldivian boat, the dhoni

Across the world, violence against women is one of the things that increase dramatically in disaster situations

experienced, some will find this more challenging and their particular difficulties may only emerge over time," Professor Zwi said.

"UNFPA worked with non-governmental organisations and government agencies to identify current providers of psychosocial services and support systems in Sri Lanka," he said. "It was hoped that by identifying needs, and the gaps in their services, that they would determine how best to complement each other. A significant problem in many such situations is co-ordination between agencies – but we saw in Sri Lanka a number of important efforts to promote better co-ordination."

A number of agencies identified frontline workers as themselves being in need of support. "Teachers, police officers and health workers are all dealing with people in varying stages of grief. They may need support in refining their own skills, and dealing with their own experience of crisis, as they seek to assist others."

Supporting the women

Two UNSW academics have returned to Sri Lanka to continue their work with some of the most vulnerable survivors of the tsunami.

Dr Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei, who are both from the School of Social Work, are working with local women's groups, assisting them in providing psychosocial support to women and girls affected by the tsunami.

"Tragically, across the world, violence against women and girls is one of the things that increase dramatically in conflict and disaster situations," Linda Bartolomei said, ahead of her second post-tsunami visit.

"Women's groups across Sri Lanka are reporting an increase in family and domestic violence, and indicate that the large, often overcrowded camps are exacerbating problems within families," she said. "There have also been a number of reports of sexual abuse and rape, including several gang rapes which occurred immediately after the tsunami struck."

On their first trip to the country after the disaster, the UNSW academics held one-day workshops for local women on how to prevent and respond to risk. This time, the pair is working with UNFPA, the Sri Lankan Government and women's groups to facilitate a five-day workshop with 25 local women trainers. The workshop participants will go on to train other women working in community-based organisations around the country.

"There are hundreds of women who are working in tsunami-affected areas," Dr Pittaway said. "Many of them are highly skilled, but others have limited experience in providing psychosocial support."

Need a collaborator?

For any academic who feels they have a contribution to make to tsunami-related research and may be looking for a collaborator, a research matchmaker service exists. Go to www.newspaper.unsw.edu.au and follow the *Research Matchmaker* link. ♦



The training includes how to identify and respond to women and girls who are at risk, documenting incidents of abuse and establishing safe spaces for emotional support and service provision.

"One of the things happening immediately after the tsunami was that some groups were denying the existence of these abuses," Dr Pittaway said. "It is really important that these women's groups know how to document these and report them effectively, so that the risks can be minimised."

The pair indicates that the risks could go on for many months, while families remain housed in temporary shelter, often sharing sleeping areas with multiple families. The UNFPA is also interested in sharing the training resources developed with the support of the School of Social Work across other affected areas such as Aceh.

Surveying the damage

Two UNSW academics are part of a group of Australian and New Zealand academics leaving next month to take part in a post-tsunami survey of the Maldives.

Dr Rob Brander of the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences and Professor Roger McLean of the School of Physical, Environmental and Mathematical Sciences at UNSW@ADFA will join the team led by Dr Paul Kench from the University of Auckland. In February 2002, Dr Brander and Dr Kench established permanent survey benchmarks on twelve of the atoll's low-lying coral reef islands. They returned in 2003 as part of a larger team with funding for Dr Kench from New Zealand's Marsden Fund.

"The impact of the tsunami, and our existing survey material, gives us an unprecedented scientific opportunity to examine the impact of a very rare and extreme natural event on the stability of low-lying reef islands," Dr Brander said. "These types of islands often support significant human populations, not only in the Maldives but worldwide, including in the Torres Strait. This opportunity is unique in the scientific literature and we have to act immediately. Our information will provide the Maldives with significant guidance in the rebuilding of damaged islands."

Multilingual help

The NSW Transcultural Mental Health Centre has made the following translations of the NSW Chief Health Officer Alert, *Coping Personally after the Tsunami*, available in English, Chinese, Thai, Somali, Tamil, Bahasa Indonesian, Hindi and Singhalese, which may be useful for students or staff affected by the tsunami. Download from www.tmhcnsw.gov.au. ♦

The group's published study was the first systematic monitoring of changes in these islands, which were considered to be the most vulnerable landforms on earth even before the Boxing Day tsunami swept through.

The post-tsunami island survey, supported by funding from the Vice-Chancellor's office, will measure and assess the impact of the tsunami, based on resurveys of previously monitored islands and on a survey of tsunami indicators

countries. This is the first time the processes underpinning emergency healthcare using mobile technology have been trialled. There have been sporadic efforts in developing telemedicine and more permanent systems are under trial in Bhutan, India, Mozambique and Bolivia. "These e-health systems have a range of applications, such as emergency telemedicine, epidemic control and even combating bioterrorism," Dr Ray said.

The impact of the tsunami gives us an unprecedented scientific opportunity

on other islands, such as vegetation damage, groundwater contamination and erosion. The project will run in liaison with the Maldivian Environment Research Centre and will help guide future island planning and infrastructure.

Other members of the post-tsunami survey project in the Maldives are Dr Scott Nichol (Auckland) and Dr Scott Smithers (James Cook).

Technology without borders

A UNSW academic is the joint leader of a project that uses the latest technology to bring the best medical advice and treatment to survivors of the tsunami in Aceh.

"We are helping to deliver temporary medical kiosks, which will be used as part of a trial in some refugee camps in Aceh," said Dr Pradeep Ray, of the School of Information Systems, Technology and Management in the Faculty of Commerce and Economics. "We are developing the infrastructure for these kiosks, which have laptops, satellite terminals and telemedicine equipment. Through this, doctors can remotely assess patients and give them medical advice."

Dr Ray is one of two leaders of the project, which involves more than 100 researchers and doctors from all over the world.

"Because the affected region is so remote, survivors often get very basic medical advice from emergency workers," Dr Ray said. "With the medical kiosks, they can get top advice from doctors hundreds of kilometres away."

The service will be connected through the central hospital in Aceh. The patients will then be assessed remotely by doctors in other

A team is expected to visit Aceh soon for an inspection before the equipment is delivered. This is a joint initiative of *Technologie sans Frontiers*, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-D), which is responsible for telecommunication development on behalf of the United Nations.

Survey skills in demand

Two members of the School of Social Work are acting as consultants to the International Red Cross in Colombo. The approach to Dr Eileen Baldry and Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson came through a graduate of the school's Master of International Social Development program who was working on the ground in Sri Lanka. Both Professor Vinson and Dr Baldry have extensive experience in social survey sampling, which they have used to measure and compare social indicators such as crime, social cohesion, education issues and families at risk.

It was this sampling expertise that the Red Cross was seeking in order to conduct a rapid needs assessment of water and sewerage needs of damaged villages and communities along the Sri Lankan coast. While the academics were unable to drop their commitments and go themselves, they are advising the Sri Lankan Government's water and sewerage committee on sampling methods and populations to achieve the most useful data.

In order to secure water and latrine facilities, both for people who managed to stay in their communities and for the villagers now in refugee camps who want to return home, it is necessary to establish not only the remnants of services that still exist but, importantly, what was in place before the tsunami hit. Ideally, the data will also inform the longer-term construction of an improved water supply system. The survey is expected to get underway shortly. ♦

Law's bumper crop

The Faculty of Law has had its best ever grants result, with researchers being awarded more than \$2.26 million from the ARC and NHMRC in the most recent rounds.

Dean of Law Professor Leon Trakman attributes the success to a significant level of focus that researchers across the faculty have placed on non-traditional research.

"The norm in law schools is to conduct research in a traditional manner that doesn't draw as much from external funding," he said. "UNSW recognises that law is not an isolated study but lives in a broader social and behavioural context. This multidisciplinary approach increasingly draws together teams of scholars from across the University and beyond."

Projects funded include terrorism and public law; development of the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII); corporate governance and institutional investment; and through Atax, reform of Australia's personal income tax system.

"The great success of AustLII [Australasian Legal Information Institute], led by Graham Greenleaf, is clearly an indication that they're engaging in a pioneering way in the largest free legal database in the world," Professor Trakman said.

"George Williams' very successful grant for a

five-year project on public law and terrorism is a prime example of non-traditional ways of addressing global problems."

Head of School Associate Professor Sandra Egger is part of a team that received more than \$400,000 from the NHMRC for a three-year project to examine the health impact of prostitution laws. "This important achievement highlights the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of research," Professor Trakman said.

According to the Faculty's Associate Dean (Research), Professor David Dixon, it is a very exciting period in legal research. "It is about a change in the culture of legal research generally and people looking to do large scale projects that are carried out by collaborative teams," he said.

But Professor Dixon stressed this approach shouldn't be seen to replace traditional research. "Some kinds of traditional legal research are unlikely to receive significant funding. This doesn't make them any less valuable or important."

And he said while all the most recent grant recipients were senior academics, "we've got a really strong group of early-career researchers, a number of whom are applying this year".

"It is very important that we have strong

research leadership coming from our senior academics as grant success depends so much on support and mentoring."

Professor Dixon said the grants result was complemented by a significant increase in publications and the best-ever result in completion and award of research higher degrees.

The faculty's success across key research indicators coincides with a number of new appointments, which Professor Trakman describes as "very exciting additions from leading scholars in areas quite diverse ranging from international law and human rights to corporate and commercial law".

Professor Andrew Byrnes, presently at ANU, works in international human rights law and will take a lead role in UNSW's international law program; Professor Dimity Kingsford Smith has come from Monash University (see story below) and Associate Professor Paul Ali, from the University of Melbourne, will teach and research in his area of corporations law and corporate governance. All three bring research grants with them to the University. Four other senior lecturer and lecturer appointments have also been made. ◆

By Denise Knight

Corporate law professor touches down at UNSW

Professor Dimity Kingsford Smith is one of Australia's leading authorities on the regulation of financial products and markets. She joined the law school in January from Monash University.

"I teach traditional courses like corporate law and financial regulation but I also have a socio-legal thread in my scholarship. This is perhaps unusual in an area which is usually thought of as traditional and rule-based," she said. "The heart of my research is on theories of regulation and the way law is responding to modern developments like globalisation and law made not by the state but by private bodies such as stock exchanges. Both these trends are relevant to online investing."

Professor Kingsford Smith is chief investigator in a three-year \$285,000 ARC grant, *One Day, We'll All Invest This Way! Regulating Online Investment*.

Online investing is of interest because "it is a new way that ordinary people are engaging with the financial sector", she said. "In Australia we have more individual shareholders than almost any economy in the world. We also have choice in superannuation and the necessity to invest a lump sum on retirement. Consequently, investing and related questions such as corporate governance have increasing public



Britta Campion

Dimity Kingsford Smith

significance. People are provoked to invest online through advertising and because it's cheaper than with a broker. This research is designed to identify ways regulation might reduce avoidable losses."

With the experience of having taught in four law schools in two countries, she was attracted to UNSW because of its reputation

as a progressive law school. "There are very fine scholars in this faculty – world-class scholars – so there's lots to look forward to. And the new law building makes possible many exciting opportunities – and I hear digging is underway!" ◆

Getting their voices heard: NGOs in Germany and Australia

By Alex Clark

Non-government organisations advocating for asylum seekers are not taken seriously in Australia, according to research by Claudia Tazreiter from the School of Sociology and Anthropology. Instead, she argues, they are seen here as troublemakers and left wing activists.

Tazreiter's recent book, *Asylum Seekers and the State: the politics of protection in a security-conscious world*, compares the role of NGOs in

Australia and Germany by examining how they are used to lobby governments and international organisations for change to asylum-seeker policy.

Her research indicates that NGOs in Germany receive more respect and are acknowledged by both the general public and the government as important contributors to policy-making.

"In contrast, Australian NGOs are seldom brought into policy discussions and, when they are, it seems to be in a token capacity," Tazreiter said.

The comparative case studies also demonstrate the clear contrast in asylum-seeker policy. Unlike Australia, Germany does not consider itself a state of immigration, although in 1992 alone 400,000 refugees crossed its borders.

"Australia, a nation built on immigration, is alone in its mandatory detention and the long-term consequences of such policies including mental health issues will be unique to Australia," Tazreiter said.

"In Germany, asylum seekers are rarely kept in detention for more than six or eight weeks to establish health and security bona fides."

Australian NGOs are seldom brought into policy discussions and, when they are, it seems to be in a token capacity

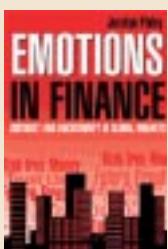


While the process of completing visa applications takes just as long in both countries, asylum seekers in Germany and in most European countries are able to live in the community during this period. Tazreiter believes the Australian approach of mandatory detention creates a fear of foreigners within the Australian community by virtue of this forced separation behind barbed wire. It has largely fallen on advocacy groups in Australia to draw attention to the situation of individual asylum seekers and to lodge appeals on their behalf.

"Following Tampa, the Australian Government tightened its processes and effectively removed particular rights of appeal," Tazreiter said. "As a receiver society and a signatory to the Refugee Convention, Australia has obligations and must adhere to certain rules. These include giving any person seeking asylum the benefit of the doubt until the credibility of a protection claim is established."

Tazreiter interviewed the local media, relevant NGOs and federal and state politicians in both Germany and Australia. While she is adamant that both the general public and the government need to listen and respond to NGOs, she believes the future holds little promise. "In Australia there is a clear shift in funding from anything that looks like advocacy to NGOs that are involved purely in service delivery." ♦

Emotions in finance



Research by Jocelyn Pixley, of the School of Sociology and Anthropology, has been published in a book titled *Emotions in Finance, distrust and uncertainty in global markets*.

The book examines the influence of emotion and speculation on the world's increasingly volatile financial sector by examining the views of experienced elites within it.

Dr Pixley's research shows how emotions are intrinsic to the hard-headed world of money and argues that distrust is uppermost in every new strategy as the financial sector assumes opportunism and greed in its calculations of the unknowable future.

"For 20 years, banks have sold money as a commodity, though centuries of economic history shows that nothing is more uncertain or fragile than money," she said. "Likewise, investment firms constantly seek new strategies to try and control the future but events are not predictable."

Dr Pixley drew three main propositions from her research: the finance world can never find certainty (internally or externally), emotions are not removable, and therefore caution is the requisite emotion.

"No one in the financial heartland knows the future; emotions are the sole support to watching 'indicators' and reducing uncertainty to mere risk," she said.

Emotions in Finance was launched by journalist Richard Ackland at the UNSW Bookshop late last year. ♦ *Alex Clark*



Aubrey Mellor on centre stage

Leading Australian theatre director Aubrey Mellor took up the role of Director of NIDA (the National Institute of Dramatic Art) in January. His appointment followed the departure of John Clark who retired after almost 40 years in the position. Mellor spoke with Alex Clark about NIDA's past, present and future direction on both the local and international stage.

Britta Campion

“I’ve often said I have a Shakespearean tangential style of talking but Shakespeare, I’m sure, knew where his tangents would meet – I’m not sure I do,” says Mellor.

Despite his modesty, the new head of Australia’s prestigious and internationally acclaimed drama school appears to know exactly where his tangents meet as he jumps between the importance of international exchange, the progress of his new first-year students and NIDA’s role in resisting potential damage to Australia’s cultural identity from the new trade agreement with America.

Mellor is no stranger to NIDA. Between 1973 and 1978, he taught acting at the institute and returned in 1985 in the role of Deputy Director for three years. But his understanding runs even deeper: Mellor graduated from the Institute in 1969, a time when its graduates entered a vastly different industry.

“In those days, each state funded a major theatre company at which you would see NIDA students employed for a year after graduating,” he said. “Those companies no longer have ensembles of actors for students to join. Mel Gibson and Judy Davis were part of the last generation that had those opportunities. Today you may walk out and get a major role in the Sydney Theatre Company but you won’t get a year-long contract.

“It’s the more experienced actors and the NIDA graduates, who have built a name for themselves, who pick up the best parts in major productions today. Graduates might get a small role in a soapy or you might become an assistant designer on a movie but the bulk of actors in theatre will not go into anything immediately. Instead they put on plays themselves – understanding all the elements of producing a play is now part of their final year.”

NIDA’s production course, its most successful but largely unsung course, is a different story. “Production graduates get beautiful

secondments, one will go to New York and another to London,” Mellor said. “They all go straight into work and are never out of work.”

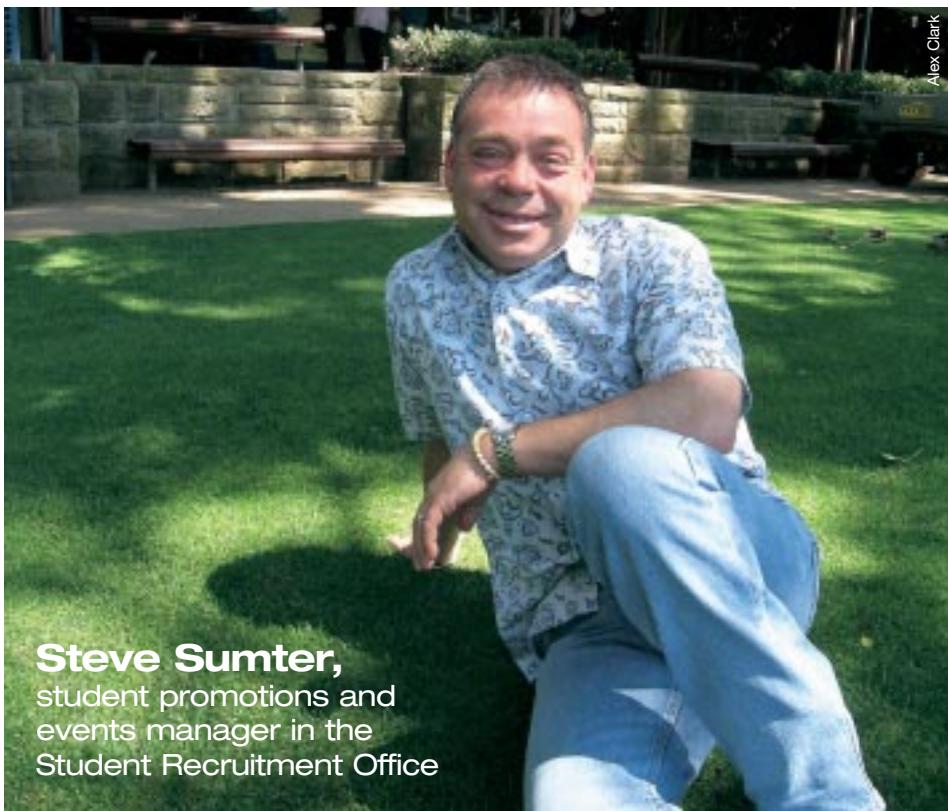
Understanding shifts in the local and international theatre, film and television industries, are key strengths Mellor has brought to NIDA’s directorship. He has held four artistic directorships in theatre companies and worked with internationally acclaimed actors including Hugo Weaving, Meryl Streep, Guy Pearce, Lynne Redgrave, Diane Cilento, Bryan Brown, Robyn Nevin and Colin Friels. Mellor knows only too well the changing environment his students are attempting to join.

“Australia is changing rapidly – almost everything we worked towards for 30 years has been turned and twisted around as Americanisms creep in and Australian plays, films and novels fall out of fashion,” Mellor said. “We are waiting to see what will happen under the new trade agreement but we [NIDA] need to look at how we can empower our artists to maintain our own identity.”

Mellor believes people are bored with realism and pronounces the traditional play to be an endangered species. “If what is going on on stage is the same as what you can see on television, people question why they are even going to the theatre and why they are paying for it,” Mellor said. “I am really interested in exploring this relationship between the audience and the actors.”

Mellor is determined to encourage people’s imaginations, something he believes has been lost. “We are fed by the big screen and the box and they both tell us not to have an imagination,” he said. “I believe in theatre-making as an event as opposed to ‘making a play’.”

To this end, Mellor sees a large part of his new role in developing his students not only into highly employable graduates but to give them something extra. “It’s that quality that the Catherine Martins, Baz Luhrmanns and Cate Blanchetts have, that originality and courage that makes them magically wonderful.” ♦



Steve Sumter,
student promotions and
events manager in the
Student Recruitment Office

I enjoy meeting and working with people and like learning about the things that interest them. When choosing a field of study at university, I decided that public relations and marketing allowed me the opportunity to utilise my interest and skill in this area.

Just after arriving in Sydney from Dallas, Texas, I was looking for casual work while I decided what I wanted to do in this new and exciting city. I came to UNSW to do a couple of weeks of filing. Five years later I find myself performing the role of Events Manager in the Student Recruitment Office and love every minute of it.

What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy planning and implementing the Student Recruitment events and open days held at UNSW. It's fun to see things falling into place, making note of the successes as well as the not so successful. I also enjoy working with a very diverse group of people.

What makes a successful event?

When the goal is met and everything falls into place as planned.

Pet hate?

Clutter, though looking at my desk right now might not convey this statement.

What are you reading/listening to?

I have just begun *Dixie City Jam* by James Lee Burke. The story takes place in New Orleans, one of my old haunts. I can visualise all the places that Burke describes.

Coldplay is probably my favourite group du jour if I had to name one. After arriving in Sydney I discovered Kasey Chambers who fills the void of the country and western music I grew up listening to.

Best advice you've ever received?

Believe in yourself.

Who or what inspires you?

Our Jack Russell Terrier, Brian. He inspires me to get up in the morning because otherwise the consequences are not pleasant.

Favourite expression?

Can I use that sort of language in this forum?

What would you have done in another life?

Probably would have been a writer, might even attempt to do some writing in this life. Failing that, I might have been a comedian.

What are you good at?

I'm good at running, love it. It might be due to the fact that I got a lot of practice as a kid. The bullies in the area I grew up in were really tough.

What can't you do?

I can't cook, but have learned that if you fry onions and garlic you can fool most people into believing that you can – until mealtime anyway.

The ideal place to be...

... is where you're surrounded by those you love. ♦

Obituary

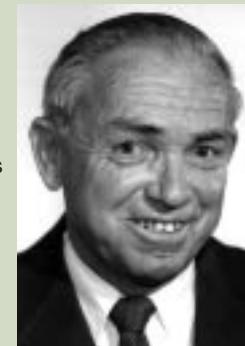
Fred Loughnan

1923-2004

Frederick Charles Loughnan was appointed as Lecturer in Geology at the then-New South Wales University of Technology in 1953. Thirty years later he retired from UNSW as Associate Professor in Applied Geology, with a national and international reputation for a diverse range of research activities in sedimentary petrology, especially rock weathering and clay mineralogy.

In 1957, Fred was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to work at the University of Illinois. However, he declined the offer for family reasons, and developed research at UNSW that led to his PhD in 1960. A monograph based on his thesis became a standard reference on commercial clay deposits in NSW.

Fred became Associate Professor in 1967. He was called upon a number of times to take over as Head of the then-School of Applied Geology. He spent several sabbaticals in the USA (including a year at the University of Illinois in 1959–60, finally taking up the Fulbright award), strengthening his research at the international level. In 1974 he was awarded



the only DSc in Geology awarded to date by UNSW, for research on the composition and properties of sedimentary rocks.

Fred was a leader in introducing new technologies to Australian geology, and in using them to learn more about the common things, such as clays and other sedimentary minerals, that we often take for granted. He was keenly aware of the need for research on topics related to industrial applications, and his advice was also sought for consultancy work on different aspects of applied mineralogy.♦

Colin Ward
School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences

By Dr John Yu AC, Chancellor

Council Meeting 13 December 2004

Research Retreat

The President of the Academic Board reported to Council that the Research Retreat had focused on the future of research, implications of Government strategies, linking research with the UNSW Strategic Plan, and the review of Unisearch Limited. The outcomes would contribute to the continued development of research at UNSW.

Child Care Report

Council noted progress on initiatives to improve the delivery of child care services to staff and students at UNSW and that child care facilities would be considered with new campus developments. Council asked for regular progress reports.

Flagpole for Aboriginal Flag

Council approved the installation of a second flagpole on the Mall to expand the range of options for appropriate recognition of visitors, events and milestones, and in particular to enable the Australian Aboriginal flag to be flown alongside the Australian national flag.

Code of Conduct for Council Members

Council approved a new code of conduct for Council members. In addition to provisions covering conflict of interest, the new code includes ethical standards for personal

behaviour and an expanded discussion of confidentiality. It can be found on the Council policy web page at www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/council/policy.htm.

Delegations

Council approved updates to the UNSW Register of Delegations. One set of updates finalised implementation of the new system of financial delegations. The UNSW Register of Delegations can be found online at www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/unsw_register_of_delegations.pdf.

Building and Grounds

Council noted that the Strategic Brief for Campus 2020 would be presented to Council at its meeting on 21 February 2005, that the Master Plan would be presented to Council for consideration in June 2005, and that Randwick City Council had granted the Development Application for the new Law Building.

Council Meeting 21 February 2005

Commonwealth Government Issues Paper

Council agreed that time would be put aside for discussion of the issues paper, *Rationalising Responsibility for Higher Education in Australia*, released by the Commonwealth Minister for Education. A detailed response to the Commonwealth Government proposals will be prepared.

Appointment of Pro-Chancellors

Council approved the reappointment of

Dr Jessica Milner Davis and the Hon Susan Ryan and the appointment of Ms Gabrielle Upton as Pro-Chancellors. Pro-Chancellors assist the Chancellor, when requested, with ceremonial duties such as presiding at graduation ceremonies.

Chancellor Search

Council received a report on the search for a new Chancellor and approved the membership of the Search Committee. Wide consultation will be undertaken in the University community and the Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with members of the Search Committee, will be seeking the names of suitable candidates.

Vice-Chancellor Search

Council approved the membership of the Vice-Chancellor Search Committee.

Building and Grounds

Council approved the Strategic Brief presented by the Building and Ground Committee, which sets out the design principles for the Kensington Campus 2020 Master Plan.

Council Minutes

Council minutes and other information about Council are available to all members of the University by accessing the Secretariat Services website www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au.

For further information on matters relating to Council or its Committees, please contact Victoria Eyles, v.eyles@unsw.edu.au, 9385 3068 or Rhona Fraser, rhona.fraser@unsw.edu.au, 9385 3072.

The Chancellor is the chair of Council.

7 December 2004

The final meeting of the Academic Board for 2004 was attended by the Chancellor, Dr John Yu, who informed the Board that he would be stepping down as Chancellor during 2005. The Board also noted the pending retirement of Professor Mark Wainwright as Vice-Chancellor at the end of 2005. The Board said farewell to Professor Bruce Dowton, the outgoing Dean of the Faculty of Medicine who had made an invaluable contribution to Medicine and the University since his appointment in 1998.

DEGW made a PowerPoint presentation on UNSW Campus 2020 and viewed a scale model of the new Law Building. Professor Dowton briefed the Board on the potential impact of new medical schools upon UNSW.

The President congratulated staff who had been promoted to Professor, as well as staff successful in the recent ARC round, and reported on UNSW's success in the recent State and National awards in University Teaching.

The Board clarified the Undergraduate Program Rules and endorsed their use in

considering new and revised undergraduate programs. The Board discussed at length the review of the discipline of Geography at UNSW, affirmed the importance of the discipline and requested Senior Management to consider Geography in its broader sense within UNSW. Discussion of the issue was fruitful and enhanced by the attendance of over 20 Geography students. A report would come back to the Board in 2005.

1 February 2005

The Academic Board welcomed Professor Richard Henry as Acting Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and thanked Ms Fiona Fong, outgoing postgraduate student member. Ms Aili Zhang was appointed to fill the student position for the remainder of the current term.

The President congratulated those persons associated with UNSW and a large number of alumni awarded Australia Day Honours, and signalled the appointment of Professor Les Field as new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Vice-Chancellor detailed the University's response to the tsunami disaster and the establishment of a working group to look at the long-term educational needs and

aid that UNSW could provide.

The Board received an update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on the review of Geography and the anticipated relocation of the discipline to the Faculty of Science, which was a satisfactory outcome for all parties. The Academic Board continues to set aside time for the discussion of major issues and the issue of cultural diversity at UNSW was the theme for January.

The Board noted the proposed Conflict of Interest Policy and would consider the item at its next meeting before recommending it to Council. The Board referred to Council the Annual Report on Graduates eligible to receive the Award of a Pass degree with Distinction and recommended the establishment of a new Master of Financial Analysis program.

If there are issues you would like me or Academic Board or its Committees to consider, or if you would like to attend a meeting, please let me know via a.dooley@unsw.edu.au or 9385 2393.

Tony Dooley
President, Academic Board

Kyoto: why doesn't Australia act?

On 16 February 2005 the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force. This is a major event along the path of garnering international political determination to act decisively on the issue of climate change.

The Framework Convention was a product of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In a 1995 decision known as the Berlin mandate, Parties to the Convention agreed on the need for stronger and more detailed obligations to flesh out the agreed Framework; this resulted in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. More recently, the 2001 Marrakesh Accords tackled issues of implementation.

What, then, does the date 16 February represent for Australia? In a narrow legal sense the answer is: very little. As a non-Party to the Kyoto Protocol, Australia is not bound by its hard-won emissions reduction target. Australians may remember the government's pride that, in an agreement aiming for a global outcome of a 5.2 percent reduction in 1990 levels of greenhouse gas emissions by 2008–2012, Australia gained acceptance from its co-negotiators that it be allowed to increase emissions by eight percent from 1990 levels.

The government clearly believed that it was being most assertive, ensuring that Australia did not cede its perceived national interest to the environmental cause. Australian policy was strengthened by its closeness to that of the

United States, which, with less than five percent of the world's population and producing more than 20 percent of greenhouse emissions, had made it known before Kyoto that it was vehemently opposed to any agreement that did not also bind developing countries.

As the parent of any toddler is aware, however, there is a fine line between exaggerated independent assertiveness and insecurity. What the government sought to portray as a victory for hard-nosed Australian diplomacy caused many Australians to hang their collective heads in shame that a country with so much going for it would not want to make a positive contribution to a global problem. Many Australians and international observers regarded the Australian Government's diplomatic victory as hollow.

The mystery goes much deeper, however. If it were simply a case of looking after narrow Australian interests versus acting magnanimously in the global good, the attitude of the Australian Government might be comprehensible. Perhaps the government had listened to too much industry advice or was determined to shed the 'multilateral' reputation of its predecessor. It is also true that Australia was not the only country holding out for as easy a target as possible. The European Union, for example, developed the notion of an 'EU bubble' in which increased emission by some countries would be offset by decreases in

others – such as in East Germany, through the closing of outdated industries.

But Australia is a country that stands to be strongly affected by rising temperatures and the likely accompaniments of more intense hail, floods and other extreme weather events. Concentration of the Australian population along the coast makes us particularly vulnerable. And scientists believe that even Kyoto is inadequate. Just as international agreements to combat ozone depletion were tightened in response to the release of fresh scientific evidence, so Kyoto needs to be strengthened. Scientists tell us that, if the atmosphere is to be stabilised, emissions must be cut by 40 percent of current levels rather than the 5.2 percent of the 1990 level provided for in the Kyoto Protocol.

On climate change – as on Iraq – our government continues to choose to defy the multilateral standard in favour of overly close policy alignment with the US. Just as parents must try to prevent an assertive toddler from inflicting harm on itself and others, so must the Australian public take this issue into its own hands. Rather than 16 February representing little more than a continuation of the shame that began with Kyoto, let's see if increased public concern can encourage a change in our government's stance. It's time to demand greater maturity on the part of our national leaders charged with ensuring the long-term prosperity of Australia. ♦

By Shirley Scott

