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uniken



*“Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes.
Design is knowing which ones to keep.”*

UNSW

S H O W C A S I N G D E S I G N A T U N S W

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Five minutes with ...

Painting is a new-found passion for **Dr Terri Foran**, a sexual health physician and lecturer in UNSW's School of Women's and Children's Health. Several of her brightly coloured oils adorn the walls of the offices in the Royal Hospital for Women.



Susan Trent, Gasbag Studios

How did you get into art?

I'd always loved art at school, but finally got back into it about four years ago, when I did an art course in oils. I like oils because they take a long time to dry completely. That means you've got lots of time to make changes before the artworks are finished. I also like the idea of working with something that has longevity and is textured.

I really like bright colours. So I tend to paint things like flowers, or abstracts. My husband suggests that there is a link between what I do for work and the paintings that I make. He reckons a lot of them look a little genital in nature!

Why do you paint?

I think it's really important that all of us have something that is ours - that is different from what we do professionally. Clinical medicine is a very expressive thing, but it's also very giving. When you do something purely for your own enjoyment it gives you the chance to put something back in the personal bank, so you can then go and give a bit more to other people down the track.

What do you like about being a sexual health physician?

I love working with women. My focus has been on prevention and empowerment. Most of my work is in contraceptive issues, menopause choices, sexually transmitted infections and the impact we can have on both men and women in preventing infections and problems in the future. It's a fascinating area to work in - and I'm lucky enough that I came to it at precisely the right time. My special interest is contraception and when I started 27 years ago, there were limited choices for women. In the last 10 or 15 years, those choices have expanded enormously. It's like being on the threshold of a new era.

As a personal crusade I think it's a pity that people, and particularly those in the media, do still feel a bit uncomfortable with the words vagina and vulva. My hope is that by the time I reach a disgraceful old age we are all able to use the word vagina as freely and easily as we do the word penis.

My present passion is investigating some of the gynaecological disasters of history. It's fascinating to look back with a contemporary eye on the sexual and reproductive health experiences of our sisters from the past. For instance Sister Mary MacKillop - who is potentially Australia's first saint - temporarily lost her place as head of the order she founded because she was accused of imbibing too much alcohol. When you go into it, poor old Mary only drank diluted brandy once a month when her period pain was unbearable. To the modern clinician the diagnosis of endometriosis is obvious. Had Mary lived in the 21st and not the 19th century there would have been a whole range of treatments open to her. It just makes me appreciate what leaps we have made in reproductive medicine over the last century. ■

- Susi Hamilton



UNSW's Antarctic field station has been featured on an Australia Post stamp. The image, taken by School of Physics PhD student Tony Travouillon, shows the UNSW flag flying on the observatory and celebrates the University's role in ground-based astronomy in the region. The stamp is part of Australia Post's new Australian Antarctic Territory stamp series for the International Polar Year 2007-2008.



New Dean for FBE

Award-winning Australian architect, Alec Tzannes, has been appointed as the new Dean of the Faculty of the Built Environment.

Alec is the founder of the high-profile Sydney architectural firm, Tzannes Associates. Some of his best known architectural projects include Aria Restaurant, Federation Pavilion and Federation Place in Centennial Park, and the Fort Denison restoration and café.

The immediate past president of the Australian Institute of Architects, Alec has regularly lectured around Australia and won a number of prestigious awards including the RAIA Robin Boyd Award and the RAIA Wilkinson Award.

Alec took up his new position in early November.

Indicators are good

UNSW is the most cited Australian university in the area of social science and the fourth most cited Australian university in the world, according to new figures compiled by the Essential Science Indicators (ESI) database.

The new rankings, which cover the period from 2003 to 2007, also place UNSW as the second most cited Australian university in the combined area of psychiatry and psychology.

Run by Thomson Reuters, the ESI database provides a comprehensive compilation of science performance statistics and science trends data based on journal article publication counts and citation data from scientific databases.

In the last period, from 1998 to 2002, UNSW was one of only two Australian universities ranked in the world's top 50 in any area, in that instance psychiatry/psychology.

For the record

"I think it's a kind of witch-hunt or McCarthyism by students who happen to disagree with a lecturer ..." Dr Ben Saul, Faculty of Law, on the Young Liberals' decision to present a Senate inquiry into academic freedom with lists of university lecturers they perceived as having a left-wing bias - Sydney Morning Herald.

"The new abstinence in the Clintonesque sense ..." Professor Basil Donovan, NCHECR, on the increase in the number of teenagers having oral sex as an alternative to intercourse - The Australian.

"The amount of smiles made no difference to whether they would come back, it was all about perceived authenticity." Dr Markus Groth, Australian School of Business, on research which shows that customers can sense insincerity in a customer service representative - Australian Financial Review.

"Speed is value." Associate Professor David McKnight, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, on the emphasis on pace of news delivery by online news sites - The Australian.

"... a big wake-up call to industry, business and politicians." Professor Matthew England, Climate Change Research Centre, on new figures which show that world carbon emissions are growing four times faster than in the 1990s - West Australian.

"Because law students are clever ... they think they can solve these issues on their own and they don't ask for help." Professor Prue Vines, Faculty of Law, on the high rate of depression in law students - The Australian.

\$56m boost to research

UNSW has received more than \$56 million for research in the latest round of Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council grants.

The ARC grants saw UNSW awarded 78 Discovery Project grants, worth more than \$27 million. This is \$1.3 million more than last year's round, the third largest increase in new funding across the Go8.

UNSW will also receive \$5.9 million in ARC Linkage Project Grants, funding 20 projects. Partner organisations are contributing a total of \$10.5 million.

Fifty one projects have attracted more than \$23 million in NHMRC grants. This is the best ever result for the University, both in terms of the amount of funding awarded and the number of grants.



Shattering the glass ceiling

Sarita Khan is a dedicated and capable commerce student, completing her degree within the supportive environment of the Australian School of Business. But how will she survive on the “outside” as a 20-year-old female graduate in the cut-throat, male-dominated, corporate world in which she’s determined to succeed?

Recent research shows that less than 20 percent of women reach management positions in the finance sector, despite the industry becoming increasingly feminised.

But the Lucy Mentoring Program, which began at UNSW in 2007, shows young female business, finance, economics, accounting and law students that success is achievable by providing access to support and professional networks.

The 2008 Lucy Mentoring Program has linked 41 students with representatives from the executive level of numerous high-profile organisations including Deloitte, Westpac, JP Morgan and the Attorney General’s Department.

Being mentored at a global financial consultancy firm has helped demystify the corporate environment for Sarita.

“Deloitte is a company which has a high percentage of females at the executive level and I’m lucky to have a mentor who’s a partner, so she’s a strong advocate for women being able to reach the higher levels,” says Sarita.

The program offers students an invaluable hands-on experience of corporate life.

“I’ve experienced being out in the workplace but with the added support of my mentor. The Lucy Program has eased the university-employment transition and I haven’t even graduated yet,” Sarita says.

UNSW Deputy Chancellor, Gabrielle Upton believes the program benefits both the students and the University by strengthening institutional outreach and industry networks.

“The Lucy Program represents UNSW’s strong commitment to giving young women the best possible opportunity to find their calling,” she says. ■

- Fran Strachan

Kernot joins the CSI

The former politician will help the Centre develop the social impact of Australia’s “third sector”.

Former politician Cheryl Kernot is still hoping to influence Australian society by joining the new Centre for Social Impact (CSI) as its first Director of Teaching and Learning. Based at UNSW, the CSI is a national initiative aimed at building the capacity of Australia’s not-for-profit organisations. Its founding partners are the Australian School of Business at UNSW, Melbourne Business School at the University of Melbourne and the Asia-Pacific Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment at Swinburne University of Technology.

Cheryl, who has been appointed to the Centre as Associate Professor, will oversee the development of Masters courses to be offered by all partners in the areas of business social responsibility, not-for-profit management and social investment. She is also involved in academic teaching and an extensive range of executive programs in the areas of social entrepreneurship.

Following her high-profile political career, Cheryl has spent the past five years working in the UK at the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurs at the Said Business School at Oxford University and as the Director of Learning at the School for Social Entrepreneurs in London.

She says she is looking forward to playing a leadership role in meeting CSI’s “timely and pioneering vision” of deepening and broadening the beneficial social impact of Australia’s “third sector”.

“The Centre is uniquely placed to become Australia’s hub in the international movement to champion social business as a force for change,” she says.

The Centre will also be home to the Macquarie Group Foundation Chair, Centre for Social Impact, after the Macquarie Group Foundation donated \$2 million towards its establishment.

The chair will be held by Professor Peter Shergold, the Centre’s Chief Executive. “The Macquarie Group Foundation’s long-term strategic investment in CSI will enable the Centre to promote socially responsible business management and build the capacity and capability of not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises,” he says.

The Macquarie Group has also donated \$1 million to assist in the establishment of the Macquarie Group Chair in Financial Services, within the Australian School of Business.

Professor Neal Stoughton, formerly of the University of Calgary, Canada will be the inaugural Macquarie Group Professor in Financial Services and the new head of the School of Banking and Finance. ■

- Victoria Brown

Past mentors show the way

Mark Hoffman and Justin Armellin both use their own experiences as students to inspire their teaching. By **Bob Beale** and **Dan Gaffney**.

As a member of Sydney University's coxless four, Mark Hoffman would rise before dawn six days a week to join his team-mates and row on Sydney's Lane Cove River. This passion and dedication paid handsome dividends, which continue today.

"Elite rowing was a privilege and an education that shaped and developed me in many positive ways," says Mark, who is now a professor and head of the School of Materials Science and Engineering. "Most significantly, I had rowing coaches who were very fine mentors. They supported and challenged me to grow, not just as a rower, but as a person."

Personal development is a theme that Mark returns to frequently when he speaks of supervising graduate research students.

"Doing a PhD requires many attributes besides intellectual ability," he says. "It demands self-discipline, organisation, confidence and a certain robustness. When students come to me as a prospective PhD supervisor, I look for these qualities. Those who have worked or studied abroad usually have these qualities and I believe that they are vital for tackling and completing a doctoral program."

"Being a good supervisor is much like being a good sporting coach," he says. "The job is to be aware of all aspects of a student's life. As a supervisor, I believe it's important to be a good communicator and to have empathy for students, and to appreciate that they are going through a developmental process. Doing a PhD isn't simply about completing a set of technical or intellectual tasks: it's about structuring a relationship in which students can feel happy and see that they're making progress."

He should know. Mark is supervising 14 postgraduate research students and has supervised a dozen PhD or Masters research students since 2002. This year, he received the UNSW Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Postgraduate Research Supervision, which recognises sustained excellence in postgraduate research supervision.

For someone young and new to teaching, Faculty of Science PhD student Justin Armellin has taken to it like a duck to water. He only began teaching in 2006 when he was "volunteered" to do so in the School of



A+ for teaching: Mark Hoffman and Justin Armellin

Susan Trent, Gesbag Studios

I ... reflected on what distinguished the good teachers from the bad, and built on that.

Materials Science and Engineering, yet he has already won a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence.

His award for sessional teaching recognises his excellent demonstrating skills in undergraduate teaching laboratories, in particular Engineering Materials which is taught to more than 1000 engineering students. The award recognises the hard work that Justin has put into preparing his classes, acknowledging the significant impact that laboratory demonstrators have upon students' experience and learning.

Originally from Canberra, Justin was attracted to UNSW when he heard of the new undergraduate degree in nanotechnology, which he duly completed with first-class Honours.

He is now working on his PhD studies, which involve trying to develop new materials with magnetic properties for use in computer components. It is hoped these materials will help the computer industry to overcome the increasing problems it faces with ever more tiny transistors being crammed into computer chips.

It was soon after he decided to take up his doctoral research that Justin was encouraged to take on tutoring and demonstrating as well, in part as a way of developing his own confidence in public speaking and presentation.

"If you do have any stage shyness, teaching is certainly a way to have it quickly eradicated," Justin says.

"Actually, I enjoy it a lot and find it fun compared with reading papers or wondering why a particular machine isn't working: it clears your mind."

In the early days Justin found teaching a little daunting and anxiously crammed on subjects and worried about making errors and so leading students astray.

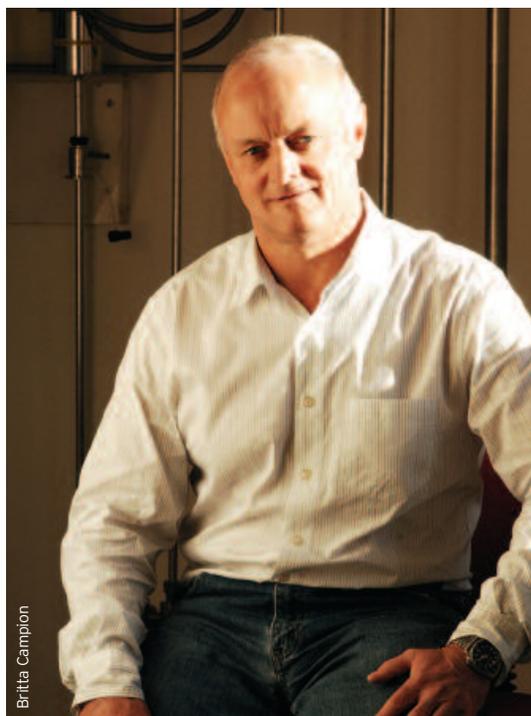
"Then I thought back to my own learning experiences and reflected on what distinguished the good teachers from the bad, and built on that," he says.

"I try to be friendly and open with all students, pay attention to their questions and to place things in the context of their lives and real-life situations rather than just hit them with theory and a wall of mathematics." ■

Eureka! Our best result ever

Solar power innovations using nail polish, pizza ovens and inkjet printers; climate change research into ocean temperatures; breakthroughs in quantum computing; and studies exposing the plight of Australia's wetlands helped UNSW deliver a powerful result in the 2008 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes.

The University won an unprecedented six prizes in the August awards, known as "the Oscars of Australian science". The result far outstripped the next-best result of two awards going to the University of Sydney. The tally was the highest by any institution in the 19-year history of the prizes. Here we take a look at our winners:



Britta Campion

Professor Robert Clark

Professor Robert (Bob) Clark, a Federation Fellow and Director of the Centre for Quantum Computer Technology, was awarded the CSIRO Eureka Prize for Leadership in Science for his pioneering research in the field of quantum computing. Not long after being hailed as "a pivotal figure and visionary" Bob was appointed as Australia's Chief Defence Scientist.

The 55-year-old marathon-running enthusiast, who joined UNSW in 1990 from Oxford University, led research which promises to fundamentally change computing science with the advent of the quantum computer.

Former Australian Chief Scientist Dr Robin Batterham paid tribute to Bob at the Eureka Prizes, saying: "He has made a catalytic effort which will do nothing less than revolutionise our existence."

Bob left UNSW in October to take up his new post in Canberra and said before his departure that he would miss the University but was looking forward to the challenges of his new role.



Photo courtesy of Nicole Kuepper

School of Photovoltaic and Renewable Energy Engineering

In a major achievement, the entire School of Photovoltaic and Renewable Energy Engineering took out the IAG Eureka Prize for Innovative Solutions to Climate Change for its consistently strong record in solar cell research.

"The internationally groundbreaking work of the UNSW School has a real impact in providing an alternative to coal-driven energy. Fossil fuel-free homes are not science fiction, and this progressive work fulfils a world imperative," Australian Museum Director Frank Howarth said.

Research being done at the School and its ARC Photovoltaics Centre of Excellence is advancing solar energy from a marginal technology to one that can challenge fossil fuels as an energy source.

The School is recognised internationally as a world leader in photovoltaic cell research and the ARC Photovoltaics Centre holds the world record for efficiency in first-generation solar cells. The School is also a pioneer in undergraduate education in photovoltaics and solar energy.

Nicole Kuepper

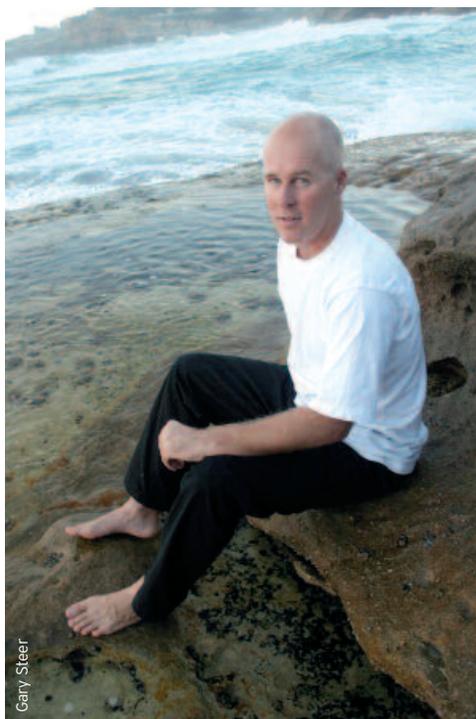
Solar cell engineering PhD student, Nicole Kuepper, stood out by winning two of the most popular awards. The 23-year-old's work to create a low-cost solar cell that can bring clean, green

energy to developing nations captured the Australian public's imagination - winning her the People's Choice Award. The patented technology, which uses common, low-cost items such as a pizza oven, nail polish and an inkjet printer, also won Nicole the \$10,000 British Council Eureka Prize for Young Leaders in Environmental Issues and Climate Change.

Nicole's research, conducted under the supervision of Scientia Professor Stuart Wenham, attracted significant media attention, with stories appearing in print, broadcast and online media in Australia and overseas.

Nicole says the media attention reflects the level of enthusiasm for sustainable energy solutions.

"Since the Federal Government ratified the Kyoto Protocol and started talking about emissions trading we have seen this surge of interest in renewable energy," she says.



Gary Steer

Professor Matthew England and the Climate Change Research Centre

Extraordinary research into rainfall patterns undertaken by Federation Fellow Professor Matthew England and his Climate Change Research Centre (CCRC) team - Caroline Ummenhofer, Dr Alex Sen Gupta, Dr Agus Santoso and Dr Mike Pook (CSIRO) - won them the Land & Water Australia Eureka Prize for Water Research and Innovation.

Being part of a Eureka-winning team has capped off a remarkable period in Matt's career. As a keen surfer, it is fitting that Professor England's special area of expertise is in the study of what controls ocean currents and how these currents affect climate and climate variability on time scales of seasons to centuries.

Two years ago, Matt also won a Eureka Prize for environmental research. Last year he joined forces with Professor Andy

Pitman as joint foundation directors of the CCRC.

The CCRC is fast winning a reputation as a powerhouse of climate change research, with its studies of sea temperature variations already yielding significant benefits. According to Matt: "In the south-west of Western Australia seasonal rain predictions have improved due to our research linking local rainfall variations to changes in heat circulating in the Indian Ocean. Farmers have taken advantage of the projections, resulting in better cropping outcomes worth hundreds of millions of dollars."

Earlier this year Matt was awarded a prestigious Federation Fellowship, to investigate the genesis of Australian climate extremes. In July he won the Banksia Environmental Foundation's \$30,000 Mercedes-Benz Australian Research Award. Matt has also been active as a public advocate on climate change, taking part in campaigns by leading scientists to pressure world leaders to act quickly and resolutely.

Professor Richard Kingsford

Environmental scientist Professor Richard Kingsford received the Australian Government Eureka Prize for Promoting Understanding of Science.

Richard has played a major role in lifting awareness of the health of, and threats to, Australia's major rivers and wetland systems. The Director of the Wetlands and Rivers Research Laboratory, Richard has been highly visible in the public debate about water, and is a tireless campaigner, researcher, educator and policy expert on Australia's wetlands, inland rivers, flood plains and their ecology.

For more than a quarter of a century he has documented and drawn attention to the destruction of Australia's wetlands and the knock-on impacts on resident and migratory shorebirds. He also won a Eureka Prize in 2001, for environmental research.

- compiled by Steve Offner



Adam Taylor

UNSW scoops pool in NSW Scientist of the Year awards

Pioneering UNSW solar energy researcher, Scientia Professor Martin Green, has been named the New South Wales Scientist of the Year - leading a stellar performance by UNSW academics in the inaugural State awards to recognise scientific excellence.

Martin, a Federation Fellow and Executive Research Director of the ARC Photovoltaics Centre of Excellence at UNSW, was recognised with the State's highest award for science for his innovative work in solar cell development. He also won the Environment, Water and Climate Change Sciences category.

He has led the development of the world's highest efficiency silicon solar cells and is a co-inventor of "second-generation" silicon-on-glass solar cell

I think solar energy conversion is ... widely accepted as providing a solution ...

technology, which offers dramatic cost reductions for solar cell manufacture by reducing the amount of silicon used. He is now working on high-efficiency "third generation" thin-film photovoltaic technology.

In an interview with the NSW Office for Science and Medical Research, Martin said making solar-generated electricity affordable was one of the most effective ways to combat climate change.

"I think solar energy conversion is ... widely accepted as providing a solution, provided the costs can be brought down sufficiently through improved technology," he said.

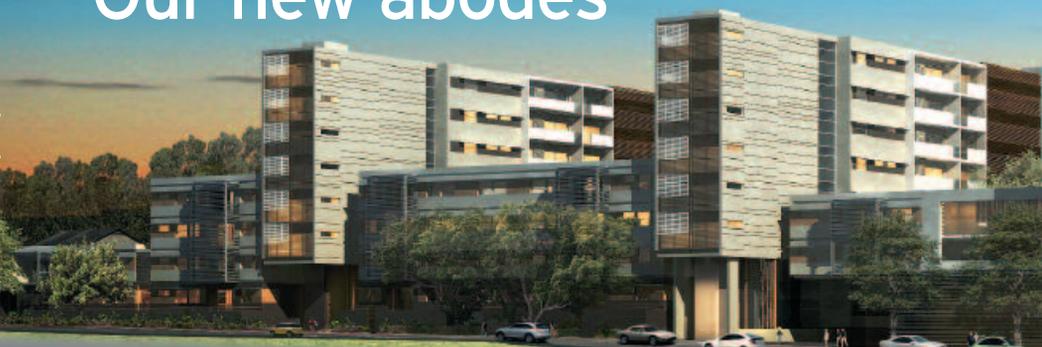
Professor Veena Sahajwalla, Director of the UNSW Centre for Sustainable Materials Research and Technology (SMaRT), won the Engineering Sciences Category of the awards for her invention of environmentally friendly technology which uses waste plastic to replace coke and coal in steel-making.

And Professor Philip Hogg, Director of the UNSW Cancer Research Centre, won the Biomedical Sciences Category for his development of a class of cancer drugs that starve tumours of their blood supply by rendering inactive the cells which form blood vessels in tumours. ■

- Peter Trute

Our new abodes

Photo courtesy of Campus Living Villages



An artists impression of the UNSW Village

The days of students living off campus in grubby digs are coming to an end. Accommodation on the University's Kensington campus is set to nearly double, with work well underway on two new projects offering first-class apartment-style accommodation to both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The New College Village (NCV) on Anzac Parade, due to be completed in January, will accommodate 319 students, mostly postgraduates, in shared apartments and individual studios. When complete, it will be the first dedicated postgraduate accommodation offered on-campus. The nearby High Street Housing project will offer a mix of accommodation. The project, provided by a private sector partner, is scheduled for completion in 2010.

Demand for accommodation at UNSW has always been fierce, but with students increasingly required to move away from home to attend university, and heightened demand from international students, the squeeze on housing has become even tighter. When UNSW was formed less than five percent of school leavers went to university. Today, this is closer to 40 percent.

Acting Chief Operating Officer Neil Morris says feedback has shown that availability of student accommodation is a critical issue for UNSW: "These projects will almost double accommodation on-campus and lead to significant improvements in student recruitment, retention and welfare, particular among international students."

New College's Master, Trevor Cairney, says accommodation on-campus is an important part of university life.

"Not all students can live close to campus, and even fewer can live on-

campus, but students who live in residential colleges on-campus contribute in diverse ways to the wider campus life.

"It is important for students to have access to a community where academic support and personal care is available, and where it is possible for students from diverse backgrounds and research interests to come together, share their ideas and support one another."

Facilities will include a business centre, reading room, TV room, games room, two outdoor courtyards and BBQ facilities, as well as a large main common room and 13 other common rooms across its seven floors.

Around the corner on High Street, construction cranes are towering above the foundations of what will become the UNSW Village - a complex of self-catered apartments offering beds to more than 1000 students. Under a deal with private partner Campus Living Villages (CLV), the apartments will be built and run privately for 40 years and then handed back to the University.

"This is probably one of the biggest new builds we've done, giving us an opportunity to provide a complex where there is a real need," says CLV Director of Marketing, Brigitte Murray.

"There will be 1021 beds in apartment and studio style, ranging from one to eight bedrooms, in buildings that are single storey up to eight storeys."

Significantly, environmentally sustainable construction is being employed throughout, Brigitte says.

"It's thermo-mass construction with pre-cast concrete panels designed to deliver a superior thermal performance. There will be no air-con, instead there will be built-in cross-ventilation causing natural airflows. All storm water will be fed back into the aquifer." ■

- Steve Offner

Kenya's calling

Students at Warrane College have organised an end-of-exam event that beats the average knees up. As soon as pens are down, staff and students of the residential college are off to Africa.

The group from Warrane will fly to Kenya in November to construct a science lab for 160 students in a remote school on the slopes of Mount Kenya.

The three-week voluntary project, *Kenya '08*, is part of a community outreach program the College has run each year since 1987. Last year the students visited Vietnam.

"We don't really have any building credentials and we're not bringing anyone with those skills over with us, so basically we are just offering ourselves as labour," says medical student and organiser, Joe Brassil.



Photo courtesy of Warrane College

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a real difference to a community. I'm also keen to learn about a new culture and gain a few organisational skills along the way," he says.

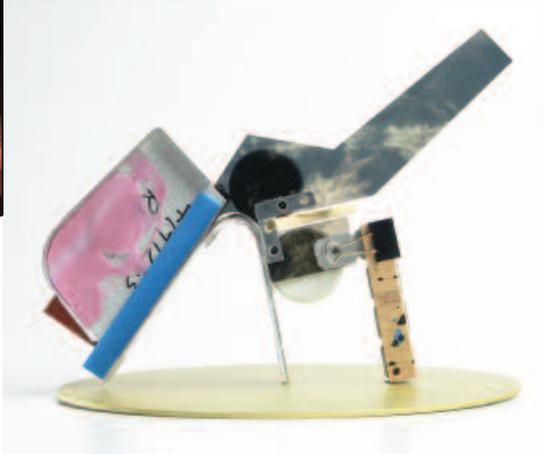
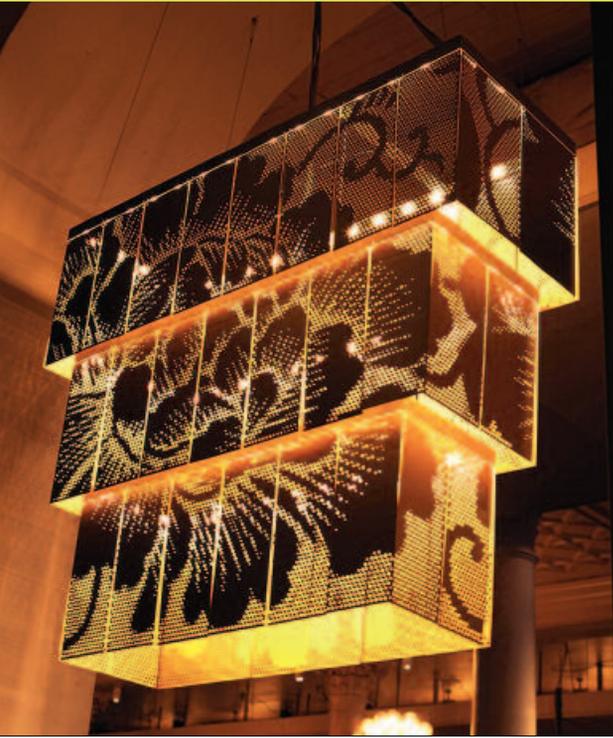
Twenty volunteers will take part in the trip, with each paying their own costs of \$3000. The group will live in school classrooms in a neighbouring village and eat local food.

The students hope to run leadership workshops with local students, and conduct information sessions on Australia. They also plan to squeeze in some sightseeing.

The group is fundraising with the aim of collecting \$10,000 to pay for the lab's construction. So far about \$2500 has been raised.

Anyone who'd like to support the project can find out more by contacting kenyaworkcamp@gmail.com ■

- Steve Offner

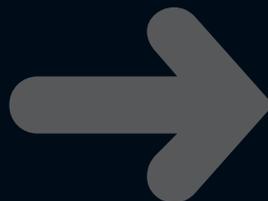


Better by design

Design permeates much of the research and teaching conducted at UNSW, from molecular to industrial design, from architecture to aircraft, from suburbs to senses. Within a university setting designers face a number of issues including funding, recognition and time. In a broader context they must also adapt to new technologies, deal with a competitive market and succeed at self-promotion, as well as innovation.

Here we look at some of the challenges that face our designers, as well as acknowledging their astounding achievements.

Clockwise from top left: bernabeifreeman's Peony floor light - Dieu Tan; Primo Estate and Joseph Wines - John Gollings; Trent Jansen design display - Trent Jansen; ALT vessel - Trent Jansen; Trojan - Russell Lowe; EULO sustainable sink - Ainslie Asher; Catherine Lassen and Jasper Knight house design - Alex Kershaw.



Practising what they teach

Rina Bernabei and Bruce Watson, from the Faculty of the Built Environment, are both leading designers in their field. Here they discuss the challenges and benefits of combining the practice of design with academic life. By **Victoria Brown**.

“There is a definite grey area between commercial design and design as research,” says Rina Bernabei. “It’s a challenge to define which is which and the only people who can really provide the answer are other designers.”

Rina’s furniture design work with her partner, Kelly Freeman, has been recognised around the world and is routinely exhibited in international furniture fairs. In 2007 **bernabeifreeman**, the pair’s design company, won the Bombay Sapphire Design Discovery Award. They used the prize money to expand their range of designs.

“Balancing the financial side of design and university work can be very hard,” Rina explains. “The broader university community sees this as commercial work and there is definitely a mentality of ‘we’re not going to fund your research so you can go and make money from it’.

“But cutting-edge design isn’t commercial. Our designs that win the most international accolades are our least commercial - they are about design concepts rather than selling a piece of furniture.”

bernabeifreeman’s success in the Bombay Sapphire awards has allowed them to experiment with new technologies and to design in new materials, using the prize money to back themselves.

The pair created moulds to develop two shapes which can be used as seats or tables, as well as light fittings (a traditional area of design for Rina and Kelly). The pods, as they are known, were exhibited at the Milan Furniture Fair and have now been put into production.

Despite this success Rina and Kelly decided not to have any exhibitions this year because they are so time consuming and expensive.

“In the past few years, with changes to government funding etc, I’ve felt more pressure to write traditional research papers,” Rina explains. “Reflecting on your design work in a paper helps you understand your work better and that comes through in your next project but it can be difficult to find the time to teach, design and write papers, and you need to have the practice in work form.”

Rina feels that her practical design work enhances her teaching, benefiting her students and the University.

“My studios have been able to inform my teaching so much because of the practice. I’ve been able to get students to practise emotional design, storytelling, and new technology. My design experience gains respect from the students.



bernabeifreeman's Totem range

Dieu Tan

“I can’t see, for the University, any downsides to design work. They’re getting all the research, the profile and informed teaching.”

Bruce Watson also considers his design work to be an asset to his teaching. An architect by trade, he now teaches and researches design at UNSW, as well as running a design practice that works on one major project per year.

“As a design student I wondered how someone could teach me about a currency like design, when they hadn’t practised that currency for 15 years,” he says.

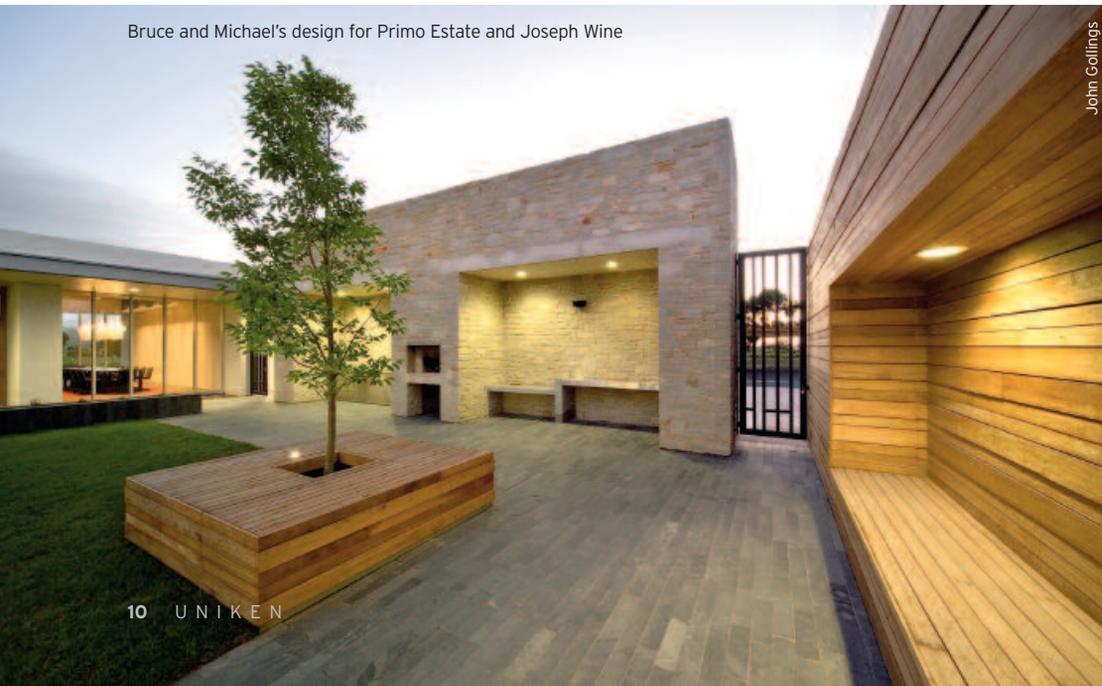
“As a teacher, and because of my student experiences, it is important to me to maintain my design practice. My worth as an educator is validated by my work in design. I’m a designer who teaches those skills to others. Having said that you could be the best designer in the world and not a good teacher, a good teacher must have the skills to communicate.”

Like Rina, Bruce finds the balancing act of teaching, researching and designing a challenge.

“The time I spend on traditional academic research has made finding time for design hard. Design and art in a university context is difficult,” he says.

Recently the architectural work of Bruce and his studio partner Michael Harvey received more traditional recognition. In late 2007 Bruce submitted a building design project, a winery for Primo Estate and Joseph Wines, with his other research papers and it received a research tick - one of the first building designs to do so. It was also published in *Architecture Review* magazine, and, like Rina, it is this acknowledgement by peers which Bruce believes helped its recognition as research. ■

Bruce and Michael’s design for Primo Estate and Joseph Wine



John Gollings

Emotional design

Susan Trent, Casbag Studios



For an object to be completely sustainable rather than disposable, it must make a lifelong connection with its owner, says COFA designer Trent Jansen. By **Fran Strachan**.



Photo courtesy of Trent Jansen

Trent Jansen doesn't take design lightly. The furniture he creates is a direct extension of himself and his love of the environment. He imbues inanimate objects with human characteristics based on the personal relationships he values so highly.

Designing lights that kiss and a mother chair that nurtures and protects a baby chair within it, his designs are poetic and symbolic.

At just 26, Trent has already made an impact on the design world, exhibiting his "Pregnant Chair" at the Milan International Furniture Fair earlier this year. The chair, an ingenious space saver that conceals a smaller chair underneath it, has a simple, rural aesthetic and is currently in production with Dutch company Moooi.

After completing his Bachelor of Design at COFA in 2004, Trent kick-started his career by winning the Object Award for Design for Manufacturing in the prestigious national graduate exhibition, New Design. His winning piece, the "Sign Stool", was constructed from recycled street signs and functioned as both seating and shelving. Re-using old signs was an early indication of Trent's commitment to sustainability and to using materials with an intrinsic history and meaning.

Trent continued on to complete an internship at the Marcel Wanders studio in Amsterdam which marked the beginning of a mutual admiration between the two designers.

Wanders eventually established the Moooi design group.

"I've always aspired to work with Moooi because of their sustainable sensitivities and their range always speaks clearly to me emotionally," says Trent.

Now working at COFA, Trent sees design and emotion as entwined. His designs have a metaphorical emphasis that informs the user of the sentiment behind the production process.

"Furniture has become disposable, people buy things with no real attachment or thought about the energy that went into making that item and the embodied value within it," he says.

"I realised that for an object to be completely sustainable rather than disposable, it had to make a lifelong connection with its owner. The value we place on an object directly relates to the level of personal attachment we have to it."

It is this philosophy that triggered Trent's move towards designs that express what is universally important to all of us - our personal relationships.

The "Pregnant Chair", the first incarnation of this philosophy, was inspired by the close relationship Trent has with his mother, and a friend who was experiencing her first pregnancy.

"The relationship between a mother and child is core to humanity and the synergy that comes from that is incredible to witness and

The value we place on an object directly relates to the level of personal attachment we have to it.

experience, I tried to recreate that emotion in the "Pregnant Chair", he says.

His most recent design continues this personification theme and, in October, he was awarded the 2008 Bombay Sapphire Design Discovery award, Australia's richest design prize.

The "Kissing Pendant" lights embody the intimacy experienced by lovers when they kiss. The two identical, pressed-metal light shades hang independently until the light is switched on when magnetic attraction draws them together and locks them into position.

"The moment the lights meet replicates the moment when two people give themselves emotionally and physically to each other and lose all concern for what's happening around them," says Trent smiling.

Like the designer himself, Trent's designs are understated. They don't cry out for attention but require quiet, calm appreciation. Much the same as talking to the designer himself, depth and acute emotion are revealed once the humble layers are peeled back. ■

Creating in cyberspace

There's nothing unique about learning online. But studying such tactile disciplines as art and design in cyberspace certainly is.

Artists and designers all over the world can now study and collaborate in a virtual communal studio.

COFA is the first Australian arts school to offer a fully online postgraduate coursework degree, the Master of Cross-Disciplinary Art and Design.

The degree has attracted students from all over the world, including Singapore, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, the US, China and the Philippines.

"The course responds to increasing employer demand for cross-disciplinary communication and collaboration skills in creative industries," says COFA's Postgraduate Online Course Coordinator, Simon McIntyre.

Despite technological advancements providing more interaction in online environments, online learning has been criticised for offering an inferior learning experience, devoid of social interaction and dedicated lecturing time - a view that 44-year-old student Anita French strongly disputes.

"I've completed a BA in Theatre Studies as an on-campus student at UNSW and a Graduate Diploma in Psychology by correspondence but this is the most interactive learning experience I've ever had," she says.

Anita's lecture theatre is her home in Lake Tambourie, 4 hours south of Sydney, but constant contact with her peers via message boards means she feels connected to other students 24 hours a day.

"If I have a problem with a project I put a message on the board and within moments I've had 20 suggestions from other students. All of the lecturers are equally responsive and speedy with their replies," she says.

This community culture and knowledge sharing has been strongly fostered by Simon.

"Good online learning is not a soul-less automation of content delivery. It's about active academic engagement and collaboration between students and teachers," he says.

Anita agrees. "I went into this degree quite pragmatically, because I knew it was the only way I could further my education without relocating. But I've been totally seduced ... this degree has become a pure pleasure in my life," she says. ■

- Fran Strachan



Ian Hobbs

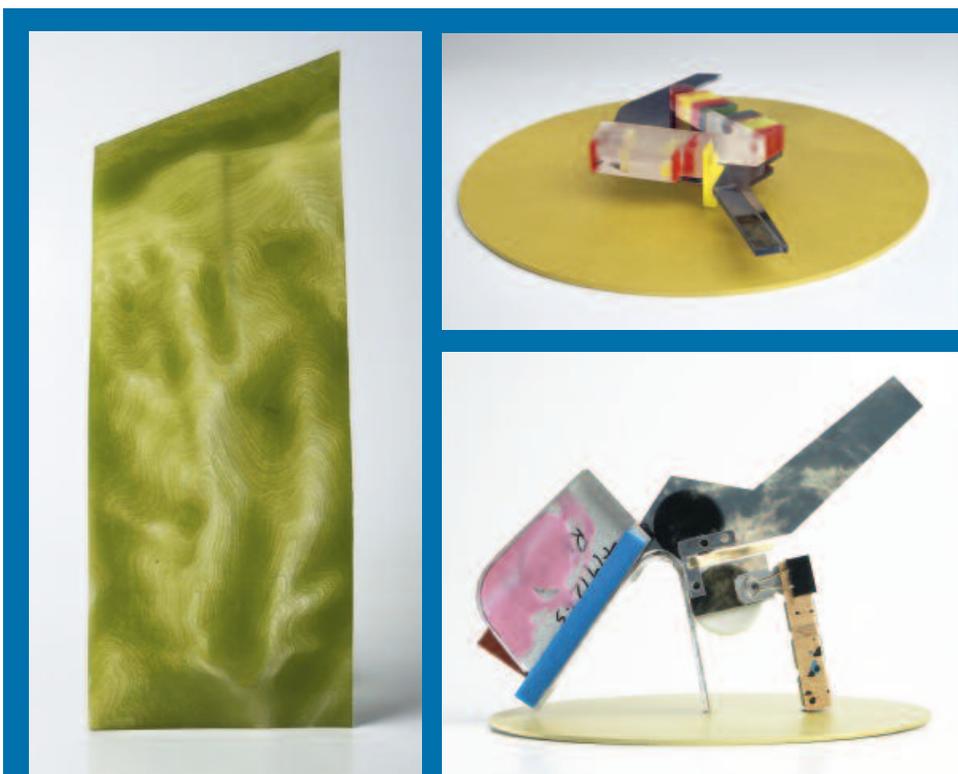
Ainslie Murray's designs consider the impact of human gesture on architectural space. The three spatial works, 'An Architecture of Thread and Gesture', use tyvek, carbon fibre, monofilament, acrylic and aluminium.

design@UNSW

design@UNSW is a cross-disciplinary initiative by the UNSW International Office which will showcase UNSW's design work to an international audience.

Combining the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of the Built Environment and the College of Fine Arts, the pilot program aims to increase enrolments in design courses and strengthen links with design schools in Asia.

The program began in November with a series of road shows and advertising campaigns in the region, as well as the establishment of a website which promotes the multi-disciplinary nature of design at UNSW. The website can be found at www.design.unsw.edu.au



Alex Kershaw

"Most architectural models demonstrate a design to the client. These models don't have that 'dolls' house' quality, rather they are a medium to demonstrate and explore architectural thought," says FBE's Catherine Lassen of her designs for a house on the South Coast, which were created in collaboration with artist Jasper Knight and exhibited as part of the Venice Biennale.

Flying into a virtual future

Computer simulation is allowing engineers to design aeroplanes that will still be flying in 50 years time, and that take into account new technologies which haven't been invented yet. By **Peter Trute**.



An artist's impression of the Qantas A380, the world's largest aircraft.

It's impossible to imagine a World War I-era Sopwith Camel biplane defending London during the Battle of Britain in 1940, or a Spitfire fighter flying missions during the Vietnam War. Yet if the design requirements facing today's aerospace engineers had applied in 1911 or 1939, that's exactly what could have happened.

Frontline combat aircraft flying missions today in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq are designs from the 1970s, and many of those aircraft still have up to a decade of flying ahead of them. A similar situation applies to commercial aircraft.

This extended lifespan, says UNSW Aerospace Engineering Senior Lecturer John Page, has brought about changes in the way engineers design aircraft.

Designers are now creating aircraft which will not only fly in the immediate future, but will remain viable in 50 years' time - taking into account not only five decades of technological advancement, but the changes in economic, social and political environments that will occur in that time.

It's a fundamental change in the nature of engineering which means today's engineers must think beyond materials and manufacturing to the very fabric of society.

The key tool in this new world, says John, is computer simulation.

"From the middle of last century,

Engineers will have the possibility of building a machine and flying it in an environment that doesn't yet exist.

engineering changed its nature significantly: before, you built a prototype, refined it and you ended up with a new vehicle.

"Now, you can't build three Boeing 787 prototypes and fly them against each other - the cost would bankrupt the company. Instead you can simulate that with computing."

Computer simulation is already an integral part of the engineering process - used not only to discover improvements in performance and in training but also in running a virtual operation of a vehicle to predict what it will do, or where it might fail, in the future after years of operation.

But simulation's full potential is yet to be realised. John, who leads the Aerospace Engineering program's research into simulation and virtual engineering, says the next step will be building new factors from the "soft sciences" - economics, politics and social movements - into the models which predict future outcomes.

"Engineers will have the possibility of building a machine and flying it in an environment that doesn't yet exist," he says.

"You can design a vehicle which has the potential for technological improvement using technologies that don't exist yet and you can look back at a problem with hindsight because it projects you into the future - it's time travel really."

It is a new way of learning which has been embraced by UNSW Engineering students. This year one group of fourth-year Aerospace students conceptualised a utility helicopter for developing countries. Considering the environment the helicopter would operate in, they designed it to operate on biodiesel, meaning it could still fly if fuel supplies were disrupted. They also made it easy to fly, to account for a possible shortage of highly trained pilots. It's this sort of awareness of political and environmental factors that will be an increasingly important part of an engineer's work.

"Our students are immersed in computer simulation and love the stimulation they get from using it," John says.

"Older engineers from industry, when the group designs were presented, were critical of the amount of time the students spend on simulation for their design but the younger engineers were thrilled with how they could optimise a design for the future." ■

Redesigning the 'burbs

Simply rezoning land for higher-density residential use is unlikely to be enough to meet the NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy, new research has found.

How can the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy meet its aim of delivering 640,000 dwellings by 2031 in today's economic climate and without displacing current residents?

The City Futures Research Centre (CFRC) in the Faculty of the Built Environment is investigating how smart design and planning can rejuvenate our older suburbs without disenfranchising those already living there.

"This period of renewal represents the first systematic rebuilding of our suburbs since World War II and the big question is how do we renew our city with more homes in the right places and at the right price," says Professor Bill Randolph, director of the CFRC and chief investigator of an Australian Research Council funded project "Planning for Socially Sustainable Urban Renewal in Suburban Sydney".

According to the CFRC's research, simply rezoning land for higher-density residential is unlikely to be sufficient.

"There are few 'easy' development sites available in the required locations," Bill explains.



"Development in most middle and outer parts of Sydney is typically unviable in current market conditions, and existing physical and community infrastructure may be unable to cope with higher residential densities. And community opposition to ad hoc and poor quality development is a further barrier to renewal."

According to the CFRC there are a number of basic requirements for socially inclusive higher-density housing, particularly in Sydney's west.

"We must plan for communities and people, not numbers," Bill explains. "Higher-density communities cannot afford to be polarised. That means a real social mix and balance for long-term residents, children and older people as well. This can only be delivered through a mix of building design and quality, which would also help meet the affordability challenge."

The CFRC's research suggests policy

changes would help meet social inclusion targets. These include:

- ◆ renewal of master planning - to set the vision, coordinate consolidation of sites and plan for adequate infrastructure provision
- ◆ more flexible local planning frameworks - mixed densities, mixed tenure, mixed community outcomes, 30 percent family homes, and universal design for all ages/capacities
- ◆ locally determined and integrated neighbourhood planning
- ◆ a managed approach to strata buy-outs and site assembly.

"We need to look for new approaches," Bill explains. "Public, private and non-profit partnerships, long leases of public land for development, and targeted subsidies potentially provide new ways forward which could increase socially inclusive urban renewal." ■

- Victoria Brown

Atomic scale innovation

When Francis Crick and James Watson discovered the secret of life in 1953, they found a beautiful thing.

Like a tiny, delicate spiral stairway, the double-helix shape of the fundamental structure that held the code for life - DNA - was revealed to be a masterpiece of design.

That same design concept is a central tenet in the development of new materials that have properties tailored to both emerging and existing technologies, notes Dr John Stride, a senior lecturer in the School of Chemistry.

Dr Stride's research group employs design way down at atomic and molecular scales, researching how to make and characterise new solid-state materials in which repeated

simple rules, such as the preferred orientation of molecular units, lead to complex structures having their own beauty and symmetry.

This rational design of new "smart" materials can lead to highly porous, sponge-like structures able to trap specific molecules, according to criteria such as size, shape or electronic polarity.

While that may sound esoteric, these new compounds hold great promise in future technologies essential to the widespread adoption of a hydrogen-based economy or the continued use of fossil fuels in so-called clean coal technologies.

Art as a language

If first impressions count, the entrance to the office of the Director of the Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW) shows the man's trademark humour and passion.

"F... off, I'm smoking" reads a card on the door of his spacious office, which is filled with original artworks and stacks of coffee table books, as well as gifts from artists and other friends - many of them reflecting his other lesser-known interests of football and giraffes.

What defines a culture - apart from food, sex and clothing - is visual and literary language.

To say that Edmund Capon has his fingers in many pies would be something of an understatement. One of them is his Visiting Fellowship with the School of Languages and Linguistics at UNSW. It's a position he's held for four years - and one that he sees as being entirely consistent with his initial interest in Asian art.

Edmund sees his role at the University as an opportunity to enhance the engagement between the Art Gallery of NSW and the academic world.

"One of the things about academic studies is that it tends to work from often isolated sources. There is almost a fear of actually engaging with the real thing," he says.

It is something the head of the School of Languages and Linguistics has already capitalised on.

"Under Edmund Capon's directorship, our School has developed close links with the AGNSW. Regular visits to the gallery are part of some of our most successful courses," says Associate Professor Hans Hendrischke.

"For example, the several hundred students who enrol every year in our course on the Silk Road always spend one course module at the fantastic Asian collection of the Art Gallery of NSW and come back to write inspired essays. Also, the senior curators for Asian art give regular guest lectures to our students."

The links between AGNSW and UNSW go back further. Edmund also holds an Honorary Doctorate from UNSW and had a close association with the former Chancellor John Yu and the former Vice-Chancellor Michael Birt.

"What defines a culture - apart from food, sex and clothing - is visual and literary language," Edmund says. "Particularly in East Asia, that distinction between writing and the visual arts is not as strong as it is in Western societies. An instinctive appreciation of that visual culture is going to be an aid to an appreciation and understanding of people's sensibilities.

"I always say that art is a language, which is defined by the culture and place of where it came from, but it is a language which is not constrained by those origins." ■

- Susi Hamilton



Photo courtesy of the Art Gallery of NSW

Dr Stride's group also uses a molecular tool-kit to manipulate structures into alternate dimensionalities - for example materials having three-dimensional architectures have electronic properties that differ widely from similar two-dimensional, layered structures and even one-dimensional chain-like systems. By increasingly understanding the coding between molecules, researchers in the group are able to perform design at the molecular and atomic scale - the ultimate palette from which to construct new materials.

Using similar design principles at a tiny

scale is a team led by Dr Nagarajan Valanoor, a senior lecturer in the School of Materials Science and Engineering. One of UNSW's leading research groups in nanotechnology, the team is designing and making new materials one atomic layer at a time.

They are working with Australia's first and only insitu high pressure Reflective High Energy Electron Diffraction (RHEED) laser ablation tool.

The RHEED lets them monitor the growth of each atomic layer as a material is built up and precisely control the chemistry of each layer's interface.

The group is focused on materials known as ferroics, which possess what is called a "spontaneous" order parameter and which changes in response to external factors such as an electric or magnetic field. Using a design strategy based on a lattice-by-lattice building, similar to stacking of playing blocks, ultra-thin layers of single crystals are combined at an atomic level.

By combining dissimilar ferroics, they hope to create novel materials with exciting new electrical and magnetic properties that may open up many new industrial possibilities. ■

- Bob Beale



Getty Images

Teamwork improves patient outcomes

Stressed junior doctors report fewer “urgent” situations when supported by a highly experienced nurse, according to new research. By **Leilah Schubert**.

Hospital patients are significantly less likely to reach the stage where they need “urgent” care, and patient outcomes are improved when junior doctors working overtime shifts are supported by an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), according to a recent UNSW study.

A research team, led by Dr Markus Groth from Organisation and Management at the Australian School of Business, in collaboration with Dr Bruce Way and APN Steven Coote, examined the experience of junior doctors at Sydney’s Prince of Wales Hospital (POW) over an 18-month period.

The team monitored the impact of having a senior APN present on the overtime shift as an added support resource, a model which was significantly different from previous hospital practice.

Shifts were matched so the same junior doctor was assessed both with and without the assistance of the APN. The team assessed 91 junior doctors over 192 shifts, using an Australian Research Council Linkage grant.

Dr Anya Johnson, an organisational psychologist and member of the research team, says junior doctors working the overtime shift experience a very stressful workplace with a great deal of uncertainty.

“Junior doctors, often in their first year out of medical school, work an overtime shift from 5 pm till 11 pm approximately two times a week. This is on top of their daytime shift. There is a lot of demand placed on them

during this time, and much less support.

“A lot of exhaustion builds up over that period. In terms of staying psychologically healthy it’s challenging,” says Anya.

The hospital recognised this problem and was keen to explore ways to enhance the performance of junior doctors. They also felt it was important to be able to measure and assess the impact of proposed changes.

“For us it was an opportunity to work in a real-world situation and really understand how changing the environment might have an impact on people’s performance,” says Markus.

“The idea was to build in a support mechanism that changes the junior doctors’ environment, gives them information, helps them control the situation, and provides them with re-assurance. So we looked at whether an APN could provide this,” he says.

The junior doctors and the APN kept detailed records of their tasks. Three tasks were categorised as “high complexity” - responding to an emergency, responding to an urgent situation in a very sick patient, and responding to an urgent situation in a stable patient.

The research team found a significant difference in the number of “high complexity” tasks junior doctors reported on their shifts. This varied from, on average, three or four per night on unsupported shifts to one or two per night on supported shifts.

“Statistically we found there were fewer

urgent situations when the APN was on, so it increased patient safety,” says Anya. “There was also a reduction in the admission of ward patients to the high-dependency unit and the intensive care unit on shifts where doctors were supported.”

Researchers say the positive effect occurred in part by building confidence in the junior doctors, and in part because the APN carried out routine tasks that in turn freed up the junior doctors’ time and capacity.

“For junior doctors we found having that support provided a buffer; it offered some relief and reduced the workload, particularly for those who were feeling rather overwhelmed and emotionally burnt out.

For those who were more confident and experienced, it also provided an opportunity to learn and build on their skills,” says Anya.

“The APN reduced the number of urgent situations because they were on top of the problem before it happened. There was closer monitoring, picking up symptoms earlier, making slight adjustments to medication or slight changes to the situation the patient was in, and that was preventative.”

As a result of the research, the POW has implemented the APN position on a permanent basis. The study has highlighted the advantages of a collaborative approach to patient care, increased teamwork and respect for the nurse’s role, and opened up opportunities for further collaboration in the future. ■

Extreme astronomy

UNSW has played a key role in a record-breaking Antarctic stargazing experiment which could reveal the birth of stars and planets in remote galaxies. By **Dan Gaffney**.

It finally conked out in perishing cold and darkness, but the 204 days that a robotic astronomy station managed to successfully fulfil its winter mission in a dark, remote location on the Antarctic plateau is being hailed as a remarkable success.

Built by UNSW scientists, PLATO (short for Plateau Observatory), is a self-contained automated platform for conducting year-round experiments. No other unmanned observatory has survived for so long in such conditions.

Its deployment in January 2008 by a multinational collaboration including China, the US, the UK and Australia marked the culmination of centuries of effort by mankind to find the best location on Earth for stargazing.

Last summer's expedition by the Polar Research Institute of China, consisting of 16 people in six specialised vehicles, took three weeks to make the 1,200 km overland traverse to the high point (called Dome A) from Zhongshan station on the Antarctic coast.

The observatory has had to withstand some of the most extreme conditions on Earth. Temperatures at Dome A dropped to minus 75°C in winter, and the air pressure is barely half of that at sea level. Since its deployment, PLATO's seven telescopes have

tracked the heavens above the South Pole while its site-testing instruments measured astronomic parameters such as sky darkness and atmospheric turbulence.

Since 20 April, it had been operating in 24-hours-a-day darkness, an effect caused by the Earth's tilt from the Sun and Antarctica's location at the base of the southern hemisphere.

“Of the many colours in the electromagnetic spectrum of light, terahertz waves are perhaps the last unexplored frontier.”

“When PLATO stopped on 9 August at around 8am Australian eastern standard time it had been running continuously for 204 days, 22 hours and 30 minutes - a new record for a high-power remote observatory in Antarctica,” says UNSW astronomer, Professor Michael Ashley.

“We are very excited to have operated throughout the Antarctic winter, and to have come within a couple of weeks of seeing sunrise.”

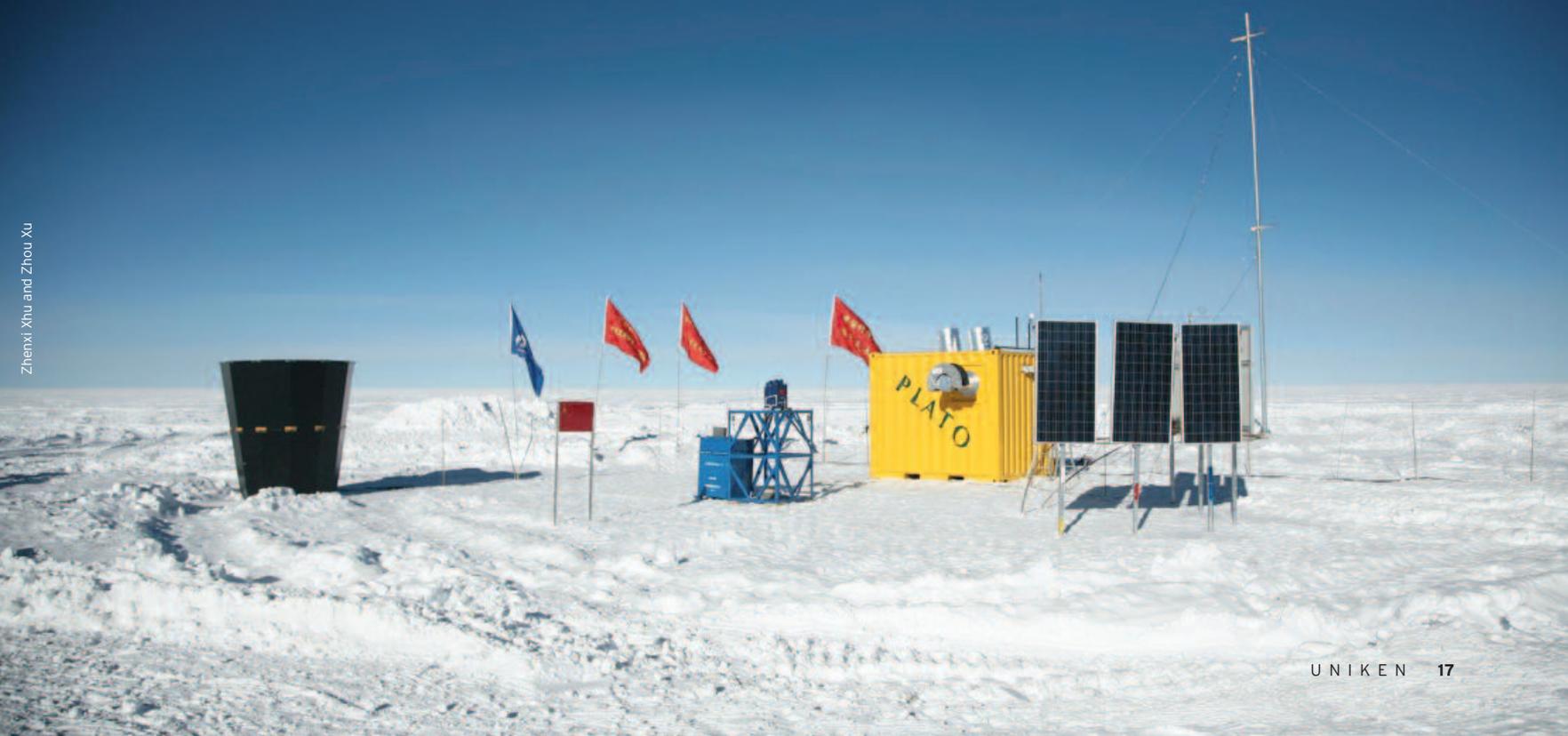
The stoppage resulted from an exhaust leak that reduced power to PLATO's banks of batteries, computers, engines and communication systems.

UNSW astronomers believe their Antarctic observations could reveal the birth of stars and planets in remote galaxies. These distant galaxies emit phenomenal amounts of thermal energy at terahertz wavelengths - a part of the electromagnetic spectrum between the far-infrared and microwave wavebands.

“Of the many colours in the electromagnetic spectrum of light, terahertz waves are perhaps the last unexplored frontier,” says Michael. PLATO includes a prototype instrument to “peer through windows in the terahertz atmosphere”.

Dome A is the only location on the Earth's surface where these observations can be made.

To date, Earth-based terahertz astronomy has been limited in its ability to study the cosmos because minute traces of water vapour in the air absorb terahertz light from space before reaching the ground. The Antarctic plateau is ideal for astronomy because it has clear skies, it doesn't rain, clouds are rare and the air is so still the stars barely twinkle. ■





We need to think about factors such as whether the alleged syndicate had previously been importing ...

When ecstasy goes bust

NewsPix

In August, it was made public that 15 million ecstasy tablets had been seized by the Australian Federal Police and Customs.

Once the details had come in, the Drug Policy Modelling Program (DPMP) at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre crunched the numbers.

The DPMP, which is part of the Faculty of Medicine, is interested in illicit drug use - and is the only place in the world that is undertaking work in drug policy using modelling as a research tool.

The team calculated that the seizure could represent almost half of the annual consumption of ecstasy in Australia, if we take the consumption to be 31.5 million tablets.

But the DPMP research contextualises a rather more complicated picture.

"We need to think about factors such as whether the alleged syndicate had previously been importing, because if it was a new endeavour, it would not impact on the market," says the Program Director, Associate Professor Alison Ritter.

"We would also need to know other things such as how much ecstasy was already stockpiled in Australia, because if there are large stockpiles, it is likely that there would be a long lag between the seizure and the user-market impact."

The DPMP incorporates the work of mathematicians, computer modellers, economists, health experts and psychologists in building the models, which are used to

test different policy options.

"There is a gap between the published scientific literature and the way that it is accessed by policy makers," says Michael Lodge, a Senior Research Policy Officer with the DPMP. "Very few of them go to the scientific literature as the first port of call. We hope to bridge that gap."

Work in the program spans three areas: generating new research evidence; translating evidence into information of use to decision makers; and studying policy making. In generating new research evidence, for example, DPMP found that one dependent amphetamine user costs the community \$44,665 pa - significantly more than a non-dependent amphetamine user (\$926 pa).

In striving to understand policy processes the DPMP teams found that current Australian public opinion is favourable towards pragmatic harm reduction responses but most Australians do not approve of illicit drug use.

DPMP is led by NDARC, UNSW in partnership with the ANU, Griffith University, the Burnet Institute and HEMA Consulting. ■

- Susi Hamilton

A fresh start for Indigenous women leaving prison

Jenny* is an Indigenous woman who has found herself on the wrong side of the law more than once. As soon as she was released from prison recently, naturally enough she wanted to see her children. She headed north.

That visit unleashed a string of problems, explains Associate Professor Eileen Baldry from the School of Social Sciences and International Studies.

"She was supposed to be reporting to parole in Sydney, but she failed to do that, because all she wanted was to visit her children and didn't think to apply to change the reporting conditions," says Eileen.

"Her mother, who was looking after the kids, was concerned about Jenny's ability to parent, as she had no place to live," she says.

Compounding the problems were the lack

of drug and alcohol services in the country and the re-appearance of a violent ex-partner.

Finally, Jenny was picked up by the police for breaching the conditions of her release - and sent back to prison.

So the cycle continues with Aboriginal women representing the fastest-growing group in prison, explains Eileen, who has written a report which calls for Aboriginal-managed housing for women and their children to help prevent these women being sent back to jail.

"Another reason we are focusing on supporting Aboriginal women with children is to address intergenerational imprisonment.

"If an Indigenous child has a parent in jail, there's a higher likelihood that they will also go to jail," she says.

"There is a disconnection between the needs of these Aboriginal women leaving prison and current services."

The report also suggests that the reintegration of the women into life outside of prison, must be guided by the women themselves.

"The women want and need to be involved in planning their future," Eileen says. "And there should be a seamless connection between prison and the community support agency where women and their children can build positive futures."

Eileen's report *Aboriginal Women and Dependent Children Leaving Prison Needs Analysis* was funded by Homelessness NSW. ■

- Susi Hamilton

*Name has been changed for this story.

Reforming human rights in Australia

UNSW's Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law has been at the centre of efforts to promote public debate about the necessity of introducing a Human Rights Act in Australia. The Centre's **Edward Santow** explains why.

A wide-ranging public debate is about to get underway in this country on whether we should adopt a Human Rights Act and, if so, how that Act should operate. It is a debate that is long overdue - Australia is now the world's only liberal democracy without national human rights legislation.

The debate will represent a once-in-a-generation chance to consider a fundamental reform in how we are governed. It will give the public an opportunity to choose what rights are protected, how they are codified, and to do that in a way that protects the fundamental tenets of our system of representative democracy.

In June 2008, the Gilbert + Tobin (G+T) Centre of Public Law and the Australian Human Rights Commission (formerly HREOC) held a round table that brought together 50 key experts on human rights. It was a motley crew representing the government and non-government sectors, religious groups, academia, the legal profession and business.

The meeting was instrumental in putting human rights onto the broader public agenda and, in part, it was a response to promises made by the then Labor Opposition during last year's federal election campaign. Labor went to the election on a platform that included a promise to "initiate a public inquiry about how best to recognise and protect the human rights and freedoms enjoyed by all Australians".

The G+T Centre believes it is vital to foster public input into such an important debate. When it commences, the public inquiry has the potential to be one of the most significant in our history. Any Human Rights Act would represent a fundamental shift in the operation of our public service, and in how the Federal Parliament drafts and considers legislation. Moreover, it would also give certain powers to the courts that they do not currently possess.

So far, the public debate on the legal protection of human rights has been beset by misunderstandings and misinformation about the potential effects of a Human Rights Act. Significantly, the meeting in June resolved to establish an organisation to foster *informed* public debate. That organisation, the Australian Human Rights Group (AHRG), comprises members from every Australian state and territory, and brings together a broad cross-

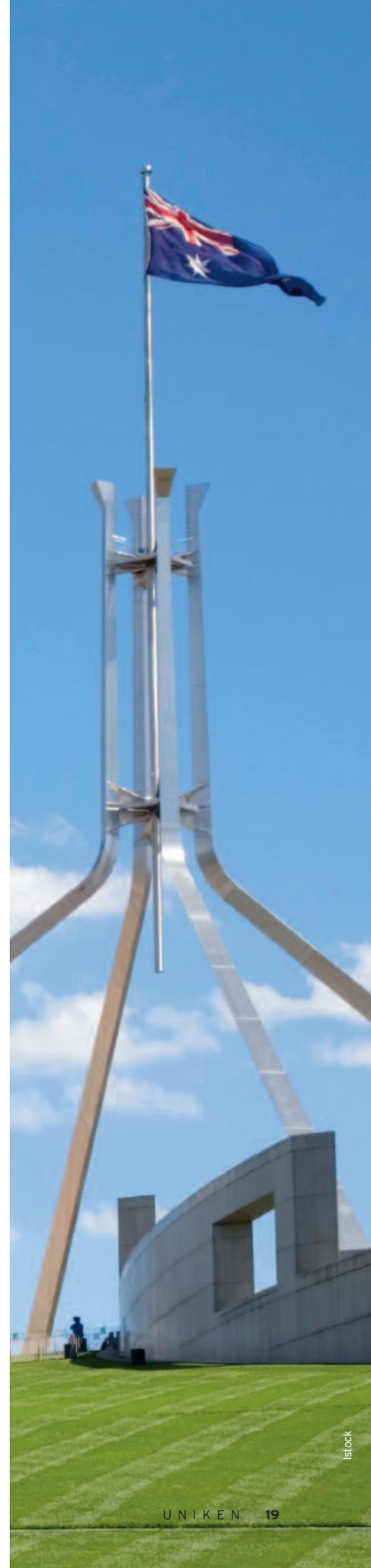
section of people and organisations - not only lawyers and legal academics. The AHRG contributes actively to public debate, through the media and public forums and provides expertise to state and federal governments. Perhaps most importantly, it is acting to collate and disseminate resources so that any debate is informed and evidence-based.

As we saw with the debate on the Republic, misinformation can be the greatest enemy of change. Opponents of reform frequently equate a Human Rights Act with the US Bill of Rights, suggesting that it would import to Australia a right to bear arms and it would shift enormous power from our elected officials, placing it in the hands of "unelected and unaccountable judges". This is a most unfortunate misunderstanding: there is no logical reason why those features of a two-centuries old constitutional Bill of Rights in a foreign jurisdiction would automatically be transposed to Australia.

There are, of course, reasonable arguments both for and against adopting a Human Rights Act. My research as a legal academic leads me to support the adoption of a well-drafted Act. Chief among the benefits is that such an Act would lay down an enforceable set of principles that the public service would be required to follow in the work it does in our name and for our benefit. Moreover, adopting a statutory (as distinct from a Constitutional) model would provide these benefits without running the risk of corroding principles, such as parliamentary supremacy and the separation of powers, which underpin the Australian politico-legal system.

Naturally others will have different views and rightly so. The point is that the community needs to have a thorough debate on this issue - and the debate must avoid myths and misunderstandings; it must embrace the diverse groups that make up Australian civil society, and respond to their input; and it must be open to learning from the relevant experiences of people in other lands. ■

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Social inclusion: more than just buzz words

The election of the Rudd government has begun, inevitably, to change the lexicon of social policy. Every government has its own catchphrases and politically acceptable nomenclature, and this one is no exception. We seem to be moving from the era of social capital to the era of social inclusion.

Already it has become de rigueur for any significant social policy conference to be themed around the concept of social inclusion, and I have no doubt that there will be a spate of special journal editions, edited books and the like.

Academics love this sort of transition because it opens up whole new areas of work - not only because new subjects of inquiry are encouraged, but also because of new buzz words, such as social inclusion, need debate, refinement and discussion.

Social exclusion (as opposed to inclusion) has been studied in the European context since the early 1990s and is generally seen as a more productive construct than poverty. It is multi-dimensional rather than relying on one threshold for its definition.

Interestingly the term social inclusion, while a lot warmer and fuzzier than social exclusion, lacks the connotation of exclusionary forces. It therefore implies a much stronger policy focus on helping the excluded to participate in mainstream society, without examining what it is about that society that excluded them in the first place.

From a research point of view, the social inclusion agenda opens up a raft of opportunities to study aspects of social policy that were previously de-emphasised, particularly the effects of government policy on marginalised groups.

One of the fascinating aspects of academic social policy research and analysis is that many of the basic aspects that we are addressing are very simple to understand on the surface, but are fiendishly difficult to define accurately. Poverty, care, disability, child abuse, social capital and social inclusion are cases in point. Any intelligent member of the population will be able to easily grasp the essence of these terms, and



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yet none of them has been defined accurately or adequately.

On the contrary, acrimonious debates and tensions among scholars have been engendered by disagreements over their definitions. While these debates have engaged academics (and bureaucrats) over long periods of time, the groups of people who are subject to the actual policies don't tend to care much about these arguments.

Social capital, for example, has spawned a veritable industry of definition, measurement, comment and analysis. In my view social inclusion/exclusion contains a much richer set of concepts than social capital. Although social capital has a very powerful, simple and commonsense narrative at its core - people function better in the context of networks of support and trust than as individuals - it has become an overburdened and tired expression with little meaning, and it is tainted by its vaguely right-wing connotations.

It would be a pity if the focus on social inclusion became mired by definitional issues. Social inclusion is intentionally an inclusive definition and hard to define accurately. There is another approach to the problem, which the government seems to be taking. It seeks to identify a number of severe social policy problems that are known to require a multi-departmental approach and to set up processes to deal with these issues.

Typically these problems include homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, and young people not in education or employment. This approach has the advantage of not having to address the definitional complexities of social inclusion. Instead it can narrow the focus on specific and hopefully achievable objectives rather than promoting social inclusion as a positive-sounding but fairly meaningless goal. On the other hand this approach is narrowly focused. It presumes that complex problems can be addressed relatively easily by short-term interventions.

This is a new and exciting phase in Australian social policy, but it will be a while before we know whether it will fulfil its promise. ■

Professor Ilan Katz is the director of the Social Policy Research Centre.