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COURSE: Diploma of Arts (Visual Art)
DATE: 2005
TITLE: Bent backwards
MEDIA: oil on canvas

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COVER PHOTO
Victoria University’s fire research facility at Fiskville in rural Victoria.
PHOTO BY Sharon Walker
DESIGN
Brett Kiteley of Stroke p/l
Recent decisions by the University Council to invest many millions of dollars in infrastructure will ensure that Victoria University maintains a strong presence in the west and will continue to appeal to successive generations of students.

The stories in this issue of Connections show how our University is continuing to offer transformative courses and programs in an innovative manner, allowing our students to take the best possible advantage of the investments we are making in our facilities.

Council’s approval of a $22 million sports laboratory precinct at Footscray Park Campus will help keep VU at the forefront of international sports science. As our TAFE programs in this area are moved from South Melbourne to Footscray Park, students will benefit from access to better facilities and clearer pathways to higher education.

Our exciting partnership with the Western Bulldogs is set to give students and staff practical experience with high-profile sports practitioners as well as courses directly geared to the real world of professional sport.

Our facilities and flexible course delivery are attracting some of Australia’s top athletes, including former Olympian Cathy Freeman, who is revelling in her two-year Graduate Certificate in Career Counselling for Elite Performers (Sport), which is delivered online via VU’s TAFE Virtual Campus.

A $4.3 million investment by the University at our Centre for Environmental Safety and Risk Engineering will allow the centre to continue its internationally recognised fire safety engineering research. A new warehouse-sized building at Fiskville, in rural Victoria, will allow unique large indoor fire testing, which will deliver benefits to the whole community.

All these great stories show how Victoria University is continuing to provide better educational opportunities and employment outcomes for its students through its flexible approach to study. They also demonstrate how our investment in infrastructure benefits the entire community as well as our students.

Please enjoy reading this issue of Connections.

Professor Elizabeth Harman
Vice-Chancellor and President
November 2005

INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION SPELL SUCCESS

WHO’S BEEN A LEGEND?

You may have known us as Footscray Technical School, Footscray Institute of Technology, Western Institute, Victoria University of Technology, or as we are today – 90 Years New – Victoria University.

To commemorate this milestone we want to know special stories about the people that have made VU so great. These stories of VU Legends will form the basis of a book marking the achievements of 90 Legends in 90 Years.

If you know someone you would like to nominate as a VU Legend, go to our website www.vu.edu.au/ninetylegends to download a nomination form, and email to ninetylegends@vu.edu.au. You can also phone Sharon Orbell on (03) 9919 4000.

Play your part in VU’s history – nominate a Legend today.
Footscray Park Campus is to receive $54 million in new infrastructure, including $22.45 million to the School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance to boost teaching and research.

“We are planning a world-class total package in sport, exercise, recreation, fitness, human movement and physical education, which will benefit students, industry partners and the wider community,” says Vice-Chancellor Professor Elizabeth Harman.

A new Learning Commons at a cost of $16 million will provide seamless learning support to students and academic staff, and will include a new library, open access computer laboratories with IT support staff, and a relaxed, informal space for those seeking quiet individual or group study.

A further $11 million will be spent refurbishing the existing Building P, including new lecture theatres, a corporate data centre and new courtyards. Monies will also be spent improving student facilities, including catering and retail, as well as providing more attractive external surroundings.

“Victoria University is shifting from a teaching-centred to a learning-centred university,” says Professor Harman.

VU’s much vaunted student diversity was on show in all its colourful glory at Footscray Park Campus during Multicultural Week in October. There was free sushi one day and chicken biriani the next, with international movies, quizzes, costume parades and performances.

Participating countries included Turkey, Sri Lanka, India, Papua New Guinea, China, Malaysia, Japan and the Republic of Oman.

“Because we don’t have overcrowded lecture theatres, students have a more personal experience and develop good relationships with their lecturers,” Professor McCallum says.

“Student satisfaction says a lot about our quality. In the 2005 Good Universities Guide our graduates gave VU the maximum five-star rating for their education experience.”

The average ratio among Victorian universities was 19, compared with 19.1 in NSW and 21.6 in Queensland.
IN BRIEF

DENIED AND NOW EQUAL

VU's libraries have been turned into a 'Learning Commons', thanks to a special one-off $3.5 million grant to improve student access to library computer services from the Federal Government's Higher Education Innovation Program.

The Learning Commons is a bold new venture that enhances the student learning experience by putting learning first, seamlessly combining information technology, library resources and student support.

"Libraries were [once] symbols of political and religious power," said Victorian senator Mitch Fifield at the October opening. "They effectively denied the community information. This has changed over the past 15 years due to technology – now knowledge is the great equaliser."

Vice-Chancellor Professor Liz Harman said that internet access at home is relatively low in Melbourne's western suburbs and that the new funding had helped increase the number of computers that on-campus students can access in the University's libraries.

"Wireless technology is now available at most of our campuses, and in the past eight months the library has increased student computers from 300 to 604 – student use of the new PCs has increased 83 per cent," Professor Harman said.

A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Victoria University has always been known as a friendly, open-minded, in-touch education provider. Its new branding as 'A New School of Thought' will further consolidate and advance this reputation.

Although still in its infancy, the new brand has already captured widespread attention and applause.

The brand project began when Antoinette de Villiers started as director of the Marketing and Communications Department last year. The department first did their homework, carrying out a brand audit and extensive market research involving students, staff, external people and the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing. They also employed a brand agency, cummins&partners.

De Villiers says that re-branding is much more than simply changing a logo. "A logo is like a signature, a brand is like a personality," she says. "Changing a logo is like changing the wrapping on a parcel, changing the brand is like filling the parcel with good things.

"We know our students come here to challenge and be challenged by new ideas and new thinking. That's what our new brand is all about."

For information, email: brand@vu.edu.au

RELAX AND CLEANSE THE MIND

With only an indoor fountain's cascading water to compete with his calming tones, Buddhist monk Phra Ronrawee Chainirattisai introduced 18 novices to meditation at the recently opened Reflection Centre at St Albans Campus.

Before long, bodies were relaxed and minds were cleansed. The 20-minute session included Phra Ronrawee's explanation as to why the mind, much the same as our external skin, needed to be cleansed.

He said meditation could control impure thoughts, mental problems and phobias, while building self-confidence, awareness and happiness with a stronger mind.

Bangkok-born Phra Ronrawee, 30, has been a monk for 10 years and is an English language student.

Established on Campus last March, the multi-faith Reflection Centre welcomes staff and students of all religions, and is run by VU's chaplain, Sister Catherine Tay.

"It's for students and staff of any religion, even those without any religion," Sister Catherine says. "All are very welcome – until they come they don't realise what it is.

We all need a break and this is a place to come and take a moment – I call it a sacred moment or sacred space – just to be quiet."
A CHANCE TO PLAY SPORT

An adapted netball program for people with an intellectual disability was launched at VU in May. Creating a Sporting Chance is being run by VU students for 40 participants from Melbourne’s western suburbs who come to the Footscray Park Campus by bus for a few hours every Wednesday morning.

“Creating a Sporting Chance is a wonderful partnership delivering great learning experiences for our students and healthy physical activity for our clients,” says head of the School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance, Professor Terry Roberts.

Participants are from agencies including Brimbank Support Services, David House, Distinctive Options – Sunbury, Macey House and the Recreation Plus Program.

“Students enrolled in a special adapted physical education unit of study, designed to give them the skills to work with specific groups of people, are gaining valuable experience,” Professor Roberts says. “Our clients are able to access a healthy and enjoyable experience not otherwise available, and our University is engaging with the community and important community groups.”

There is a lengthy waiting list of agencies from around the west wanting to take part in the program.

DRAMA FOR KIDS

A menacing black-suited figure with a bright blue feather, a befuddled Dame Edna look-alike and fair maidens with handfuls of lollies were all part of a stage spectacular with a difference at Footscray Park Campus during October.

Around 50 of Victoria University’s education students who are studying drama as an elective performed for children from four local primary schools, many of whom were witnessing their first live drama.

Three short performances, The Emperor’s New Clothes, The Ugly Duckling, and Who am I? What am I? thrilled the children with a feast of visual and vocal entertainment. Third-year student and the show’s production manager Emily Paton says the chance to give to the children was itself a reward.

“A lot of these kids don’t get out to see performances because they come from a lower socioeconomic background.” Paton says. “The kids absolutely loved it.”

Drama lecturer Lisa Petty says the drama program began four years ago and had built relationships with primary schools across Melbourne’s western suburbs.

BIGGEST IN THE COUNTRY

Success was the unspoken but undeniable theme dominating the recent 10th anniversary reunion of VU’s sport administration program. More than 170 sport administration graduates attended the function at the City Flinders Campus conference centre.

Graduate and basketball legend Andrew Gaze paid tribute to VU staff who assisted him in his human movement degree, which he completed over 12 years during a hectic sporting career.

VU’s sport administration program started in 1995 with an intake of 55 students, and now enrols 300 students. It allows students to take a four-year combined degree in sport administration with either business management, marketing, events or human movement.

“This makes it the largest undergraduate sport management program in Australia,” says principal lecturer Dr Bob Stewart.

Success stories among the program’s 500 graduates include Telstra Dome Events Manager, Nick Saulter; Acting CEO of Deaf Sports Australia, Brett Hidson; and Media Manager with Cricket Australia, Jessica Kendal.

“The program’s work-integrated learning model not only delivers a challenging and highly relevant learning experience, but also provides employers with high-quality and enthusiastic employees,” says Dr Stewart. “Everyone wins.”

Steve Talevski, 24, is presented with his participation medal by Professor Liz Harman. Photo by Sharon Jones

Schoolchildren were thrilled by the feast of entertainment. Photo by Sharon Walker

Andrew Gaze at the 10th anniversary reunion. Photo by Sharon Jones
Legendary Olympian Cathy Freeman has started another race; a marathon of the mind, of sorts, with a return to study at Victoria University. Cathy, 32, has discovered a passion for education she previously had no idea existed.

As a teenager, Cathy had a disjointed education, completing Year 12 through a series of about 10 secondary schools. Her stepfather and first coach, Bruce Barber, had to move towns as part of his job as a Queensland railway guard. “I didn’t care about school,” says Cathy, who admits to being a daydreamer in primary school. “I was born to run, and the only thing that mattered to me was to be an Olympic athlete. To be quite honest I am quite resentful of the fact that I didn’t take my schooling more seriously. I just didn’t think about it.”

An adviser at the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS) suggested to Cathy last year she might enjoy returning to study. At the start of 2005, she commenced a two-year part-time Graduate Certificate in Career Counselling for Elite Performers (Sport), delivered online via VU’s TAFE Virtual Campus, which includes five days of face to face on-campus study.

Because of her other commitments, Cathy attends VIS in East Melbourne to do her studies because it is close to her Kew home. She is working on a children’s book with Penguin and has a busy schedule as an ambassador for several charities, including Inspire, which works on suicide prevention, and Cottage by the Sea, a respite centre.

VIS Athlete Career and Education program advisers, such as Peter Brown, have done the same counselling course and are mentoring Cathy through her studies.

“This course is really aimed at elite athletes, where the advisers have a good understanding of the focus and time commitments that athletes have,” says Brown.

Does Cathy enjoy studies now? “Yeah – oh yeah,” she says. “The information, managing it, integrating it … it helps me understand myself, and my environment. And it makes me want to know more, want to learn more. It’s amazing.”

Cathy was determined not to rush into anything after retiring from running. “I came in here very curious as to what they could teach me,” she says. “I had to think about it, because I certainly don’t have the time to spend four to six years studying full time. And I do worry because I get work in late and I am a novice student. But between the VIS and VU, they’ve been fantastic, the support has been amazing.”

Cathy is assisted in her studies by VU online course co-ordinator Wenda Donaldson, who has high praise for Cathy.

“It has been really exciting to work with Cathy,” Donaldson says. “Her passion and desire to do well is to be commended.”

Jane McLennan, head of VU’s Department of Sport, Recreation and Performance, says the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) once offered a Graduate Certificate in Athlete Career Education for staff professional development, but they approached VU in 2000 to deliver the course. The following year, VU offered the program re-accredited as the Graduate Certificate in Career Counselling for Elite Performers (Sport).

“We continue to run the course for staff of the AIS and the state institutes and academies of sport,” McLennan says.
A number of people from professional sporting bodies are undertaking the course. It is a niche area of training, but the area is growing.

The course currently has eight students from institutes and academies across Australia. Other sporting bodies to enrol students include the Hawthorn Football Club, Football Victoria, AFL Sportsready, the Tasmanian Cricket Association, the English Cricket Board and the New Zealand Institute of Sport. They join a growing list of athletes to select VU sports courses to advance their careers, such as elite AFL players Matthew Lloyd and Steven Alessio from Essendon Football Club and basketball guru Andrew Gaze.

In a recent interview, Cathy said she had become depressed when she stopped running, but she now reassesses that description. “Depressed is a strong word. I’d say I was lost, just a little bit lost. The dynamics change a lot. You have a team around you [when competing] geared towards you being the best athlete you can be. So you don’t live in a real world. You live in a bubble and the only thing you see is the track and the gym.”

Asked to nominate the best moment of her career, she says her gold medal win at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. “But it’s really, really difficult to single out one most satisfying moment. It’s just a whole series – before, now and after. It’s all relative. Without the training and the build up I wouldn’t have had the pleasure of winning. To have your own home host the Olympics, then light the cauldron, and then to win with Indigenous blood running through my veins, it’s kind of special.”

Cathy remembers her very first race – barefoot. She was eight years old and in grade one at St Joseph’s Primary School in Mackay. “I was hiding in the toilet because it was sports day,” Cathy recalls. “I was very shy.” But her teacher, Mrs Baldry, insisted she race. “I ran into a fence on my way to the start.”

The race was over 80 metres, and on a hot, sunny day. “I was just running with one eye open,” says Cathy, mimicking an obviously spectacular entrée to sports stardom, the back of her hand an imaginary fence wire, flailing against her forehead as her eyes twitch wildly. “The fence was this wire, and I didn’t see it. It went across my eyes,” she says with a burst of laughter.

“And yeah, I won. I didn’t realise that I was so competitive, that I had it in me, to want to win and want to be the best.”

She says the inspiration behind her love of running was that “it felt good and it felt easy, and I felt happy”.

Cathy still likes to run barefoot, usually on the beach, or somewhere “out in the bush”, such as Arnhem Land or the Kimberley, which she visited recently to co-host a television travel series.

Now clearly revelling in her counselling course, tertiary education for Cathy – much like her first race – seems on track to providing her with many more golden moments.
David, the presenter, picks a girl with thick, loose, shoulder length hair from the second row. Standing her on a plastic crate, he places her right hand gently on a large silver ball. He flicks a switch and slowly, slowly, her hair begins to stand on end.

"Give your head a shake," he says, and when she does, her hair flies higher and higher, forming an impressive aureole around her head. The kids filling the darkened theatre clap and cheer. There are cries: "That is so cool!"

There are more tricks, including an electrically charged gherkin, but the piece de resistance is what is known as the Lightning Room.

The lights are dimmed, and behind the massive Faraday Cage that reaches from floor to ceiling, lightning – two million volts worth – jags out from a high spinning Tesla coil. And then it strikes four realistic looking human dummies – one in a car, one under a bus shelter, one under a tree and the last swinging a golf club high into the highly-charged air.

It's not just the kids who are thrilled. Since it was opened in March last year by the Victorian Minister for Innovation, John Brumby, and Museum Victoria's CEO Dr J Patrick Greene, almost 100,000 people have experienced the Lightning Room, otherwise known as the Victoria University - Scienceworks High Voltage Theatre (HVT) at Scienceworks museum in the Melbourne suburb of Spotswood.

It's a great example of VU's involvement with industry and community, and has resulted in a first-class research and educational facility that is one of only two in the world. But, like so many other worthwhile endeavours, it started with an idea and a relationship.

Telstra had run a high-voltage testing laboratory for many years, and when they closed it down they decided to donate it to Scienceworks. But given the colossal amounts of electricity involved, it needed to be housed and staffed appropriately.

Peter Pentland is Education Officer at Scienceworks. In a previous life as a secondary school physics teacher, he taught the daughters of Professor Akhtar Kalam, VU's deputy dean of the Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science. He phoned Kalam and asked if he'd be interested in a joint venture between Scienceworks and VU.

"I'd been looking for facilities of this type for teaching both undergrads and postgrads," Kalam says. "I had known about the Telstra lab for a long time and I'd had it at the back of my mind that we needed such a facility. But it needs a huge work-shop type environment, so we couldn't do it at Footscray Park Campus where engineering at VU is based.

"So naturally I was keen – and Peter knew that. The problem was, where would we house it? We calculated that we'd need about $450,000 to get this thing going. I told Peter I'd get the money and within a week I did. $100,000 came from VU and the rest from local industries."

Pentland says this is one of the few places in the world where there is such an array of high-voltage equipment for public display and academic use. "We are certainly unique in our level of interpretation of these things and the shows we put on around the displays. And the relationship between VU, the museum and industry is also unique."

Certainly all three parties involved reap the benefits of this project. Kalam describes it as a "win-win situation for everyone."

Scienceworks gets a world-class display that would take $3 million to replace, and one that lures thousands of members of the public and a continuous stream of primary and secondary school groups. The industries involved get free staff passes to Scienceworks, use of their conference facilities, great PR and will soon start to use the facility for staff training and equipment testing.

For VU it is a fantastic educational and marketing opportunity. "There are so few high-voltage electrical engineers being trained in Australia that we’re having to import them," Pentland says. "We aim to encourage kids to study electrical engineering at VU, and we do this by handing out course brochures when secondary students come to HVT."

It's a little early to tell yet, but Kalam thinks that this strategy may already be working. "The numbers of students studying electrical engineering has declined substantially, but in the area of power and high-voltage engineering, numbers have actually increased. I suspect one of the reasons for this is the excellent facilities we have at the High Voltage Theatre."
“Customer satisfaction” is a familiar phrase. But as customers – or consumers – ourselves, we know that all too often we are left unsatisfied. And we experience a whole gamut of emotions, positive and otherwise.

Victoria University academic Michael Edwardson knows this only too well. Consumer emotion, his field of expertise, is a relatively new area.

“As consumers we have reactions to our experience other than satisfaction,” he says. “Conceptually we know this, and I’ve been trying to work out ways of measuring the experience.”

He has done this on a massive scale. In 2003 he was co-author of the SOCAP (Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals) Consumer Emotions study that researched the experiences of no fewer than 4000 Australian consumers. Last year he presented a symposium on Consumer Emotions at the University of Queensland Business School.

In different services, Edwardson discovered, different emotions are rewarded by customer loyalty. In the hospitality industry, for example, feeling welcomed and relaxed was important. While feeling trust and in control was more important for financial services.

Anger and disappointment, both negative emotions, tend to result in different behaviour.

“Angry consumers have a sense of injustice and want retribution,” he says. “In other words, they are going to complain! Disappointed customers, on the other hand, feel let down and simply want to leave without any further contact. Both are equally dissatisfied, but disappointment is more highly linked to defection. Disappointment is especially insidious because, unlike anger, customers don’t let you know, they just defect silently and never ever come back.

“If you are a company and want to ‘satisfy’ customers, it’s not going to do anything. In my view the word ‘satisfied’ is quite meaningless. It doesn’t capture the real human emotional experience.”

Edwardson is a lecturer in the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing, which he describes as “one of the best, if not the best hospitality school in Australia”.

Although he was the first person in Australia to present and publish on the topic of consumer emotions, Edwardson began in hotel management, starting as a management trainee at the Sydney Hilton. An organisational psychologist made a presentation there one day, and Edwardson became fascinated with the application of psychology in business and marketing.

Angry consumers have a sense of injustice and want retribution, they are going to complain!

Aged 27, he went on to complete a psychology degree, followed by postgraduate studies in applied psychology at the University of Melbourne. Ten years teaching at the University of NSW School of Marketing followed.

Having taught at an older university, Edwardson is enjoying the change at VU. “There’s the opportunity in a new generation university to be more involved in the activities of the uni, not just teaching and research.”

Recently this has taken the form of his inclusion in the Brand Advisory Group, established to help develop the University’s new branding strategies.

“I teach Advanced Market Research and Consumer Behaviour, and every semester we do a qualitative research project. This year we looked at the VU brand. Tutors Wendy Kennedy and May Tow Yoon, myself and our students worked with the director of the University’s Marketing and Communications Department, Antoinette de Villiers, to design a survey. We administered it to designated groups of people and analysed the data. It gave the students the opportunity to work with data that has real relevance.”

There’s been a lot of talk about VU’s brave new brand, and Edwardson is convinced that it will work.

“A brand that connects with people emotionally does two things. First, it positions us clearly in the marketplace. People will have a perception of the University whether you brand it or not. By having a clearly defined statement about who we are, we give people a perception in line with what they already know, but also revealing something we can realistically grow into.

“The other thing is that it drives an internal change, and this is really important. With any good brand, people live the brand values within the company. Brand positioning enables the internal culture to take all the newness and innovativeness that exists and capture that. It drives action in the company itself. The University’s new catchphrase, ‘A new school of thought’, includes all the values we currently have as well as encompassing future possibilities.”
When your homeland has been devastated by war, your family decimated and you arrive in a new country as a refugee, the need to find a ‘safe space’ is paramount. For Melbourne’s Bosnian community, concentrated in the western suburbs, Victoria University is becoming such a place.

Bosnian students and their families have been quick to respond to support and encouragement as part of VU’s community engagement policy, which has already forged strong links with the Maltese community and those from the war-torn lands of East Timor and the Horn of Africa.

Earlier this year six VU students of Bosnian background – most of whom arrived in Australia as refugees – joined a group led by VU’s Professor Ron Adams and Dr Steve Bakalis, along with Senada Softic, president of the Australian Council of Bosnian Herzegovinian Organisations, on a study tour of Bosnia and Herzegovina, central Europe and Vienna.

In Vienna the students had meetings with the Australian ambassador and presented a conference paper to a European Access Network (EAN) international educational conference. They then spent three weeks in Bosnia Herzegovina, where they met with key ministers and policy makers for detailed briefings on education, science, human rights and refugees, as well as visiting four successful export companies.

The aim of the tour, says Adams, from VU’s Europe-Australia desk, was to allow the students to hear first hand from Bosnia’s leaders about the rebuilding efforts in a country where thousands of people lost their lives in a brutal conflict over four years.

There was another motive too. July marked the 10th anniversary of the gruesome Srebrenica massacre, in which 8000 Bosnian Muslims died. VU study tour members attended the 10th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, in which 8000 Bosnian Muslims died.

The tour, which also included an exposure to and celebration of Bosnia Herzegovina’s rich cultural heritage, contributed to a mutually supportive, forward looking environment for dealing with the students’ past.

Spokeswoman for the group, third-year VU law student Amela Murica, is perhaps more fortunate than many. Although her family lost their house in a small village near the town of Mrkonjic Grad during the war, none lost their lives. She migrated here with her family in 1998 as a secondary-school student.

“Going back with other Bosnian students was a great experience – to be together in a group like that,” she says. “So much has changed since the war and we were briefed by government ministers on the rebuilding of the economy. The issue that stood out for me was the need for foreign investment to rebuild the industries that were closed down during the war.”

As a law student she has a special interest in human rights and the campaign to bring to trial those responsible for the wartime genocide.

“I would consider legal work in Bosnia after I graduate, but with the unemployment rate so high there, I don’t want to take away a position that could be filled by a local,” she says.

With her cousin Alma Murica, Amela presented the VU students’ paper on the impact of fees and paid work on their studies to the EAN conference in Vienna. EAN is an international non-government organisation – Professor Adams is an executive committee member – that encourages access to higher education for disadvantaged students.

The students’ research identified a high level of fee aversion among Bosnian tertiary students in Australia. About 97 per cent defer their HECS payments, and more than half said they would be forced to drop out if fees rose further.

VU’s work with Bosnian students has involved fostering the establishment of the Bosnian Students Association, an exchange program with the University of Sarajevo, ESL programs and support for potential students who may need to upgrade their qualifications.

“One of the things that stands out about the Bosnian community is the high value they place on education,” says Adams. “But many professionals, particularly in the field of engineering, find that when they arrive here their qualifications are not recognised.”

Applied economics lecturer Steve Bakalis is working with local Bosnian businesses to help them establish trade links and commercial opportunities in Australia. Similar work in the Maltese community has identified the successful strategy of building on links with their home country.

“The Bosnian businesses are not at the same stage of development, but we have demonstrated the potential is there,” Bakalis says.
A man has collapsed on a suburban nature strip. An ambulance races to the scene. The back door is opened to reveal not the gleam of high-tech equipment that is the hallmark of Western medicine, but the soft natural colours of herbs and incense.

This is a scene from a television advertisement for Medibank Private. It’s a sign of the times. No longer are alternative therapies relegated to the fringes of society – Chinese medicine has gone mainstream.

“I think Australian people respect nature very much and are very open to non-traditional therapies,” says Dr Hong Xu, senior lecturer and co-ordinator of VU’s Chinese Medicine (CM) program in the School of Health Sciences. “CM has developed very rapidly in Australia, probably more so than anywhere else in the Western world.”

In 1992, VU became the first publicly funded university in the Western world to offer a degree in CM. Initially the focus was on acupuncture, but the current course, a four-year Bachelor of Chinese Medicine, offers an emphasis on both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. The Chinese Medicine Registration Board of Victoria has accredited the course.

A holistic discipline, CM considers the balance or harmony of the whole body. “It tries to either prevent symptoms or enhance general health before symptoms become severe or there is organic change,” Xu says. “We use natural herbs, acupuncture, dietary therapy and Tai Chi.

“CM has a long history – thousands of years of experience and practice. But now it is further developed by modern techniques. We provide Western scientific training in the course because our students need to be able to read lab results and X-rays.”

One hundred and fifty students study CM at VU, and a minority are of Asian background. Since 2002 there have been more applicants than places in the course. Graduates usually go on to private practice, some taking up opportunities for post-graduate study, with masters by research and PhDs.

Part of what makes the course effective is the broad exposure students have to clinical experience. There are student CM clinics at both City Flinders and St Albans Campuses. “Students start clinical practice in first year, and by their final year are treating patients as student practitioners under supervision,” Xu says. Over the four years of the course, students have at least 700 hours of clinical experience. Many do their final-year internship with local practitioners, and some as student practitioners in China.

“In first and second year, CM students do observation, reception duties, helping out generally and getting the feel of how a clinic is run,” says Dr Chris Macfarlane, CM clinic co-ordinator. “In third year they help the fourth years give treatment, may do Tui Na (manual therapy), cupping, moxibustion and help in the dispensary – a bit more hands on. In fourth year they take responsibility for the treatment, with a staff member supervising them.”

Students also attend external clinics. Glen Furze, sessional clinic supervisor and experienced acupuncture practitioner, says one of the back-bones of VU’s clinical program is that students get to go to a variety of locations.

“The external clinic program gives them access to a range of clientele that they’d never see here, such as homeless people or those suffering from drug withdrawal,” Furze says.

The meshing of the theoretical and practical components works well, according to final-year student Lucas Moy. “There’s lots to learn, but in final year it’s satisfying because you do more clinical stuff and see where it all fits in,” he says.

Renee Knott, also in final year, has a VU Chinese Medicine UMAP grant scholarship to do her internship at a hospital in Korea.

“In China, that’s how I got interested in this field,” she says. “It’s pretty amazing stuff. You can never get bored with Chinese medicine. It’s so broad – it’s a lifetime of learning.”

Dr Hong Xu fantasises about a future where government hospitals offer CM. “It’s a dream of a CM hospital here in Australia,” she says. “But it’s just a dream at present.”
Perched on the edge of a hill overlooking the city, the newly refurbished Building 22 at Victoria University’s Sunbury Campus can appear at first sight to be an isolated and windswept oddity. A tuck-pointed slate-roofed redbrick, surrounded by towering pines where magpies warble, its institutional history — whispered down its symmetric corridors — can occasionally rise up.

For this is a place once filled with padded cells, and without much difficulty you can imagine the muffled wails of restrained psychiatric patients piercing the air. But you can’t hold that thought because once inside the former Victorian-era asylum, transformation and creative energy is everywhere around you. The quadrangle is filled with sunshine, smooth timber floorboards line corridors that are filled with posters, and these days it’s the wail of a guitar riff that you’re more likely to hear. Welcome to the new site of the School of Music (officially, the Department of Music – School of Further Education, Arts and Employment Services).

When Jennifer Turner was appointed to start up the music school seven years ago, the task ahead of her was both exhilarating and daunting.

The trombonist and music educator had no doubts about where she wanted to take the school — right to the forefront of the music scene. But first there was the task of selecting courses, organising staffing, and overseeing the design of recording studios and teaching spaces. At the same time, she was charged with overseeing the refurbishment of a dilapidated 115-year-old building.

“At times it was frustrating because we started off with a blank sheet,” says Turner, who beams at the world through purple-framed glasses. “There was just an old derelict building and we were in temporary accommodation for the first few years while we designed and built our facilities.

“But at other times I’ve had to pinch myself because this has been a fantastic opportunity to lead the development of a music school from scratch.”

The challenge of marrying the new with the old was too good for the University to pass up. The school’s rooms are purpose-built in the asylum’s former women’s refractory building for difficult patients.

“We’re lucky being in an old prison building – the solid brick construction makes for fairly good soundproofing.
attracts a wider range of students than a standard Bachelor of "Most of them do," says Turner, who adds that the TAFE entry after which they may proceed to a further two years of study for IV level. After first year, students may go on to a TAFE diploma, music business. Entry to each of the strands is at TAFE certificate offered by the school -- the others are technical production and As important as it is, performance is just one of three strands laughs Turner.

solid brick construction makes for fairly good soundproofing," We're lucky being in an old prison building – the a dedicated performance space, the prison's former mess hall. "We're lucky being in an old prison building – the redbrick construction makes for fairly good soundproofing," laughs Turner.

Retention of some of the old features, including heavy wooden cell doors and some of the former heating pipes, provide glimpses of the past, but the overall thrust is thoroughly modern, in keeping with the school's focus on contemporary music. In each corner of the redbrick building four larger spaces have been converted into the engine-rooms of a music school: ensemble rehearsal spaces and a computer lab.

In the centre of the quadrangle formed by the former cells is a dedicated performance space, the prison's former mess hall. "We're lucky being in an old prison building – the solid brick construction makes for fairly good soundproofing," laughs Turner.

As important as it is, performance is just one of three strands offered by the school – the others are technical production and music business. Entry to each of the strands is at TAFE certificate IV level. After first year, students may go on to a TAFE diploma, after which they may proceed to a further two years of study for a Bachelor of Music degree.

"Most of them do," says Turner, who adds that the TAFE entry attracts a wider range of students than a standard Bachelor of Music course, and enables those students to build their skills gradually to higher education level.

Since taking its first students in 1999, the program has grown every year as more students come in. It now has two years of Bachelor of Music graduates behind it. Turner is adamant the program must continue to grow. "We are open to opportunities and possibilities. We have created something new here and we don't want it to stand still. Also, being at Sunbury, far from the centre of Melbourne, we've got to do what we do very well."

Next year her plans for a music major as part of VU's Bachelor of Education course come on stream. Music teaching methods in the Graduate Diploma of Secondary Education will also commence. "This means that students can qualify as performers, music technologists, and classroom and instrumental music teachers," Turner says.

Teaching plays a large role in the careers of many musicians, and most of the instructors in the course are themselves performers, recording technicians and people from the music industry. It's one of the drawcards that attracts students to the course [see above].

As a centre of the performing arts, Melbourne is not short of tertiary education programs in music. Most of the universities and several TAFEs offer similar courses, but VU staff are confident theirs has an edge.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Michael Hamerston is a former head of campus at Sunbury and was part of the team that got the music

Monet Hawkins
A classical and contemporary pianist, Monet Hawkins, 18, of Bulleen, was prepared to travel for six hours a day to attend classes at the Sunbury Campus. That was how long the return trip took her by public transport before she got her driver's licence. Enrolling at VU is not a decision she regrets.

"I chose to study at VU because I didn't feel as comfortable with the other uni I approached," she says. "I felt it was a friendlier environment here. When I applied to get in, we talked about the course as well as doing an audition. At the other uni it was audition and leave."

She appreciates the intimate atmosphere of the building, which lends itself to mixing with students from other courses, and opportunities for playing and studying together. Monet hopes to complete her full degree and go on to teach.

Jason Sbriglio
Drummer Jason Sbriglio, 18, of Hoppers Crossing, started playing pots and pans when he was just four years old. He came to the music school straight out of school with a fair idea of what to expect – his older brother Adam is a second-year student in the same course.

"I had been here a few times before so I knew what I was coming to," he says. "I didn't feel the need to apply anywhere else." Jason appreciates the style of teaching and the fact that as a TAFE student he can go on to complete a degree.

"The approach the teachers take is great. They're always willing to lend a hand when you need it, and it's gradual learning, they don't throw all the information in your face and expect you to make sense of it all at once."

Although he has his own band, Four Shades Darker, he is keeping his options open to teaching as much as performing when he graduates.

Ben Soulsby
Coming from the countryside, guitarist Ben Soulsby was happy to find a course with a solid reputation at a campus that also offered student accommodation. A resident of the newly refurbished Sunbury Hall, he appreciates its convenience, as well the opportunity to jam with fellow musician-residents.

Ben says he investigated other courses in Victoria, but found VU's to be the best – it offered a high standard of teaching, equipment and facilities.

"I’ve been playing guitar for a long time but I didn’t know much about the industry and this course offered subjects in business and production – areas that performers need to know about so they don’t get roped off."

"The best thing about studying here is that everyone gets along, but also you make new contacts to set you up for the future, not just musicians, but people like music lawyers and venue owners too."
Some of Australia’s top musicians teach at the School of Music.

Kiernan Box
keyboard/piano
(Blackeyed Susans)

Karl Lewis
drums
(Bachelor Girl)

Nicola Eveleigh
flute
(Coco’s Lunch)

Simon Patterson
guitar
(session)

Peter Jones
keyboard/piano
(session)

program up and running. He says the vision came after research indicated that Melbourne’s west was lacking in tertiary places in the liberal arts.

The prison building was outside the initial grant of land to the University by the former Kennett government, but was later incorporated into the Campus when plans for expansion demanded more space.

“After it became clear that various public proposals for the building were not going to get up – hospital, brothel, casino – we realised it would be an ideal location for an iconic contemporary music school,” Hamerston says.

That was in the late 1990s and now, with up to six times the number of applicants for its courses than it can accommodate, the University’s vision is largely realised. Program manager Adam Hutterer, another trombonist, says there are four areas on which the school bases its success.

“The first is technology,” he says. “We have the latest industry-standard equipment that students will encounter when they move into the workplace. It’s also equipment that will allow them to explore their creativity.” The second is staff with experience in the music industry. “We have gone to a lot of trouble to select staff who have appropriate industry experience and excellent teaching skills,” Hutterer says (see right).

The third is the articulation pathway from TAFE to the higher education degree, which means that students have multiple exit points. If they choose to move on to another field of study or into the workforce after the first or second year, they still receive a recognised qualification.

The final drawcard, says Hutterer, is the facilities. As well as the newly refurbished Sunbury building – which the school moved into earlier this year – these include on-campus accommodation, a boon for music students who are required to access equipment after-hours.

With collaborative projects already under way with multimedia students, and with a music education pathway in place, the next step is a three-year undergraduate degree and postgraduate programs. With these programs the school can establish itself on the international stage, where Turner is keen to have a presence.

“We have to know what’s going on nationally and internationally to keep abreast of developments in the industry so we can pitch ourselves in the right direction,” she says.

There’s an echo of the past in this process, too. Having grown out of a demonstrated need for more educational opportunities, the music school is the completion of a cycle for the Sunbury site, which served briefly as an industrial school for abandoned children in the 1860s before it became an asylum.

“That’s our gift to the Sunbury region,” says Hamerston. “We’ve turned a disused set of buildings back into a fine educational precinct that maintains its heritage but is forward-looking.”
It can be hard to hide behind flaming red hair. And Victoria University researchers are hoping to make it even more difficult for redheads who commit crimes to escape attention. As part of a five-year study to build identikit pictures of criminals by using minute traces of skin or body fluids left at a crime scene, Dr Swati Bairndur-Hudson and her team at Werribee Campus are concentrating their efforts on genetic clues to hair and eye colour, and age. These traits have proved to be the best contenders for prediction from DNA, using the complex set of genes that determine body characteristics.

“Already a UK forensic lab can predict red hair with 84 per cent accuracy,” Bairndur-Hudson says. “Our work may be able to shed light on the remaining 16 per cent.”

The molecular biologist from the School of Molecular Sciences says the research is mainly aimed at helping police build a picture of criminals who commit crimes where there are no witnesses or other clues. “If a fragment of skin or a drop of blood or saliva is left behind, this can be sufficient to extract enough DNA to carry out the complex identification process,” she says.

Fittingly, the work has been carried out in collaboration with the Victoria Police Forensic Sciences Services (VPFSS) Biology Laboratory. “What the police want is a way of narrowing their search for these criminals,” Bairndur-Hudson says. “If we can tell them they are looking for, say a blonde with blue eyes, their job is a lot easier.”

Although the technology has the potential to revolutionise police investigations, DNA examination for predicting traits is not intended for use as evidence in courts but is designed to assist police in their investigations. Already there is a case where its application in policing has produced results.

“In the US, private company DNAPrint and some university-based researchers who have been working on a similar project to identify ethnicity were able to determine that a serial rapist and murderer in Louisiana was 85 per cent African-American and 15 per cent Native American,” Bairndur-Hudson says. “The police had been looking for a white Caucasian man. Based on the findings of the DNA matching, they changed their search and caught the guy.”

Despite this early success story, widespread use of genetic matching is still a few years away. This is because there are often many genes responsible for just one trait and frequently other regulatory factors are involved. Thus a breakthrough in identifying one genetic marker usually needs to be backed up by further research into others, followed by extensive linkage and statistical analysis.

“In mice, we know there are about 150 genes involved in pigmentation, and we expect this will be about the same in humans,” Bairndur-Hudson says.

Although their work has been oriented towards forensics, her team expects it will also have implications for medical science. For example, PhD candidate Michelle Vaughn is working on markers for blonde hair, which are thought to be associated with low levels of the darker types of melanin pigmentation (eumelansins) rather than with increased levels of the lighter types (pheomelansins). Lighter skin also has less eumelanin, which may have implications for the prevention of cancer. In light-skinned people, for example, genetic markers could be used to calculate a risk factor for UV-induced melanoma and other skin cancers.

Bairndur-Hudson and her team are looking for volunteers for these projects. People of all ages and ethnic origins, hair and eye colour are invited to contribute samples of their cells. All that is required is a simple mouth swab, the completion of an easy questionnaire and a photo for eye and hair colour.

For further information:
email DNAPredict@yahoo.com.au
or Swati.Baindur-Hudson@vu.edu.au
It’s a long way from the Student Village – just around the corner from Highpoint shopping centre in urban Maribyrnong – to semi-rural Sunbury Hall. But Victoria University’s two student accommodation facilities are more alike than first meets the eye. One of the common traits mentioned by residents is the sense of family.
Student Village

Nine hectares of parklands, easy access to public transport, people to show you the ropes, a strong sense of community and loads of sport and social interaction. That’s life at VU’s Student Village in Maribyrnong, where 450 students from around the world make their home.

As well as a gym, 24-hour computer lab, sports fields and public transport at the door, there is a well-established system of ‘res lifers’ (Residential Life Team) where senior students undergo rigorous training to support other students and organise village social functions.

Naomi Holland, an architecture student from Bairnsdale, 300 km east of Melbourne, describes the Student Village as a great starting point. In this, her second year at the village, her roommates include another girl from Bairnsdale and a girl from her course.

“We each have our own room and share the bathroom and foyer,” she says. “We end up cooking at the same time, and we cut costs by buying things together. It’s a real family. I love it.”

First-year students are always put in with a second-year resident. “It’s really handy,” Naomi says. “They let you know the ropes and if they can’t help you, they let you know who can. There’s no way I would have made anywhere near the number of friendships if I hadn’t lived at the Village.”

Mike Hu hails from the People’s Republic of China. He loves living at the Village and the opportunity it provides to practise his English.

“I lived in New Zealand for a year before coming here,” he says, “but I’ve never had a social life like this.” In between lectures, Mike pours beers at a local bar, which he sees as immersing himself in one aspect of local culture. “Sometimes it’s confusing learning all the names, like knowing that a ‘Crowny’ is a Crown Lager,” he laughs. “I like pouring beer, but I really can’t drink it.”

Masters student Jay Lobin, from Mauritius, says the Village is “the world in miniature”, with more than 40 nationalities represented. Jay is a res lifer and one of the Village’s international student coordinators. “I am the first point of contact for all international students – their first friend.”

“Our job is to help make the transition to student accommodation enjoyable by helping residents feel secure and happy,” he says. “The Village’s academic advisers help students achieve the right balance between study, work and fun. And we try to give the international students the maximum experience that Australian life has to offer.”

Sunbury Hall

It’s a view worthy of a million-dollar penthouse. In the distance the silver towers of Melbourne CBD gleam in late afternoon sun. In the foreground are the rustic green-grey of the hills around Sunbury, with rabbits hopping around like something out of Watership Down. One minute’s walk away are the lovingly restored turn-of-the-century buildings of the old Sunbury Asylum.

Yet the city is not that far away.

“When I want to go to the footy, I hop in the car and in 30 minutes I’m in the Telstra Dome car park,” says John Bracher, affable supervisor of Sunbury Hall, re-opened for student accommodation earlier this year. “Seventy-five per cent of the students living here have their own cars. But for the others, Sunbury township is 20 minutes walk away, and there is a bus and train service into town.”

But most of the residents study at Sunbury Campus, so transport isn’t an issue. Right next door, a bluestone building – one of the oldest in the complex – houses the gym. As well as a games room, each level of Sunbury Hall has its own laundry, kitchen, and airy lounge room filled with natural light. The corridors, doors and rooms are painted in bright colours – ochre, red, blue, purple, yellow.

Originally the nurses’ home, the old wing of Sunbury Hall has been completely refurbished, with 80 standard single rooms with communal shower and toilets. The new wing has 40 bedrooms with en suites, which includes five rooms for disabled students. It is constructed of corrugated iron and surprisingly complements the older, orange brick residence.

Most of the students are from rural Victoria. Amy Stephen, from Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula, is in first year. “It’s a good place to live if you’re straight out of home like me,” she says. “It feels like a family.”

If it’s a family, then third-year Arts student Angela McLaughlin is definitely the mother. A veteran of the Student Village, she is one of the two res lifers at Sunbury.

“We have communal meals every few weeks and residents often cook together,” she says. “It’s very conducive to study here, and the facilities are so beautiful and new. Students come from overseas, interstate and rural Victoria. We’re a really close community. If we see someone we don’t know, we ask them who they are. It’s a very secure environment and we all look out for each other.”
When Charles Rahim’s phone rings, it plays the theme from the James Bond movie, *Never Say Never Again*. Although his line of work is undercover investigation, Rahim’s little joke on himself is about as close as he gets to the rarefied world of espionage.

Contrary to the popular imagination, says Rahim, running a private detective agency is a decidedly prosaic exercise. For a start, there’s little call for the kind of electronic gadgetry that Q designs for Bond. “Most of the time all I take with me is a still camera, and occasionally a video recorder,” he says of his bread-and-butter work in domestic surveillance and commercial monitoring. But it wasn’t always so. Formerly a customs officer who ran stings on poachers, drug runners and illegal importers, Rahim came to the relative calm of private investigation after studying marketing as a postgraduate at Victoria University in the late 1990s. “It opened me up to the possibilities of commercial investigation,” he says of his classes, which led him into the harsh realities of corporate competitiveness as he completed his MBA. “Corporate work is where my studies in marketing intelligence come into play. For example, a customer will come to us and say, ‘We need an estimate of what the competition is spending on advertising’. A regular private investigator wouldn’t know how to start.”

Standard legwork includes shopping surveys to determine a competitor’s prices or customer service surveillance to check on customer satisfaction. “Sometimes a company wants us to take a look at themselves to see what their own customer service is like.”

On one such job, a footwear retailer was puzzled as to why sales in a particular outlet had dropped markedly. “We found out through fairly routine observation that basically the staff were an unhappy lot who had no interest in selling their product. They were taking out their frustration on the customers, most of whom simply walked out never to return.”

Similar tales of deceit and disloyalty stream regularly through Rahim’s door on the fifth floor of a shady Collins Street office block in Melbourne. Domestic work makes up just under half the business. It might be checks on neighbours when people buy a house, monitoring credit or checking work histories. He also offers polygraph examinations, the lie detection system that monitors involuntary heartbeat reactions to a series of questions.

But the main reason an aggrieved party contacts him is love gone wrong. Most often it’s a suspicious wife who wants to find out if her spouse is having an affair. “A common pattern is where a husband and wife are separated,” says Rahim. “The husband says he’s living at his brother’s house or his mother’s house, but the wife thinks he’s actually seeing someone. What we do is get investigators to follow him from work – that’s usually where any obvious pattern emerges. If he’s seeing someone, then he’ll usually meet them after he goes home.”

It’s hardly cloak and dagger stuff, but the need to keep in contact with a suspect in heavy traffic while remaining at a discreet distance is not as easy as it sounds. “Keep in mind, when I was in customs we would have 12 cars, a boat and two helicopters on surveillance. In this situation it’s just one car and one person, and no power to put tracking devices on people.”

Just what powers or rights do private investigators have? “If the person realises they’re being followed and they lodge a complaint, if we keep following them we could be done for stalking.”

A rule of thumb is to always keep the police informed about surveillance activities. “That protects us,” says Rahim.

Happy endings, unfortunately, are not common. Rahim recalls a case in which a husband had been in email contact with a potential lover in the US. When he confronted her about it, she confessed and said she was going to pack up and move to America to be with him. The husband had other plans. Unbeknown to his wife he paid Rahim to travel to the US to check out the big-talking lover. “It turned out he was seeing several other women and was working as a labourer, not in his own business as he claimed.” The husband presented the video evidence to his wife, who cancelled her trip. Sadly, the marriage didn’t survive.

Rahim’s business, A Charles Aaron Consultancy, recently expanded to Sydney and Brisbane, and now employs eight investigators.

Information about VU’s alumni community: www.vu.edu.au/alumni alumni@vu.edu.au
It seems like an obvious combination – tours of Melbourne, concentrating on sporting venues. Surprisingly, no one had thought of it before. Until Victoria University alumnus Kirsty Grace (nee Scott) and her husband Anthony Grace set up Melbourne Sports Tours in January 2004.

The company logo includes a racing car, football, cricket and tennis balls, and a horseshoe – a fair indication of the areas that their tours cover. Their Sports Lovers’ Tours include visits to the MCG, Melbourne and Olympic Parks, The Grand Prix track, Flemington Racecourse, the Commonwealth Games village, Telstra Dome, the AFL Hall of Fame and Carlton and United Brewery.

“People who love sport tend to love beer,” Kirsty says. “And CUB is actually one of our most popular tours.”

Between March and September they run half-day footy tours. These include reserved undercover seating (right near the action), an explanation of the rules, a meat pie and drink, and a show bag of Aussie Rules goodies.

Other tours include Moonee Valley night racing, trips to the snow in winter and to the surf coast in summer. Most tours have an intimate number of between six and ten people.

Starting her own tour business, Kirsty was able to bring together various passions and fields of expertise. She has always loved sport and after leaving school, Kirsty first studied recreation and then the teaching of English as a Second Language, before working in both areas. She also developed hospitality and tourism experience, working in numerous cafés and managing a “conversation café” in Japan for a year.

In 1995 she completed a Graduate Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality at VU, and went on to work with sightseeing specialists Gray Line in a variety of roles for seven years. She ended up as national sales manager, a position that meant domestic and international travel for between three and four months a year.

“It was fantastic,” she enthuses. In 1999 she married Anthony Grace, a man who “lives, works and breathes sport.”

A few months before the 2003 Rugby World Cup we began researching the number of people coming to Melbourne for sporting events,” she says. “Not one tour operator focused on our national religion – sport.

“The intricacies of the tourism industry are quite hard to understand. Lots of people in the sports industry don’t understand the tourism industry. Maybe that’s why no one else has thought to combine the two in this way.”

Given that Melbourne Sports Tours is only 18 months old, Kirsty is happy with progress. “We’re in lots of brochures and we’ve had really good media coverage, including being covered in the ‘Getaway’ and ‘The Great Outdoors’ TV travel programs. We’re definitely on track.”

Contrary to what you might expect, a large proportion of Melbourne Sports Tours’ clientele are women. “Forty per cent of our customers are women,” Kirsty says. “They often come in order to get their husband to spend the next day with them on a shopping tour, but they usually end up saying how much they enjoyed it and that it wasn’t at all what they were expecting.”

Some of her most memorable experiences involve women. “One time we were hosting some American Express Agents from the US,” Kirsty chuckles. “We took them to the footy. Our reserved seats are right on the front row, right beside the interchange bench, so you can practically touch the guys. On my left I had a woman who was a hockey fanatic and got so excited she yelled and screamed right through the match. On my right was a woman who’d never been to a sporting event in her life. By the end of the match, she was making as much noise as the hockey fan.”

Next year promises to be a busy one for the Graces. “With the Commonwealth Games, a lot of people who love sport will be in town, and we want to take advantage of that. We hope to be operating seven days a week during that time, and already have some group bookings.”

She and Anthony recently returned from a trade expo in Perth, which she says was an encouraging experience. “Several people said, ‘This is exactly what Melbourne’s been needing’. We’ve had great industry feedback, so hopefully we’re on the money.”

Information about VU’s alumni community: www.vu.edu.au/alumni
alumni@vu.edu.au
Over the past few years, Victoria University’s signwriting courses and facilities have steadily gained a reputation among industry professionals as being the best in the country. Signwriting apprentices trek to VU’s Sunshine Campus from all over Victoria, Tasmania and southern New South Wales for their training.

Yet it was only a few months ago, in early September, that the industry’s Australian Sign and Graphic Association (ASGA) first bestowed a gold award on the Department of Building Services and Special Trade’s sign industry training program. The award, in the category of Supplier or Associate of the Year for 2005, recognised innovation, approach to technology, investment in people and an ongoing commitment to the sign and graphic industry’s education and training. ASGA business development manager, Sydney-based John Hadfield, says the VU training program “should have been acknowledged years ago”.

Neville Penny, head of VU’s Department of Building Services and Special Trade, admits – with a little pride – that the prestigious award was well-deserved.

“There is no doubt about it, this [training facility] is a model for the rest of Australia – it is the best training provider,” he says. “It was purpose built, not retrofitted or changed around. The industry has changed and we have probably gone further ahead than all the other training providers in Australia to the point where this is the bee’s knees – it really is.”

About 120 apprentices are enrolled in the 18-week program at any one time, while another 15 students are enrolled in the pre-apprenticeship Certificate II in Signwriting. There is a waiting list for the apprenticeship, but students who complete the pre-apprenticeship are often snapped up by industry as apprentices.

Teacher Norm Johnstone, a veteran of the artistic signwriting trade, gave credit to VU and the signwriting program’s manager John Craddock at the ASGA awards in Sydney last September.

Accepting the award on behalf of his department, he said VU had approved the purchase of the latest technology with a major investment in a large format solvent-based digital printer worth about $48,000, and a flatbed router worth $40,000. He said the award also recognised the hard work of Craddock, which has placed VU as Australia’s...
leading training provider in implementing the new signwriting training packages.

Aside from the recent production of a DVD to promote careers in signwriting – to be distributed to all secondary schools in Tasmania and Victoria – Craddock and his staff practically rewrote all training procedures when new Government Training Packages were introduced three years ago. "New Training Packages came with little or no assistance," Penny says. "Staff had to write the resource books and design workstations – the whole gamut. They have worked their butts off to put it together."

About 10 per cent of the current apprentice cohort is female. First-year apprentice Laine Shuffell, 22, of Sunbury, was tipped off about the pre-apprenticeship course by a girlfriend who had completed it, enjoyed it, and quickly found a job. Shuffell did not have to wait long for a job either. "I got a job the day I finished the pre-apprenticeship," she says. "So I had a day off and then started work the next day at New Generation Signs, in Greensborough. I like being creative rather than sitting in an office. It's hands on – I love it. It can be frustrating at times, but you stick with it."

The skills of the women apprentices are being recognised. Recent apprentice graduate Sacha Rattray, of Launceston, also won a gold award at this year’s ASGA awards in the category of Work by an apprentice. Her entry, a 600 mm by 450 mm gold leaf glasswork of a Coca-Cola sign, was hand painted and the famous wave logo etched by sandblasting.

Not to be outdone by his female colleagues, third-year apprentice Haiden Oswald also won a gold award in the same category for an intricate hand painted and airbrushed artwork on a primer mover panel.

Johnstone says the whole industry has changed over the past decade with the continued evolution of digital printing. "Signwriting used to be mainly done by hand, but now a lot of it is computer generated, with large format printing and sign fabrication more widespread," he says.

VU keeps close links with industry associates to stay abreast of developments. Nonetheless, a lot of employers still want their apprentices to learn traditional hand skills because it teaches them good layout and an understanding of letter shapes and proportions. "A lot of employers say: 'That’s what we want them to learn – you teach them that and we’ll teach them with machinery and high technology at work and further into their training’," Johnstone says. Students therefore learn a mix of traditional and digital skills.

These broad based skills are making VU’s signwriting apprentices highly prized by industry.
Sport in Melbourne’s west has long suffered poor sister syndrome. From Heidelberg’s 1950s Olympic Village to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, big developments in our city’s sporting world are usually located east of the Maribyrnong River. But that is about to change.

Victoria University and the Western Bulldogs have signed an iconic partnership agreement – a venture to put both organisations at the forefront of international sports science research and development. A few years in the making, the agreement – sealed last September – will see both organisations take advantage of $41.95 million worth of infrastructure at the Bulldogs’ Whitten Oval home in Footscray and VU’s Footscray Park Campus.

VU will improve its already substantial knowledge base with a new $22.45 million sports laboratory precinct, while the Bulldogs have a $19.5 million redevelopment already well under way. Students and Bulldogs players alike will benefit enormously as they access world’s best practice facilities and research – with equipment at each venue to be selected in consultation to avoid duplication.

Victorian Sports Minister Justin Madden noted at the launch that the broader community will also gain from a shared vision for advancing the region’s sport, health, recreational, economic and social wellbeing. The University will work with the Bulldogs to develop and deliver agreed sport science service and research programs designed to achieve and sustain superior on-field performance.

VU’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Elizabeth Harman, says the Footscray Park Campus sport precinct will add 5200 square metres of space over the next three years, as part of a recently announced $54 million development.

“Victoria University does already have outstanding sports science facilities, staff and students,” says Professor Harman. “Our existing facilities and services already attract athletes from many elite sports, such as Melbourne Storm (rugby league), the Tigers (basketball) and professional golfers who come in for assessments before an international tour. “For us at the University, the partnership will allow very close collaboration between researchers in sports and sports science with elite athletes, coaching and medical staff at the Western Bulldogs.”

As a typical example, Professor Harman cited a recent study by VU researchers on the risk of ligament injury that involved 200 players from six AFL teams. Researchers tested the relationship between their pre-season balance skills and the manner in which injury occurred over the season, which led to new knowledge about balance training as part of injury prevention.

Western Bulldogs chief executive Campbell Rose describes the partnership as unique for the sports industry and says it will deliver a significant and sustained competitive advantage for the club.

“We’re excited by what this partnership is going to deliver, both for the Western Bulldogs and for Melbourne’s entire western region,” Rose says. “We engage our community partners so that where we cannot do it alone, we bring in our partners for the outcomes we require. This firmly illustrates us as the thinking club of the AFL.”

Bulldogs senior coach Rodney Eade says that although he expects people to see the benefits of the partnership next season, the club will keep a lot of knowledge in-house while developing competitive advantages.

“As an example, once we have results on specific research projects related to say, fatigue, injury or mental agility, we’ll implement them in-house before announcing them to the broader football, sporting and academic worlds. So the outside world will see a stronger, fitter, less injured and more focused team, but they won’t necessarily know how we’ve achieved those results.

“The partnership will assist the Western Bulldogs in developing strategic advantages in areas from exercise physiology through to mathematical modelling of team performance. Given the value the Bulldogs expect to generate from the partnership, it’s very likely that other AFL clubs will seek to create similar structures in the future.”

Professor Harman says VU students and staff will work with high-profile practitioners from the Bulldogs in courses that are directly geared to the real world of professional sport. “There will also be the opportunity to advance related course areas, such as hospitality, event and venue management, and sports administration,” Professor Harman says. “The partnership will prove VU to be a clear leader and a ‘university of choice’ for students.”
Professor Pieter Nagel, director of Victoria University’s Institute for Logistics and Supply Chain Management (ILSCM), has a passion for broadening people’s concept of what logistics is about. He started by renaming VU’s Institute for Integrated Freight Systems as ILSCM, because freight systems are only one part of the field of logistics. “People think of logistics as a recent development, but it’s not so – although the industrial revolution certainly gave it a boost,” Nagel says. “Imagine the logistics of moving the Jews out of Egypt. In some form or other, people have had to make things available to themselves for a long time. The Romans had to maintain their chariot wheels and feed the horses that pulled them.”

He says logistics is almost a philosophy and not a discipline, explaining that there are two components involved: business logistics – moving things around in ‘trucks and trains’; and engineering logistics – equipment not only needs to be somewhere, but it needs to be working, so includes maintenance and repair.

Nagel says there are two sides to the institute’s work – external and internal. “It’s my absolute conviction that our main area of focus is to engage industry,” he says emphatically. “I can’t see that we’ll have a future if we don’t do this.”

Our mandate starts with the west of Melbourne and extends to the rest of the world.

He speaks of the Institute as a facilitator between VU and external stakeholders, such as government and industry. “We’ll eventually have an advisory board with representatives from all these [external stakeholders] – government, defence, the private sector, logistics service providers, infrastructure and logistics systems companies.”

One ambitious project is the concept of an infrastructure forum for the western region of Melbourne. “This would be something we could really do for this region,” Nagel says. “We would aim to be a catalyst towards the development of an integrated agenda, supported by models and analyses to provide evidence-based advice to support the development of a logistics infrastructure plan for Melbourne’s west.”

“To do this we would bring together business, government, politicians, city councils and community forums, all of whom have their own agenda on logistics. So far I have met with these people individually. We have good support and I hope we’ll be bringing them together early next year.”

The Institute is currently running a series of ‘synergy’ breakfasts. Held once a quarter, they bring together industry, government and academia. In terms of the research component of the Institute’s activities, a program has been started that will develop integrated mathematical models for measuring performance throughout the supply chain in order to improve its management.

As for internal work, the institute has a specific role within the University. More than 40 University staff have identified themselves with logistics in some form or another, and Nagel sees it as vital to bring these people together so that they talk to each other.

One way of doing this is by quarterly forums for staff where an external logistics expert provides input. The most recent of these introduced two speakers from global logistics giant Bax Global. Staff from both the TAFE and higher education sectors attended. The forums will give staff the opportunity to increase their knowledge and develop networks, at the same time increasing internal awareness of logistics within the University.

Another initiative will be a review of all logistics-related courses across VU’s TAFE and higher education sectors. The steering committee will consist of an external reviewer, Nagel and representatives from both industry and VU.

The final report of the review will highlight deficiencies and opportunities for a co-ordinated development of logistics-related courses at VU, providing career pathways in logistics and supply chain management.

Pieter Nagel’s dream is for VU to become the world’s knowledge centre for logistics and supply. “Our mandate starts with the west of Melbourne and extends to the rest of the world,” he says. “I’m extremely excited about the future.”

www.vu.edu.au/ilscm
Fire safety engineering is a comparatively new discipline. Research is as broad as examining how burning structures behave, heat and mass transfer, the way humans behave in the face of fire, and the performance of hydraulic and mechanical systems under extreme heat. Its aim is to develop principles for designing safe buildings and infrastructure.

Victoria University’s Centre for Environmental Safety and Risk Engineering (CESARE), which opened in July 1991 and is part of the Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science, has earned an international reputation for its research into fire safety engineering. Based in Buildings 4 and 5 at Werribee Campus, the centre has 14 full-time and part-time staff. There is also a large-scale test facility at rural Fiskville, about 70 kilometres west of Melbourne.

CESARE undertakes research and development projects for organisations such as BlueScope Steel, Boral Australia Gypsum, OneSteel and the Australian Building Codes Board. These projects are usually funded by the organisations but sometimes as part of ARC linkage grants. There is also direct funding from government bodies and grants from the Australian Research Council.

The centre’s prestige has led to grants coming from as far away as North America through the National Fire Laboratory and the National Research Council of Canada. CESARE recently won a research grant from the National Fire Protection Association in the US to study the responses of sleeping people to fire alarms. CESARE’s facilities at Werribee Campus are second to none – at least in Australia – according to director Professor Ian Thomas, and include fire test furnaces, two very costly calorimeters and a mass of associated data and control equipment.

With 70 per cent of building regulations concerned with fire safety, the research is important work and CESARE’s programs have led to reforms of building fire regulations and evaluation of proposed regulatory changes.

“Over the years, we have developed an internationally-recognised fire safety system model that identifies cost-effective design solutions for apartment buildings,” says Dr Ian Bennetts, a research fellow at the centre. “The program relies on many submodels, such as those that predict the growth of fire and the spread of smoke within a building.

“We also get involved in major projects on a commercial basis – either in aspects of design or as a peer reviewer.” Projects reviewed include the fire-safety designs of the Spencer Street station redevelopment, Federation Square and the Brisbane Cricket Ground.
A typical project was the recent testing of a new steel formwork system for steel building product manufacturer Bluescope Lysaght. Formwork slabs were placed in a fire test furnace and their properties at various temperatures observed. Thermocouples – miniature thermometers – and other instruments are used in such tests to measure temperatures and heat fluxes. Designers were then able to stipulate slab thicknesses to ensure compliance with the Building Code.

Building 4 at Werribee Campus houses the furnace testing area and a $300,000 cone calorimeter used to measure the heat release rate (in kilowatts) of various materials. Because most materials use roughly the same amount of oxygen to generate the same heat, measuring the rate of oxygen consumption – and gases such as carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide – enables calculation of the heat release rate.

A large multi-purpose fire-testing furnace is currently being constructed at one end of Building 5, a joint undertaking with Melbourne and Monash universities. A three-metre by three-metre opening will provide the capacity to test entire floor and wall systems under a hydrocarbon-heating environment – in other words, petrol fires.

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A scale model four-storey building is at the other end of Building 5. Along with doors and windows the model has a lift shaft, stairwell and service shaft, allowing the team to create a variety of scenarios. Researchers vary the location of fuel and ventilation and, using more than 160 thermocouples, measure the effect of these changes to study fires that might occur in one or several levels of a multistorey building.

“This lets us study – in scale, of course – the density and movement of smoke and the behaviour of fire,” Bennetts says.

In the middle of Building 5 is a 21-cubic metre ISO (International Standard Organisation) room with a calorimeter big enough to test furniture and building products, plus a gas analyser and exhaust system. A long “rig” is used for researching fire behaviour and smoke movement in enclosed spaces.

Methylated spirits is the usual fuel, and at various locations the loss of mass is measured while the calorimeter measures the heat release rate.

The main purpose of the ISO room is to test the fire behaviour of lining materials by using an international standard room and test procedure, which provides a more realistic indication of the likely behaviour of lining materials in fire compared with the small-scale tests used in many countries. This procedure allows results to be compared around the world.

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At CESARE’s fire-testing facility at Fiskville, large-scale fires can be re-created in a new $4.3 million warehouse-sized building that encloses an older four-storey structure, offering a unique opportunity for large indoor fire testing in the safety of a rural landscape. The site will soon include a massive six-metre by six-metre calorimeter, which will be one of the world’s biggest.

“We could drive a car in for testing,” Dr Bennetts says. “It also means we can do the tests required by oil companies and organisations like Ports and Harbours who store large amounts of oil and flammable liquids.” A new foam testing facility was recently established at the site to test fire retardant properties of foam, including whether it can prevent a flammable liquids pool fire re-igniting.

The types of fire dreaded by oil refinery operators are often recreated at Fiskville. Recently, in a scaled-down simulation of a tank-top fire, a tank was part-filled with water before heptane was added, floating on the surface like oil. It was ignited, and the research team pumped foam through a set of calibrated nozzles, measuring the time taken to extinguish the fire.

Tests like these are vital to the ongoing safety and security of Australia’s petrochemical industry.
Professor Brian King is head of Victoria University’s School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing.

What do the charging of Schapelle Corby and Michelle Leslie, the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings and last year’s Boxing Day tsunami have in common? These events have focused our attention on the personal plights of fellow Australians encountering nightmarish occurrences in places normally associated with the dream of the perfect holiday. Of course overseas misadventures are nothing new. Since the start of white settlement in Australia, many disasters and personal tragedies have affected Australians travelling overseas. However the occurrences since the Bali bombings have been unprecedented because they have personally touched many Australians caught in the act of enjoying the ‘pleasure peripheries’ where many of us spend time relaxing on the beach.

Internationally the “I need a holiday” myth is driven by a diet of alluring images promising consumers the prospect of the dolce vita, albeit a temporary one. Against this idealistic backdrop, we cringe at the horror of a Bali nightclub inferno and the threat to holidaymakers. Bombings confirmed the repetitiveness of misfortune – places to be enjoyed and consumed for reasons that extend no further than pleasure.

The idea shocks us of a Gold Coast girl being locked up in a primitive jail for 20 years because of what is alleged to have been transported inside her boogie board shocks us. Schapelle Corby’s naivety reminds us of the realities of life in an economically impoverished country. Perhaps it also reminds us of the realities of life in an economically impoverished country.

What is needed is a mature recognition of the pleasure periphery as forming a part of complex and needy societies. Hopefully the more hysterical responses towards Indonesia from Australians concerning the Schapelle Corby affair, including calls to discourage the study of the Indonesian language in Australian schools, do not signal a return to stereotypical depictions of our neighbours.

The Boxing Day tsunami showed an encouragingly mature recognition of the pleasure periphery as forming a part of complex and needy societies.

The generosity of Australian donors following the Boxing Day tsunami showed an encouragingly mature recognition of the pleasure periphery as forming a part of complex and needy societies. We need to keep travelling to destinations such as Bali, but also need to change our mindset to recognise that a favourable exchange rate does not entitle us to monopolise paradise and ignore the context of the places where we travel and the people who live there. What is needed is a mature bilateral relationship between the tourist receiving and generating countries.

The incidents of horror remind us of three underlying factors that we like to forget when enjoying the fruits of the pleasure periphery. First, if we stray from the script when holidaying, for reasons within or outside our control, we can suddenly be exposed to the realities that confront locals – the toughness of the criminal justice system for example, or the inadequacy of health care.

And the tsunami reminded us that the arrival of a single wave can obliterate the paradise myth of the perfect beach scene in an instant. Thirdly, the Bali bombings reminded us that behind the façade of smiling local people lurk the shadows of desperation, hatred and bigotry. While governments of neighbouring countries generally manage to keep manifestations of these emotions under control we cannot afford to make assumptions.

Beach holidays in neighbouring countries are not a cure for those who are able to enjoy them, nor for the locals – many positive social exchanges may arise. However a twodimensional view of our neighbours, notably Indonesia and Bali in particular, as simply a pleasure periphery is counterproductive. Travel should be one element of a multidimensional relationship involving cultural, business and linguistic exchange. The human dimension is critical, including the capacity to empathise and show mutual respect.

Cultural insensitivity by Australians is often blatantly shown by inappropriate dress, such as when entering temples and bathing topless, and the child sex tourism industry is a manifestation of tourists taking advantage of vulnerable people in poor countries with less stringent laws and enforcement than our own, such as in Laos and Cambodia. And we’ve all witnessed Westerners excessively bartering (more game playing) with local traders to cut just a few cents from an already very reasonable price, when the financial impact on the trader and his or her family could be considerable.

But the generosity of Australian donors following the Boxing Day tsunami showed an encouragingly mature recognition of the pleasure periphery as forming a part of complex and needy societies.
**NEW BOOKS**

**Imagery in Sport**
*By Tony Morris, Michael Spittle and Anthony P. Watt*
*Published by Human Kinetics Publishing*

Imagery in Sport offers a comprehensive look at the state of imagery and its uses in sport today. It covers the breadth of what researchers and practitioners in sport psychology know about the topic, treating each issue in depth while considering current theories and research, as well as future directions.

**Offset 2005**
*Edited and published by third-year Professional Writing and Editing Students*

This is the fifth issue of Offset, a forum for aspiring writers and artists, mostly from the western suburbs, to exhibit and publish their work. It also includes established writers with VU connections, such as Arnold Zable, Ngiq Thomas and Euan Mitchell. It includes an eclectic mix of artwork, poetry and prose.

**Sport Psychology in Practice**
*By Mark B. Andersen*
*Published by Human Kinetics Publishing*

Sport Psychology in Practice contains insights from an elite list of contributors who explain how they successfully and ethically do sport psychology. Relying substantially on dialogue and actual experiences, it covers both fundamental and more complex areas, even taboo topics, and is sure to provoke debate and controversy.

**Constructing Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaptation**
*By Richard Chauvel*
*Published by East-West Center, Washington*

This study examines the development of Papuan nationalism from the Pacific War through the movement’s revival after the fall of President Suharto in 1998. Chauvel argues that the first step in understanding Papuan nationalism is understanding Papuan history and historical consciousness.

**Fanfare – Spectator Culture and Australian Rules Football**
*By Matthew Nicholson*
*Published by The Australian Society for Sports History*

Historians of Australian Rules football have virtually ignored the importance of spectator culture in the development of the game. Fanfare is a response to this blind spot, and gives the place of fans its due regard. Its intended use is as a launching pad for further work in the area of football spectator culture.

**Qi! Chinese Secrets of Health, Beauty & Vitality**
*By Kate O’Brien and Troy Sing*
*Published by Creative Licence Publications*

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is about recognising and identifying patterns in people’s lives and learning how to make their body work for them. Qi is the vital breath or energy that sustains all life, and this book makes TCM accessible in a highly informative format with more than 150 full-colour photographs.
ARTIST/STUDENT: Carmel Seymour
COURSE: Diploma of Arts (Visual Art)
DATE: 2005
TITLE: Bent backwards
MEDIA: Oil on canvas