Surgery hopes not always met

BY CHRIS GILES

Cosmetic surgery is a popular option for women dissatisfied with their image or for those fighting the ageing process.

A new nose, younger looking face, bigger breasts ... with just a nip and a tuck and a few thousand dollars, women can have whatever their hearts desire.

But how realistic are women's expectations of successful surgery and how do they differ from those of their practitioners?

Monash University PhD student Ms Rhian Parker is undertaking research, the first of its kind in Australia, to find out if what women want is what cosmetic surgeons can or will deliver and whether expected results are adequately explained to patients.

"There is quite a volume of research material about body image and weight, but hardly anything about cosmetic surgery," Ms Parker says.

"It was clear that this issue was being discussed everywhere - in magazines, on television - but I couldn't find any academic work in the area.

"My research looks at how women perceive what they want, compared to what practitioners can give, or think they should give."

Ms Parker, from the Department of Community Medicine and General Practice, has spoken to 24 Victorian doctors and plans to interview up to eight more, including three female practitioners. She will also sit in on practitioner-patient consultations to see how procedures are explained.

Eight women aged between 28 and 53 have also been interviewed about reasons for surgery and whether the results met their expectations, but Ms Parker is appealing for more women to contact her.

Early research indicates that some women, while not complaining about surgery standards, feel their results are disappointing.

Continued on page 2

Anti-GST sentiment high among family businesses

BY SANDRA BUCOVAC

With GST implementation less than a month away, family businesses across Australia are yet to be convinced of the benefits of the controversial new system, despite their frantic efforts to ready themselves for the 1 July taxation revolution.

In what is probably the most recent GST-specific research data available, a Monash University-led survey has revealed that while family businesses are diligently preparing themselves, the majority do not believe the GST will be good for business; nor are they confident it will lower selling prices or save costs.

It is the smaller operators - the backbone of Australia's economy - and the family business giants who are most sceptical, according to the March quarter findings of the Pitcher Partners... Continued on page 2
Melbourne’s water gets a clean bill of health

No city in the world can be more certain that its drinking water supplies do not cause health problems than Melbourne, according to medical doctor and infectious diseases expert Associate Professor Kit Fairley.

Professor Fairley commenting recently on the outcome of a world-first scientific study on Melbourne’s water quality concluded that local health authorities knew who had installed filtration systems.

Families recorded their health over a 17-month period, monitoring symptoms of gastroenteritis. The study showed no difference in the level of gastroenteritis between families with real water treatment units and families with dummy units.

“This study represents an unprecedented shift from a reliance on measuring ‘put-your-money-where-your-mouth-is’ — measuring the health effects on people,” Dr Fairley said.

Surgery hopes not always met

An infat of a smoking mother is three times harder to arrest from sleep than that of a non-smoking mother, says Dr Rosemary Horne.

In this study, 40 infants aged up to six months were studied in a longitudinal survey, giving researchers clues to understanding the role of infant sleep patterns and arousability.

The work quantified and quantified the two major risk factors: prone sleeping position and smoking habits of the mother in full and pre-birth. Other factors such as temperature, ‘breathing and oxygen uptake showed no association with arousal response.

The researchers found that an infant of a smoking mother is three times harder to arouse from sleep than that of a non-smoking mother. That bias remained true even if the child slept in the supine position — on its back — which presents the lowest risk.

Dr Horne, face-down position presents a higher risk, and babies of smoking mothers who slept in the prone position were again much more difficult to arouse than those of the non-smoking mothers.

The research has taken further the accepted risk factors known to be associated with SIDS, and quantified their influence on the arousal response of infants under laboratory conditions in the Children’s Sleep Unit at Monash Medical Centre.

“The arousal response is becoming central to our understanding of SIDS,” said senior research fellow in Monash’s Paediatrics department Dr Rosemary Horne.

Dr Horne presented her findings in two papers to the Sixth Sudden Infant Death International Congress held in Beijing in 2000. They are the result of a three-year project funded by SIDS Australia.

Publicity and public education of known risk factors over the last decade have been responsible for a dramatic decline in SIDS rates, from 2.4 per thousand (more than 500 babies) in 1991, to 0.46 per thousand (or just over 50) today. The current research is now aiming to reduce this figure still further.

Arousal response key factor in infant deaths: research

By PETE GOLDR

A new phase in the fight against Sudden Infant Death Syndrome has begun with research from Monash University’s Department of Paediatrics and the Ritchie Centre for Baby Health Research highlighting the importance of arousal of sleep in young babies.

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Green urban design helps keep our rivers, lakes and seas clean

By David Bruce

A group of Monash researchers are challenging the idea that, when it comes to stormwater runoff, out of sight is out of mind.

In the urban areas of our country, each time it rains, a rush of stormwater carries tonnes of pollutants directly into drains and open waterways and, eventually, into open waters such as hypersensitive watersheds. At Lynbrook Estate, a residential subdivision on Melbourne's south-eastern outskirts, Monash scientists from the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology have begun to change the way we look at stormwater run-off by implementing the best elements of water-sensitive urban design.

Their integration of a number of innovative approaches to stormwater management is a first for Australia but, according to Associate Professor Tony Wong from the Department of Civil Engineering, Australians are beginning to realize that better urban design will lead to cleaner rivers, lakes and oceans.

"In Australia, the whole notion of draining stormwater directly into our river systems and bays is quite common," said Associate Professor Wong. "It has always been the assumption that rainwater from roofs and road surfaces is clean. But it isn't. Rainwater from roofs and road surfaces contain a lot of metal-based chemicals such as copper, nickel, lead and zinc, as well as chemicals from agricultural products such as fertilizers."

With the support of Melbourne Water, the Urban Land Corporation and their consultants, Associate Professor Wong and postgraduate student Ms Sara Lloyd have designed a street drainage system that uses natural vegetation and wetlands to clean and store the stormwater run-off before it is released into the bay.

"Stormwater collected from houses and street surfaces in one section of Lynbrook Estate is directed into a trench that runs the length of a street. The trench is covered with grass swales and underlain with fine gravel that provides the primary stormwater treatment measures. The secondary treatment of the water is provided by a constructed wetland and a large pond that slow the pace of the run-off and further filter out the water pollutants."

Professor Alan Trounson, deputy director of Monash's Institute of Biotechnologies, said: "The ability to produce clones from developed cells was born in April, an embryo was then transferred into a surrogate cow, which carried the programmed cells for nine months. The product of this development is the first Australian cloned calf from adult animals, is the first step in producing identical calves from high-producing cows for the dairy industry or identical calves from high-producing bulls for the beef industry. Breeding scientists at Monash's Institute of Reproduction and Development."

"While Kyllie Cripps finishes her PhD, she is adamant it won't be gathering dust on a library shelf. Ms Cripps is researching interventions in family violence in indigenous communities - how to tackle the issues and help heal communities."

Her comparative research will take her to the University of Arizona, in Tucson, for three months. The trip was made possible by Ms Cripps being awarded a Fulbright Postgraduate Student Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, sponsored by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

"My hope is that my research can be used by any Aboriginal community anywhere in Australia, or even by groups in the US, so they can see how to set up their own family violence programs. They can find out where to get funding, for example, and determine ways in which they think the program could be adapted to suit themselves. We hope they will say, 'How can we, from those examples, set up our own programs?'"

Palmara (Tasmanian Aboriginal) woman, Ms Cripps sees many parallels between the problems faced by Aboriginal communities and native Americans, including high unemployment, alcoholism, poor health facilities and the separation of children from their parents.

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Monash Uni wins BHP railway industry research contracts

By DAVID BRUCE
Monash and leading resources company BHP have joined forces to undertake research and technology development activities for the railways industry.

The BHP Institute of Railway Technology, within the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Monash's Clayton campus, brings aboard all the railway experts from BHP's former Melbourne Research Laboratories (MRL) to join the new institute.

BHP has transferred all its railway-related research and development activities to the new institute following its decision to outsource these activities. The BHP Institute of Railway Technology will provide services to BHP in the heavy haul operations and rail and steel sleeper development programs. These activities will be complemented by other contract research and development activities for Australian and international railway operators, railway contractors, and manufacturers and suppliers of railway equipment.

The positioning of the BHP Institute of Railway Technology within Monash has provided greater opportunities for the railway industry to draw upon expertise from related disciplines within the university.

For additional information on the institute, visit its website at www.eng.monash.edu.au/railway or contact the institute on (03) 9905 1986.

‘Green’ chemistry leads attack on corrosion

By SYRAH HUETNER
What is continuous, silent, often unseen and costs Australia billions of dollars a year?

Australia's infrastructure is under relentless attack by corrosion, from the streets and roads to high-rise towers to the metals in pipes underground. It is estimated that the cost of rusting and other forms of metal corrosion alone amounts to about 3 per cent of the national economy (GDP) in capital replacement and spending on control or mitigation.

Better technologies against corrosion are clearly of economic importance and there are other factors to consider. One group of anti-corrosion agents is based on the family of heavy metals, notably chromates, banned from Australia (and most developed countries) after it was established that they were carcinogenic.

Chromates have been replaced with nitrates or mixtures of organic compounds, which also have their disadvantages. Being less effective, higher concentrations are required, which means higher costs, and concerns persist about the impact of nitrates on the environment. In the foreseeable future they, too, might be banned from use in Australia.

With the growth of a more environmentally aware branch of chemistry known as ‘green’ chemistry, effective but friendlier alternatives are being sought.

In Monash University's Department of Materials Engineering, PhD student Kerry Wilson is investigating a promising group of compounds containing rare earth metals (REMs).

“REM have been proposed quite recently as inorganic inhibitors, and so far they have not been significantly developed,” says Ms Wilson.

Ms Wilson is working predominantly with cerium, a REM with at least one day-to-day application – in lighter fints. Cerium and the other REMs are very reactive with oxygen, which aids their corrosion inhibiting properties.

"In comparison with heavy metals and nitrates, REMs are benign. When they find their way into the environment they are even considered to have agricultural benefits."

Ms Wilson is investigating a little-understood aspect of REMs as corrosion inhibitors. When combined with a member of the carbonate family – a commonly used organic inhibitor – performance can improve markedly due to a synergy between the two ingredients. Combinations are being studied to determine which function best, and why.

“We need to understand the mechanisms of how REMs incorporate into surface coatings and their interaction with the second component,” says Ms Wilson.

In addition to chemical and environmental benefits, REM plus-carbohydrate corrosion inhibitors show promise of lower production costs and more efficient water-based reticulation systems.

Refusals: really all in the translation?

By JOSE GIBSON
US First Lady Nancy Reagan made refusals famous in the 1980s with her 'Just Say No' advice during a major anti-drugs campaign.

Unfortunately, refusals in other languages often aren't so straightforward.

Monash University doctoral scholar Mr Endang Aminudin Aziz is researching the cultural and linguistic gap between refusals in Bahasa Indonesia and English.

"Like apologies, refusals are often an area of tension in cross-cultural communication," Mr Aziz said. "This research project was motivated by complaints from non-Indonesians that Indonesians are resistant, indirect, not frank. The non-Indonesians see this as implied impoliteness."

Mr Aziz's study established that indirectness was in fact the norm for expressing politeness in Indonesian, particularly when refusing a request. Responses were heavily influenced by the speaker's and addressee's relative age and social position. When communicating with a close friend, for example, an addressee might feel they could explicitly refuse.

He found that people used strategies ranging from a direct 'no' to more indirect methods such as hesitancy, putting the blame on a third party or even threatening the person making the request.

"Indonesians try to observe the principle of 'mutual consideration' to maintain a relationship," he said. "It's a 'harm and favour' approach – for example, this expression has potential to harm as well as to express something, so be careful."

Mr Aziz surveyed more than 160 people in Jakarta, Bandung and Bekasi using a test requiring them to respond to fictional requests. Respondents included roughly equal numbers of male and female factory workers, university students, bureaucrats, professionals, academics and members of government organisations.

"There was strong interest among authorities about this research as they often felt they had been complaints made by non-Indonesians about the way they speak," Mr Aziz said. "But they can't say no in English because their culture teaches them to say it implicitly."

In Indonesian, there are 12 ways of saying no and five ways of saying yes."
Black and white reconciliation: simply a matter of political will

Reconciliation presents a unique opportunity for recognition and redress of past wrongs in Australia, but the government's lack of will and vision is hindering the process, writes Professor Eleanor Bourke.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's vision is an ambitious one. It seeks: 'A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all.'

In the decade of Australian reconciliation, recognition of past wrongs and injustices have been at the forefront of national debates in the United States, Australia and South Africa. In these contexts, reconciliation seems to have three components: acknowledgment of past wrongs; an official apology; and redress for past wrongs.

Acknowledgment should have been easier in Australia than in the United States or in South Africa, one reason being that the historical 'conspiracy of silence' infers that most of the past wrongs seem genuinely new information to most other Australians. Books such as William Stanner's The Great Australian Silence, Henry Reynolds' Why Didn't They Tell Me, and other recent works are revelations in Australian history. Stolen children, massacres and wilful neglect have not been public topics in Australian history nor in the Australian education curriculum. Many of the facts are, however, on the official public record for anyone to read. Public records offices and local historical societies are rich with telling accounts of unfulfilled stories.

It should be noted that not all indigenous Australians have supported reconciliation and that it might be of more benefit to other Australians. While this is true, at least to some extent, many indigenous Australians see reconciliation as a chance to make some progress towards achieving some of their aspirations. However, the time demands of being involved in the reconciliation process can be excessive for indigenous Australians. In addition, having to address the same family, community and employment demands upon us as do other Australians, we have to deal with issues such as reconciliation, native title, land rights, health issues, high incarceration rates, low socio-economic status, stolen children, the republic debate and constitutional change.

The decade of reconciliation has now been overtaken by its own momentum, which, of course, embraces the diverse range of responses to it. Outnumbered 49 to one, we are continually harangued by other people's requests to help understand the status of indigenous Australians. Reconciliation is seen by some as yet another impost as it has become a very time-consuming and demanding exercise.

An official government apology to the Stolen Generations was recommended in the Bringing Them Home report. The apology so desired by those indigenous Australians has been denied by the current Federal Government. Apologies from the churches, state governments and ordinary citizens who supported a national 'Sorry Day' in May 1998 to express their feelings of sorrow have highlighted this omission.

Former Aboriginal Australian of the Year Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, one of the Stolen Children, has said publicly that the year since the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's national report on Stolen Generations so drained her emotionally that she desires closure. Instead, the Federal Government, through the Prime Minister, though expressing personal sorrow, refuses to acknowledge the responsibility of predecessor governments and the impact of such policies on indigenous Australians today.

Indeed, at the Australian Reconciliation Convention in May 1997, rather than apologise, the Prime Minister harangued delegates when they showed their disapproval. Martin Flanagan in The Australian on 8 August 1998 noted that "Silence can be an extremely effective weapon...", especially when the Prime Minister's response was to shout at it. Since that time, the Prime Minister has expressed qualified support for reconciliation, but will not give those indigenous Australians the government apology they desperately seek.

At the 1997 convention, as well as during the 70th anniversary of the 1917 referendum, a range of topics was canvassed to identify ways forward in the reconciliation process. These included: self-determination; the sharing of natural resources; land and sea entitlements for indigenous Australians; the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and its subsequent impact; education; health; legal and customary law issues; and cultural and intellectual property rights.

All of these were debated so that a Document of Reconciliation might be developed. The issue of an appropriately worded apology from the Federal Government has been allowed to dominate the process and no progress has been made on other crucial issues.

The complexity of reparations - returning victims to the economic position they would have occupied but for government policy - is also not being addressed. Nor is there any accounting for the inter-generational impacts of discrimination and the severe spiritual and psychological losses from dispossession of land and separation from families, culture, and disempowerment of language and suppression of beliefs. Surely a window of opportunity exists for universities to make a significant contribution to this debate.

A weakness of the Australian reconciliation process is that there appears no plan to handle the difficult topic of compensation for prior wrongs. Perhaps it presumes that indigenous people are to be reconciled to their fate as poor second-class citizens. The former chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Patrick Dodson, has resurrected the concept of a treaty. Patrick has suggested a process for debating whether or not the document Towards Reconciliation should lead to a treaty. His suggestion includes a mechanism for further discussion through a panel of some 40 eminent Australians, half of whom should be indigenous Australians. If this group cannot reach agreement, then Mr Dodson suggests that the matter of a treaty should go to a national referendum.

My own view is that this Prime Minister has the opportunity to take the initiative. A number of government agencies already exist around the country to deal with land issues such as the National Native Title Tribunal, state tribunals and the Indigenous Land Corporation. Compensation through the development of land and natural resources can be pursued through a Land Treaty Tribunal. Compensation of another kind could also occur through Commonwealth-funded places in Australian universities for indigenous students to the value of full-time-paying places for the decade following the centenary of Federation.

Professor Eleanor Bourke is chair of Australian Indigenous Studies and director of Aboriginal Programs at Monash University.
Great appeal in ‘The Good, the Bad and the Cuddly’

By BROWNYN STOCKS

A new ceramic sculpture exhibition at Monash University tackles themes of good and evil using comic images from our past.

Michael Doolan’s works in The Good, the Bad and the Cuddly have a nostalgic appeal that is both personal and collective.

A lecturer in the Department of Applied Arts at Monash University’s Faculty of Art and Design, Doolan claims television and comic images from his childhood as his strongest influences. The pervasiveness of such images ensures that the significance of his references are shared by a wide audience.

For each work, Doolan gathers a cast of toy characters and nursery props. Some of his figures are inspired directly by well-known characters like GI Joe and Miffy; more often he captures the essence of established types — the fluffy bunny, the corpulent bear, the macho cowboy.

His imagery focuses largely on the theme of good versus evil, drawing on simple moral issues present in many comic books.

The large scale of the works implies that the toys have grown in correspondence with our own growth as adults.

Doolan tries via this approach to facilitate a return to the infant/toy relationship for the viewer. He permits entry to the interior world of the child and participation once again in childhood fantasy.

Yet these are not simply oversized toys, large versions of innocent childhood playmates. Key elements of each work have been subtly manipulated to suggest that, perhaps because of our loss of innocence, we can’t return to that childhood state.

What: The Good, the Bad and the Cuddly
When: Until 1 July
Where: The Faculty Gallery at Monash’s Caulfield campus
Who: For more details, contact faculty manager Malcolm Bywaters on (03) 9903 2882.

Artists tackle downside of Taiwanese ‘miracle’

By JOSE GIBSON

The other side of Taiwan’s transformation from a poverty-stricken agricultural society to economic powerhouse is told in a new exhibition at the Monash University Gallery later this month.

Face to Face: Contemporary Art from Taiwan examines the impact of the island’s socioeconomic miracle on the psychological, emotional and spiritual well-being of the Taiwanese.

The eight young artists explore the consequences of the transformation from an island subject to foreign colonialism, political authoritarianism and cultural repression to a bastion of capitalism, democratic ideology and cultural pluralism.

Born in the 1960s, they are the direct beneficiaries of the material prosperity brought by Taiwan’s economic miracle, but also of the environmental and spiritual degradation it has caused.

The works in Face to Face range from video installation art to photo portraits and ink paintings, some employing materials such as cloth, sequins, needle and feathers.

According to curator Ms Sophie McIntyre, the Taiwanese artists have deployed various modes of communication to explore and express the uncertainties of everyday life.

“If there is any unifying element in this most diverse selection of works, it is the sense of uncertainty, contentiousness and even displacement to which these artists give expression,” she says.

Considering the accelerated pace of Taiwan’s transition into a modern industrialised nation, political economists define these symptoms of impermanence as part of the post-Taiwan experience — a result of the ‘Taiwan miracle’.

What: Face to Face: Contemporary Art from Taiwan
When: 20 June to 22 July
Where: Monash University Gallery, Clayton campus
Who: For more details, contact the gallery on (03) 9905 4217.

Workshop festival on again

The Australian International Workshop Festival 2000 will be held from 24 June to 9 July in Melbourne.

Presented by Monash University, the highly successful festival brings together some of the world’s leading theatre figures for workshops with local performers, directors and theatre practitioners.

This year brings a range of exciting workshops and have created of performances theatre and dance, including Jennadi Bogdanov from Russia, Linda Wise from France, Mike Aldred and Wendy Houstoun from the UK, and Angela de Castro from Brazil.

In addition to the main workshops, there will be a range of extra events, including daily voice and movement warm-up classes, massage sessions, workshop forums, films/videos and discussions on all aspects of the performing arts.

The festival is being held at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. For more information, call (03) 9905 1674.

ARTS SCENE

Monash composer-of-honour named for 2000

Monash’s School of Music — Conservatorium has announced its Australian composer-of-honour and adjunct professor for 2000. Currently chair of Music at the University of Glasgow, Professor Graham Harle is well known in the US, the UK and Australia as a prolific composer of piano, ensemble and female vocal music.

He is the eighth composer in the annual Monash Australian Composers Series.

Business Systems sponsoring concerts

Monash University’s School of Business Systems has entered the musical sponsorship arena, supporting three major performances this year.

The school, based in the Information Technology faculty, sponsored a concert by the New Monash Orchestra and Windred Rudemacher last month, and will sponsor Viva Voci, the orchestra and Yuri Rosum in October. Both concerts will be performed at Monash University.

In August, the school will support a family concert by the touring Asian Youth Orchestra at the Melbourne Concert Hall in the Victorian Arts Centre.

School head Professor Rob Willis said the sponsorships were an important example of the school engaging with the community. “Our successful degree programs allow us to support such worthwhile projects as the Asian Youth Orchestra and help them bring their talents to a wider audience,” he said.
Voices of terror from Pol Pot's secret prison

BY DEREK BROWN

In just four years, from 1975 to 1979, more than 16,000 men, women and children were imprisoned, interrogated, tortured and killed at S-21, a prison camp built by Cambodia's Khmer Rouge to perpetuate its political economy. David Chandler, an eminent professor in Monash's History department, has sifted through hundreds of prison records, forced confessions and photos of prisoners found at S-21 in an attempt to understand how such an atrocity could occur.

Years of research have resulted in Voices from S-21, a book that bears witness to the suffering of prisoners who, deemed dangerous by the communist regime, were incarcerated in one of the Khmer Rouge's most notorious institutions.

"A typical prisoner arriving at S-21 would be questioned and beaten several occasions, tortured if thought to be concealing important information, and made to write or dictate a confession over several days, weeks, or in the case of 'important' prisoners, months. They were then put to death," Professor Chandler said.

As well as documenting the experiences of prisoners at the hands of their captors, Professor Chandler attempted to look objectively at the people who worked within S-21 to discover how they could willingly participate in acts of severe and inhumane violence.

"If the crimes committed within the prison were truly horrific, I believe there is more to learn from S-21 than merely condemning it, and those who worked there, as evil," Professor Chandler said.

"Most of the people working at S-21 were not inherently brutal or authoritarian, but were mainly unexceptional, often poorly educated men and women who were cast in brutal roles. At S-21, workers could become prisoners overnight themselves," he said.

For Professor Chandler, Voices from S-21 was a difficult book to write. "When I immersed myself in the S-21 archive, the terror inside it pushed me around, blunted my skills and crooked my self-assurance. The experience at times has been akin to drowning," he said.

Conference will examine global impact on the arts

BY JOSIE GIBSON

The impact of globalisation on Australia's performing arts will be examined at a national conference in Melbourne later this month. Organised by Monash University and Circus Oz, the Globalisation and Performing Arts Conference on 23 and 24 June will bring together arts practitioners, trade experts, entrepreneurs and policy-makers for an in-depth look at the industry's future.

Dr Rachel Fensham, a lecturer in Monash's Centre for Drama and Theatre Studies and one of the conference organisers, said the wide-ranging program would cover major issues including from Australia.

"There is great pressure on Australian companies to compete and survive in a global world," Dr Fensham said. "But what this means often isn't clear. We want to put some facts on the table."

The recent Nagoya inquiry into the performing arts, with its recommendations for national, regional and local funding for Australian companies, would have far-reaching implications and was one of the catalysts for the conference, she said.

Another was the recent tour by the highly successful European company Cirque du Soleil, which performed to packed houses around Australia - only weeks before Circus Oz's home season was due to start.

"Cirque du Soleil has about 600 employees," Dr Fensham said. "If we can buy the best performers in the world, including from Australia. It caters to the same audiences as Circus Oz. This clearly has an impact locally."

At the same time, Aboriginal theatre and music are flourishing. The theatre production Stolen, an in-depth and moving analysis of the autobiography of an Australian pioneer. Barbara Caine is a professor of history at Monash University, and Glenda Sluga is a senior lecturer in history and director of European studies at the University of Sydney.

"It is an attempt to look at the economic and cultural benefits of globalisation, but also some of the losses," she said. "If the push is all towards export, you might not get the development of local culture."

Among other issues, delegates will explore globalisation's impact on national culture, cultural pluralism and local communities and the role of government.

"The conference is a really good example of a university working with the industry, although timing - getting everyone together - has been a challenge," Dr Fensham said. "We have been able to bridge the distance between the scholarly language and interest of academics and the performing arts industry on the ground."

For more information about the conference, contact Ms Liz Sadler on (03) 9486 3408 or email lsadler@webline.com.au

Exploring Ways of Working

The Faculty Gallery at Monash University's Caulfield campus recently hosted Ways of Working, an exhibition of work by distinguished contemporary metalsmiths and jewellers from Japan, Korea and Australia. Photo by Greg Ford

Seize the Future: How Australia Can Prosper in the New Century

By Alan Oxlajy
Published by Allen & Unwin
RRP: $29.95

In a rapidly changing world, where information technologies are moulding a global community and economic rationalism is creating a new way of doing business, Australia is gaining strength.

Seize the Future argues that as a nation we have regained our confidence, conquered our past and are now ushering in a new golden age. Author Alan Oxlajy explores economic, social and historical factors that have placed Australia in a prime position to prosper in the new century.

Mr Oxlajy has been an Australian ambassador to GATT (the predecessor of the World Trade Organisation), has represented Australia as a diplomat in Singapore and at the UN in New York, and is currently director of the Australian APEC Study Centre at Monash University.

Teachers and Techno-Literacy: Managing Literacy, Technology and Learning in Schools

By Colin Lankshear and Ilana Snyder
Published by Allen & Unwin
RRP: $39.95

The authors of Teachers and Techno-Literacy believe that in the rush to provide students with adequate technological literacy, vital educational purposes and standards are being sacrificed.

With this in mind, the book serves as a guide for teachers in countries like Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, providing guidelines on how to incorporate technological literacy into a school curriculum without compromising teaching practices.

Dr Ilana Snyder lectures in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. Colin Lanksheer is a Mexican Council for Science and Technology fellow based at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and Bill Green is a professor at the University of New England.

Gendering European History

Barbara Caine and Glenda Sluga
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Recognition of gender as a historical force has breathed new life into the analysis of historical events such as the First World War and the French Revolution, creating new perspectives on the effects of sexual difference on national and international politics.

Focusing on three main periods of European history, the text attempts to bring together existing literature on the role of gender to explore its effects on developments in work, urban and domestic life, national politics and nation-building during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Barbara Caine is a professor of history at Monash University, and Glenda Sluga is a senior lecturer in history and director of European studies at the University of Sydney.
Eccentric exercises will protect against those hamstring injuries

BY DAVID BRUCE

Of all the serious injuries an Australian Rules footballer can receive, doing a 'hammy' is undoubtedly the most common. Painful and crippling in its initial impact, the hamstring injury has a nasty habit of recurring throughout the athlete's career - and not only in football, but in a broad range of sports played at all levels.

Ms Camilla Brockett, a graduate student from Monash's Physiology department, believes she has developed an exercise strategy that will help to minimise this type of injury.

Her theory is based on a new understanding of eccentric exercise, that is, exercises where the contracting muscle is stretched at the same time. In poorly trained athletes, the first bout of such exercise leads to muscle soreness - the soreness and stiffness of the legs you feel the next day.

"This soreness is actually damage to the muscle fibres caused by overstretching," explains Ms Brockett. "It is at this point where the muscle is vulnerable to more major damage such as a muscle tear."

However, a second period of eccentric exercise, not long after the first, typically leads to much less soreness. This is because the muscle has undergone adaptive changes that protect it from further damage.

In adapting this theory of muscle development to the hamstring, Ms Brockett has shown that appropriate eccentric exercise can eventually protect this vulnerable muscle.

"We all perform eccentric exercise in our daily activities, but athletes in sports such as football are particularly vulnerable when kicking the ball. The type of training they are currently doing is not adequate preparing them for this range of movement in the hamstring," she said.

Ms Brockett has developed a range of eccentric exercises for footballers that are designed to protect them from new and recurrent hamstring injuries. Other sports with a high number of hamstring injuries include gridiron, soccer and athletic events with a high leg lift, such as hurdles and sprinting.

"Hamstring injuries are at the top of the list of injuries for footballers. So any exercise strategy that can help minimise these kinds of injuries will obviously be of great interest to clubs and players," she said.

Brain chemical research could help treatment of weight-related illness

BY DEREK BROWN

A Monash PhD student's research into how chemical levels in the brain modulate appetite may help improve treatments for illnesses such as obesity and anorexia.

Ms Nazila Jamshidi, from the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Biology at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, has spent the last two years researching the effects of cannabinoids on the appetite of rats in an attempt to uncover the role these chemicals play in appetite modulation.

"I began by looking at THC, a major psychoactive constituent of cannabis. Cannabis has been used in the US as an appetite stimulant in HIV, AIDS and cancer patients," Ms Jamshidi said.

"By injecting rats with THC and measuring changes in their eating habits and body temperature, we have been able to deduce how cannabinoids act in the body."

Ms Jamshidi identified that THC plays a role in appetite modulation, but that the effects vary depending on the size of the dose, the time of its administration and how much a rat has eaten prior to dosing.

"I found that THC has a dose-dependent effect. When the rats were injected with a high dose of the cannabinoids, for example, their feeding was inhibited, while a lower dose stimulated feeding," Ms Jamshidi said.

Ms Jamshidi said the next step was to determine whether anandamide, a cannabinoid that occurs naturally in the body, had a similar effect on the appetite.

"If we can find out what is happening in the brain and determine what role anandamide plays in appetite modulation and how it affects these kinds of weight-related states, we will be better prepared to find a solution," she said.

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