Australia – right at home in America

BY COREY NASSAU

If you’ve ever been to America and immediately felt at home, it could be partly due to the fact that you were standing on very familiar soil. Structural geologists at Monash University have applied modern theories of tectonics to determine that large chunks of western North America once belonged to Australia.

According to Dr David Giles and Dr Peter Betts of the Australian Crustal Research Centre, Australia had numerous interactions with North America more than one billion years ago – interactions which altered the shape of our continent forever.

"By applying modern tectonic ideas to ancient terrain, we have been able to piece together a large part of the Australian jigsaw during the Proterozoic period," Dr Betts said.

"We have discovered that a very complex link existed between the two continents and that large parts of Australia may have actually become part of Canada and the United States." Over the past 10 years there has been growing support among the geological community for an ancient link which once existed between eastern Australia and western North America as part of the supercontinent, Rodinia. This new research, conducted by Dr Giles and Dr Betts, presents the idea that the link was not a continuous one, but instead a series of complex interactions between the two continents that began about 1.8 billion years ago.

Over a 700-million-year period, Australia and western North America were connected three times, during which there were extended periods of

Continued on Page 2

Law School gains judge

Victorian Supreme Court judge Justice George Hampel will leave the court this month after 17 years of service to join Monash’s Law School as a full-time professor of advocacy and trial practice.

Law dean Professor Stephen Parker said he was delighted that Justice Hampel was joining the faculty. "Justice Hampel’s appointment will bring more than 25 years of experience in advocacy training to Monash, which will enhance the Law School’s new practical legal education program and further develop the school’s training profile," he said.

Justice Hampel, who is chairman of the Australian Advocacy Institute and a member of the Victorian Council of Legal Education, said he was making

Continued on Page 2

Inside

News

Young doctors down on the farm
An unlikely alliance between farmers and doctors is giving medical students first-hand experience of rural medicine.

Page 2

News

Reforms lack foundation
Recent economic reforms in countries such as China lack the infrastructure needed for long-term success, a Monash economist has found.

Page 3

Opinion

Privatisation: at what cost?
What does privatisation of government activities mean for consumer rights and public accountability, asks a Monash law lecturer.

Page 5

Arts

Tale displays heritage
A modest princess, a fierce warrior and a bug-eyed demon feature in an Indonesian morality tale at Monash this month.

Page 6
Doctors call on farmers to bridge urban and rural medical divide

Encouraging young doctors to set up practice in rural areas is increasingly a challenge for both the medical profession and the regional communities concerned.

An innovative program, led by the Monash Centre for Rural Health, has formed an unlikely alliance between doctors and farmers to give an informed view of life outside the city to the next generation of medical practitioners.

The centre's Dr David Birks began providing rural health experiences for urban students in 1989, and since then the Rural Hospital Undergraduate Rotation in Gippsland has evolved into a three-week compulsory component of Monash's medical course.

Final-year medical students spend time in and around hospitals in Sale, Warragul and the Latrobe Valley, working with specialists, ambulance staff and local GPs to gain an understanding of the different medical issues facing country people.

But the most innovative part of the program is a session crossing medical boundaries. Veterinarian Dr Bill Darmody and local farmer Mr Chris Griffin host undergraduate doctors for a practical information session focusing on farming and farm hazards.

The tutorial begins with a walking tour of Mr Griffin's farm, highlighting health and safety issues involved in working with heavy machinery, large animals and farm chemicals.

Students then continue discussion with Dr Darmody at his Moe veterinary clinic, with a particular emphasis on animal diseases that jump the species barrier, such as leptospirosis and Q fever. "I share with students my professional experience of what it's like to work in a regional area, and this can be as valuable as the technical information," comments Dr Darmody.

"If we work on the hypothesis that the chances of getting doctors to rural areas are better if they know more about rural life, then this program is an important induction for students."

New dean to broaden Science faculty base and boost research

An international scholar and researcher whose study of the reactivity of nitro compounds in aromatic systems attracted worldwide attention has been appointed dean of Science at Monash University.

Professor Robert Norris is currently dean of Science at the University of Wollongong and president of the Australian Council of Deans of Science. He will join Monash in January.

Professor Norris completed a science degree at the University of Sydney in 1966, where he gained first class honours and the University Medal in organic chemistry. A PhD at Sydney in 1970 was followed by a Diploma of Imperial College at the University of London in 1975.

Professor Norris said he had been impressed by the Monash blueprint, Science Forward, and planned to ensure that science became more broadly based through greater collaboration with other faculties.

"We need to prepare our graduates for careers in science, but also equip them with the generic skills they need for a changing world," Professor Norris said.

"As a faculty, we must keep a high research profile and strengthen our industrial and international links."

Monash vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson said Professor Norris was an "outstanding appointment".

BRIEFS

Monash receives road safety accolade

The Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) has received an international award in recognition of more than a decade's commitment to road safety research.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers Safety Council presented the Edmund R. Richter Traffic Safety Award (Organizational) to MUARC early this month in Nashville, Tennessee.

The award recognizes MUARC for its contribution to enhancing road safety in Victoria, which has one of the lowest fatality rates in the world. Victoria recorded a 50 per cent reduction in road fatalities from 1989 to 1999.

Water team wins health award

A Monash University water quality study team has won the Victorian Department of Human Services 2000 Award for Excellence in Public Health Research.

The team, headed by Associate Professor Kevin Birks from Monash's Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, won the award for its "high-quality research to determine the contribution of microorganisms in drinking water to diarrhoeal disease in Victoria".

Some 600 families in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs took part in the $3 million, three-year study, which gave Melbourne's water a clean bill of health.

Law school to offer tribunal training

Monash's Law School has launched Australia's first university-based training program for members of administrative tribunals.

The new subject, 'Decision-making for tribunal members', is an introduction to the legal requirements for administrative decision-making on boards and tribunals.

The one-semester graduate subject will be delivered nationwide via the Internet to members of state and federal administrative tribunals who are planners, social workers, government administrators, lawyers and social policy experts.

Victorian Supreme Court judge and president of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Justice Murray Kellie congratulated Monash on the introduction of the subject, which he said was a "significant step forward in the delivery of a higher standard of tribunal justice to the community".

Celebrity joins Monash in fundraising effort

Olympic medalist Ms Debbie Flintoff-King has joined forces with the Monash University Student Union (Monsu) and Monash's Peninsula Health team to support the Franklin Relay for Life campaign to raise money for cancer research.

Ms Flintoff-King is patron of the Franklin event, which is being coordinated by Monsu and Peninsula Health on behalf of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

For more information on the event, to be held on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 November, visit the website at www.monsu.org.au/craftsline or contact Mr Mark Mathison at Monsu on (03) 9770 1405.

Australia - eight at home in America

Continued from Page 1

up to 150 million years when they were separated. Every time they broke away from each other, Australia was missing a piece," Dr Giles said.

"There was an extension to Cape York Peninsula which today forms the northern chunk of Canada. Parts of Idaho also once belonged to us. So we’ve had contact with very different peoples and cultures, and the problem is how to translate that experience to others in the world."

Professor Kit Fairley from Monash's Preventive Medicine, won the award for Australia's first university-based training program in cancer research.

Monash University Student Union President Tony Flintoff-King has joined forces with the Franklin Relay for Life campaign to raise money for cancer research.

Mr Flintoff-King is patron of the Franklin event, which is being coordinated by Monash University Student Union and Peninsula Health on behalf of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

For more information or to register, visit www.patchadams.org.

Law School gains Supreme Court judge

Continued from Page 1

the transition to academic life because he believed there was a need to further develop education in advocacy and trial practice.

"The legal profession should continue to aim towards setting minimum standards for people who practice advocacy," he said.

"In my role at Monash, I will be developing and teaching undergraduate advocacy courses, and developing our postgraduate courses in advocacy and trial practice both within Australia and internationally."

Justice George Hampel said he was also interested in pursuing judicial training and exploring human rights issues associated with professional development and the concept of fair trials.

The Age is proud supporters of Monash University.

For home delivery phone 13 27 82

DO YOU WANT TO ADVERTISE?

For details on how to advertise in Monash News, contact Duyen Vo on

93905 3087, fax (03) 9905 2097

or email duyenvo@adm.monash.edu.au

Doctor sees the funny side

Speaking to an enraptured audience at Monash Institute of Public Health last month, American doctor Patch Adams inspired all with his positive energy and facilitating healing through humour to thousands of people through the Pat Adams Foundation.

Dr Adams spoke about his life's work providing free medical care and facilitating healing through humour to thousands of people through the Pat Adams Foundation.

"I share with students my passion for medicine and facilitating healing through humour to thousands of people through the Pat Adams Foundation." Dr Adams spoke about his life's work providing free medical care and facilitating healing through humour to thousands of people through the Pat Adams Foundation.

"I share with students my passion for medicine and facilitating healing through humour to thousands of people through the Pat Adams Foundation." Dr Adams spoke about his life's work providing free medical care and facilitating healing through humour to thousands of people through the Pat Adams Foundation.
Economic reforms in China and Russia ignore the need for foundations

BY SANDRA BUCOVAC

An investigation by economists from Monash and the US into the relationship between economic reforms and constitutional transition in China and Russia has attracted international interest.

It has also prompted government officials from Jiangsu Province near Shanghai to seek more information from the authors, including Professor Xiaokai Yang from Monash’s Department of Economics and Harvard University’s Centre for International Development.

"In fact the findings have implications for Asia as a whole," said Professor Yang, noting that latecomer or emerging economies mimicking economic reforms of other countries but may ignore the institutional and legal infrastructure necessary to provide a solid foundation.

The research is unique in that it is the first to look at constitutional reform from an economist’s perspective, according to Professor Yang. "Often economists focus on economic reforms, not constitutional transition. However, economic reforms are just a small part of constitutional reform," he stressed.

The research was presented recently at conferences in Shanghai in the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan and Korea. Extracts appeared in various publications in those countries, and also in the US.

Professor Yang began the research while he was a resident fellow at Harvard in 1998/99, in collaboration with internationally respected economist and author Jeffrey Sachs, from the Centre for International Development and Department of Economics at Harvard, and Wing Thye Woo, from the Department of Economics, University of California at Davis.

Professor Yang said the authors were liberal-minded and acknowledged the benefits, in certain situations, of "shock or big bang" reforms which are implemented quickly rather than gradually.

"The focus countries were China because of its economic reforms in the absence of constitutional transition, and Russia due to its economic reforms associated with constitutional transition.

The most important characteristic of China’s market-oriented reforms is the absence of constitutional order and rule of law. This implies institutionalised state opportunism, self-dealing of the ruling class, and rampant corruption, according to the research.

Professor Yang noted that rivalry and competition between states and between political forces within the countries studied were the driving force for constitutional transition. Under the political monopoly of the ruling party, economic transition would be hijacked by state opportunism.

In the case of China, Professor Yang said there were many conflicts between Communist rule and market-oriented reform.

Despite this, there was a big push for privatisation in provinces like Jiangsu in order to bring China’s institutions up to an internationally competitive standard.

Researchers to investigate touchscreen learning

BY CHRIS GILES

Computers are as much a part of the modern-day classroom as inkwells were to past generations.

And while there is no doubt that computers present a new world for today’s students, Monash University’s Faculty of Education is hoping to develop those learning opportunities even further.

Commissioned by MicroTouch Australia to undertake a pilot research project, the faculty will investigate how touchscreen computer technology in classrooms impacts on the learning abilities of Melbourne kindergarteners, prep and year one students.

Monash research team leader and senior learning technologies lecturer Dr Geoff Romeo says the scope of the pilot project is necessarily broad because of variations in students’ educational abilities and teaching approaches.

But part of the research will test the theories that touchscreens encourage greater student team work and could also help some children who are reluctant to use a conventional mouse and keyboard.

"The company’s belief is that for some children the mechanics and physicality of the keyboard and mouse are restrictive," he says.

"Some children might be reluctant to use them (mouse and keyboard) because they are not ready or they have not had the fine motor skills experience. But there might also be cognitive reasons, not just physical and mechanical reasons, why it’s good to have a touchscreen.

"Actually doing something – creating, drawing a box, using text or whatever – on the screen with your finger might be less abstract, for example, than using a mouse, and under those circumstances, the learning might be more effective.

"It’s a pilot project, so we’re on a bit of a fishing expedition, and we’re looking at a range of things that we’re hoping will lead to more significant research."

Dr Romeo and fellow team members, senior lecturer in learning technologies Dr Sue McNamara and research fellow Dr Christopher Ziguras, will seek approval for their research design from the university’s ethics committee and the Department of Education, Employment and Training.

If approved, touchscreens and observational cameras will be placed in two or three selected Melbourne learning centres for eight weeks during term four.

Teachers and the research team are expected to compile findings for MicroTouch by 22 February, with publication in academic journals and presentation of findings at leading teaching and technology conferences to follow.

Monash Means Business

The new Monash MBA programs offer innovation, flexibility and choice.

Monash University has redefined its MBA for 2001 in line with current needs in the global marketplace. The focus is on combining traditional management and financial disciplines with specialisations in the emerging field of electronic commerce. And with a choice of over 250 elective subjects, you can tailor this degree to your requirements.

For those who want an MBA with a technology focus, the unique new MBA.com program combines specialist subjects in the area of electronic commerce with subjects in the traditional business disciplines.

The MBA.com program is of real relevance for managers in the information age.

For further information, contact the Manager, MBA Programs, Faculty of Business and Economics, at the details below.

Ph (03) 9905 1166 Fax (03) 9905 1168 Email mba@buseco.monash.edu.au
Consultancy offers practical advice on ethical dilemmas

BY KAY ANSELL

A decade ago - in the grip of the 'greed is good' era - the idea that ethics would become a growth area had been laughable.

But many corporations that rode high then have since been caught out over dubious practices and are now seeking guidance on how to be better corporate citizens.

Monash is meeting this increasing demand by becoming the first Australian university to offer a consultancy focusing purely on ethics.

According to the executive director of Monash Ethics Consultancies, Associate Professor David Muschamp, fresh fields of dilemma are emerging in areas such as new technologies, while at the same time people genuinely want to improve their behaviour.

"We don't see the world, including history, as value-free very often anymore," he says.

Contact Ms Michelle Leighton in the Faculty of Business (Risk Management) on (03) 9904 4196 or email mlleighton@monash.edu.au for more information.

Evidence of the decline of moral relativism is apparent in the number of companies that now take an ethical approach in devising policies and strategies. He cites The Body Shop as a leader and says BHP, Shell and Rio Tinto are among the companies "seriously concerned with both the appearance and the reality of behaving decently, when perhaps they weren't 10 years ago".

Why now? "Maybe it's because they are nicer, finer people," he says wryly, "or maybe they see that goodness pays and that wickedness is costly.

"Talk of the triple bottom line is in everyone's minds - that we are not concerned solely with profit but with environmental and social values. This aspect is now in the last 10 years or so.

"Also now are some of the areas presenting ethical challenges for which the consultancy can offer guidance, for example in the area of computers. Potential ethical dilemmas here range from the straight (legal headaches of the internet) to the saucy (is cybersex wrong?).

Then there are organisational ethics, governmental ethics, military ethics, accounting ethics and journalistic ethics, among others.

Monash has long recognised the need for fostering debate about real-life dilemmas, having been a world leader 20 years ago when it established its Centre for Human Bioethics.

Monash Ethics Consultancies, based in the School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Bioethics, will link clients with experts from across Monash's vast range of resources, for a fee.

For more information, contact Associate Professor David Muschamp on (03) 5985 9598.

'Signcryption' sets the scene for mobile e-commerce

BY STUART HEATHER

The mobile telecommunications business is booming. Increasingly, Australians are relying on their personal mobile devices for work and play.

Mobiles are also the 'next big thing' on the internet.

If the major telecommunications companies are correct in their predictions, within four to five years half the internet traffic in Australia will be generated by mobile devices. An increasing proportion of those communications will be e-commerce - buying and selling without paper documents or face-to-face transactions.

At Monash's Peninsula campus, the Laboratory for Information and Network Security (UNKS) is working to overcome some of the obstacles impeding the success of e-commerce in the mobile digital realm.

Security is a key problem when financial transactions such as credit card sales are involved. Both customers and vendors need to be assured that the other is who they purport to be, and that financial details remain confidential and not tampered with, regardless of distance or the means of transmission.

A new technology being developed at LINKS is called 'signcryption', which combines the need to send an electronic signature (analogous to signing a credit card voucher) and to encrypt the signature and message into a transmission able to be 'opened' only by the intended recipient.

The founding director of LINKS, Dr Yuliang Zheng, is an international authority in online security technologies. "Signcryption cuts by half the amount of computing needed to send a secure message," Dr Zheng says. It wraps the signature and the encryption simultaneously, instead of signature-then-encryption, as happens with the usual systems now.

"Signcryption provides both transaction confidentiality and integrity in a single computational step, so the necessary security is there but in a radically, new, smaller package."

Cutting the size of digital messages is crucial for mobile devices where processing power and memory are much smaller than in fully-fledged computers.

"Communications bandwidth is also an issue," says Dr Zheng. "Signcryption significantly cuts message size for each transaction and saves millions of transactions, so this adds up to a lot of communications and storage capacity saved."

The mathematics involved in Signcryption is complex and the university has a patent pending on the technology. While graduate students at LINKS put the finishing touches on a prototype, discussions are under way with potential partners about commercial applications.

For more information about Signcryption or other LINKS e-commerce technologies, contact Dr Zheng on (03) 9904 1396 or email yuliang.zheng@infosec.monash.edu.au.

As the VTAC closing date for course applications is fast approaching, this is a reminder that students have their applications in by Friday 30 September.

In addition to courses that are listed in the VTAC guide, there are other Monash University courses that students can apply for by direct entry to the relevant faculty.

Direct entry courses for 2001

Bachelor of Telecommunications Engineering - Clayton

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 15 December.

Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Arts (International Communications)/Bachelor of Commerce - Peninsula

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 8 October.

Bachelor of Information Technology - Clayton

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 15 December.

Bachelor of Business (Risk Management) - Clayton

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 15 December.

Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Information Technology - Peninsula

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 15 December.

BERWICK CAMPUS

Bachelor of Business and Commerce/Bachelor of Network Computing - Berwick campus

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 29 September.

BERWICK CAMPUS

Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Multimedia Computing - Berwick campus

Applications close Friday 29 September, but there is a priority closing date of Friday 29 September.
Privatisation: have we sold off public accountability?

Over recent years, politicians have 'sold' privatisation to the Australian public as a way of making services traditionally provided by the government cheaper, more efficient and more responsive to demand. But what are the implications for consumer rights and the public accountability of private providers, asks Monash law lecturer Dr Bronwyn Naylor.

The last decade has seen a massive global reassessment of the role of the state, and the increasing involvement of the private sector and market philosophies in what had been traditionally government activities.

This shift is, of course, highly controversial in political and philosophical terms. It also raises crucial questions about the continuing public accountability of the private providers, and about the protection of the interests of consumers and service recipients.

The shift to privatisation has been driven by a belief that both competition and the market will provide more efficient and responsive services, and more generally that the role of the state should be more circumscribed.

Change has taken place particularly rapidly in Australia, with major divestment over the 1990s of services previously provided by the public sector, and with the added impetus of the adoption in 1995 of National Competition Policy by state and federal governments.

When government activities are privatised, the public law mechanisms which formerly provided redress to individuals may no longer operate...

The move to privatisation began with Australian Airlines, the Commonwealth Bank, Qantas, the state-owned banks and insurance companies, and, more recently, the partial sell-off of Telstra.

Privatisation of state-owned utilities occurred most rapidly in Victoria, beginning in the mid-1990s. The privatisation of a substantial proportion of Victoria's prisons (housing 45 per cent of the state's prisoners) also occurred in this period.

The implications of privatisation continue to dominate public debate in Victoria. The secrecy of government contracts has been under attack, both in the media and in the courts, and the incoming Bracks government promised to make contracts more transparent and accountable.

Reports of disorder in Victoria's private prisons, and of inmate deaths, have focused debate both on correctional policy and on monitoring and enforcing compliance with private prison contracts.

The management and operation of the private prisons is currently the subject of a public inquiry called by the Minister for Corrections.

The government is also reviewing the regulation of essential services - electricity, gas, water and public transport - and mechanisms for dealing with consumer complaints in these industries.

When government activities are privatised, the public law mechanisms which formerly provided redress to individuals may no longer operate, and mechanisms that ensured the accountability of government to the community as a whole will be more circumscribed.

The goals of accountability and redress are not necessarily inconsistent with other objectives of privatisation...

Privatisation also raises challenging questions about the most effective means of ensuring the accountability of private sector providers to government and of government to the community as a whole.

Governments have developed new forms of regulation both to facilitate competition and protect the public interest in privatised industries.

Regulation can entail anything from high to minimal levels of government intervention. At one end of the spectrum will be specific, prescriptive legislative rules.

Along the spectrum will be encouragement to formulate industry codes, and at the other end will be forms of self-regulation in which industries and corporations may choose to develop their own codes of practice.

The regulatory model used in Victoria includes an independent economic regulator established by statute, the Office of the Regulator-General (ORG). The Regulator-General is responsible for the electricity, gas, water, port, rail and grain export industries, with primary responsibility to facilitate the operation of competition.

The objectives of the Regulator-General, as stated in the ORG's 1998/9 Annual Report, are "to promote competitive market conduct; to prevent misuse of monopoly or market powers; to facilitate entry into the relevant markets; to facilitate efficiency in regulated industries; to ensure that users and consumers benefit from competition and efficiency".

An illustration of this form of regulation is the utility sector, in which providers must comply with specific industry legislation.

In addition, the Regulator-General licences providers and develops codes and guidelines with which licencees are required to comply, which themselves oblige licencees to develop appropriate practices addressing, for example, customer complaints handling and the protection of privacy. The industry-funded Energy Industry Ombudsman (Vic) was established in 1996 to handle consumer complaints.

Governments also assert control over private sector providers through private law mechanisms such as contracts. Private prison contractors have obligations set out in their contracts, which are then monitored by the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner in the Department of Justice. Failure to meet specified performance criteria can lead to financial penalties.

The Auditor-General and other commentators have voiced reservations about the practical operation of aspects of these contractual mechanisms, and have emphasised the importance of ensuring fully independent monitoring in this area.

Public law mechanisms may also be extended to cover some activities undertaken by private sector bodies, for example the extension in Victoria of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and freedom of information legislation to cover private prisons.

The goals of accountability and redress are not necessarily inconsistent with other objectives of privatisation...
The eyes have it in magical Indonesian morality tale

BY KAY ANDELL

A long time ago, a beautiful young princess was in line to become queen. When her father died, her wicked older sister did everything she could to stand in her way.

After this, the plot of The Black Monkey and the Princess takes some truly curious turns — and it’s all set to music. The performance on 14 September continues the Monash tradition, created by professor Margaret Kartomi way back in 1971.

Every year since then, her one, Professor Kartomi has maintained a bridge between Monash and Indonesia by hosting Indonesian musicians and showcasing the country’s richly textured culture.

An elaborately costumed drama, the morality tale pits good against bad, and features a fallen angel who becomes a monkey and a princess whose meditative powers give her strength to do good.

Professor Kartomi, head of Monash’s School of Music, says meditation — communing with ancestral and natural spirits — is one of the animist beliefs which has survived despite the strength of the Muslim religion.

The spirits are everywhere — even in the great gong onstage, which resembles the sound of the orchestra, she says. “The spirits have to be placated with offerings before the performance, and the audience will see the director perform an incense-burning ceremony.”

The story will be narrated in English, but even without narration, the good and bad will be obvious. It’s all in the eyes: the princess modestly looks downward, demons are bug-eyed and warriors glare.

Movements also betray character, with elegant, refined gestures for the heroes and big steps and sweeping arms for the evil ones.

Prestigious grant for Monash graduate

A Monash graduate has been awarded a financial assistance to working artists, chosen and stuck to an uncompromising and artistically lonely path.

"The awarding of this most significant international grant will not only give financial support for her time, but is most likely to convince the public that the work deserves much closer attention," he said.

Monash students join Sundanese artists to perform a traditional tale in The Black Monkey and the Princess. Photo by Greg Yard

The company is made up of Monash School of Music students, with visiting Sundanese artists and musicians from West Java, who will be directed by visiting artist Lili Sulapri, a second-generation musician, dancer and puppeteer.

As well as having his own wayang performance, Mr Sulapri also teaches at the Academy of Music at Bandung, in the province’s capital.

The annual performances give Monash students the chance to play in the orchestra, learn stage craft, write critiques and experience Indonesian culture first hand. The performances are also suitable for students as young as those of primary school age.

What: The Black Monkey and the Princess

When: Three performances only, on 14 September

Where: Alexander Theatre, Monash University, Clayton

Who: For tickets, contact the Monash Box Office on (03) 9905 1111.

The company is made up of Monash School of Music students, with visiting Sundanese artists and musicians from West Java, who will be directed by visiting artist Lili Sulapri, a second-generation musician, dancer and puppeteer.

As well as having his own wayang gokel puppet company, Mr Sulapri also teaches at the Academy of Music at Bandung, in the province’s capital.

The annual performances give Monash students the chance to play in the orchestra, learn stage craft, write critiques and experience Indonesian culture first hand. The performances are also suitable for students as young as those of primary school age.

The third-year fine arts student has mounted two solo exhibitions of her work and has been commissioned for various pieces by private collectors.

She completed an artist-in-residence term as a printmaker with Red Planet, and was commissioned to paint a large environmental mural at CERES in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick.

Rena also recently won a young woman’s printmaking award from Koopie Women Mean Business Ltd.

Monash lecturer in Romanian link

Monash lecturer Dr Joel Crotty recently returned to Australia after representing Monash at an arts festival in Romania.

Dr Crotty, from the School of Music — Centre for Art and Design, addressed delegates about new music theatre in Australia, the Romanian composers examined was Peter Tadeu, Monash’s composer of honour in 1998. Dr Crotty said the Romanians were keen to connect with Australia. “They are desperate to establish links with the rest of Europe after such a harrowing time under the Communists,” he said.

“Buy a way, Romania and Australia are countries looking for links, a sense of location — Romania with Europe and Australia with Asia.”

‘Spitting and Biting’ makes good viewing

BY SARA KELLY

A tastefully named exhibition at the Monash University Gallery this month explores unusual collaborations between artist and printer.

"Spitting and Biting" draws its name from the etching process where nitric acid is dropped onto spit, or mixed with water and saliva and painted on a copper plate prepared with a rosin ground.

The exhibition presents traditional saliva or water "bites" the plate around each rosin particle, creating delicate translucent effects where the acid is printed.

This is just one of many processes explored in Spitting and Biting.

The artists, who, except for Kim Wescott, are not printmakers have used a variety of processes — lithography, drypoint, open bite, spit bite and ground etching, hard and soft ground etching and woodcut — to realise different ways of making images.

The activity of working with a printer has also changed the flow of their usual work patterns and concentrations.

Imants Tillers, for example, provides the printer with a photocopy of an image, from which the printer produces a plate and then a print.

Through this reproduction method the concept of appropriation is extended, and the idea of artist as hero and author is challenged.

The use of the drypoint needle and its new possibilities are also important for Aida Tonseus and her drawing.

"Drawing is fundamental to Tonseus’s work, and this action on copper is completely new each time. Sometimes her prints are used as a foundation to paintings where the print can become completely obliterated.

Mike Parr continues to engage in printmaking on a large scale in a bid to redefine the self-portrait and the search for self. The reversal of the image and the use of the copper plate as a mirror is exciting. The resistance of the drypoint needle creates a dynamic that allows the drawing to take on different forms.

"Spitting and Biting" will challenge people’s ideas about the process of printmaking.

What: Spitting and Biting

When: 15 September to 28 October

Where: Monash University Gallery, Clayton campus

Who: For opening times, contact the gallery on (03) 9905 4217.

The company is made up of Monash School of Music students, with visiting Sundanese artists and musicians from West Java, who will be directed by visiting artist Lili Sulapri, a second-generation musician, dancer and puppeteer.

As well as having his own wayang performance, Mr Sulapri also teaches at the Academy of Music at Bandung, in the province’s capital.

The annual performances give Monash students the chance to play in the orchestra, learn stage craft, write critiques and experience Indonesian culture first hand. The performances are also suitable for students as young as those of primary school age.

What: The Black Monkey and the Princess

When: Three performances only, on 14 September

Where: Alexander Theatre, Monash University, Clayton

Who: For tickets, contact the Monash Box Office on (03) 9905 1111.

The company is made up of Monash School of Music students, with visiting Sundanese artists and musicians from West Java, who will be directed by visiting artist Lili Sulapri, a second-generation musician, dancer and puppeteer.

As well as having his own wayang performance, Mr Sulapri also teaches at the Academy of Music at Bandung, in the province’s capital.

The annual performances give Monash students the chance to play in the orchestra, learn stage craft, write critiques and experience Indonesian culture first hand. The performances are also suitable for students as young as those of primary school age.

What: The Black Monkey and the Princess

When: Three performances only, on 14 September

Where: Alexander Theatre, Monash University, Clayton

Who: For tickets, contact the Monash Box Office on (03) 9905 1111.
Holidays to relatively untouched destinations and how do tourists and communities continue to profit from them - without killing off the very attractions that people are so eager to experience?

The ways in which Australia's rapidly expanding ecotourism industry is trying to strike a balance between preservation and public enjoyment is explored, along with the principles and practices of responsible ecotourism, in Australian Ecotourism: Contributing to Ecological and Community Sustainability, a Monash publication from the School of Geography and Environmental Science.

By co-authors and Monash academics Dr Peter Cock and Dr Sharron Pfueffer, the book explores boom ecotourism, in which: 'it has become a valuable reference for a wider audience both in Australia and overseas, including tour operators, local government, tourists and rural land owners who might be considering ecotourism as a viable alternative to more exploitative land uses. The text is presented in three parts: an exploration of the challenges and attractions of nature-based travel; critical appraisals of more than 600 ecotourism operators in Australia with a total annual turnover of about $250 million. Dr Cock and Dr Pfueffer are senior lecturers in Monash University's Graduate School of Environmental Science. They bring a combined background in social science, environmental science and tourism to the text, which they claim is the only one available with an all-Australian focus.'

Australian Ecotourism authors Dr Sharron Pfueffer and Dr Peter Cock, void in study material for graduate students of environmental science or tourism. They hope it will become a valuable reference for a wider audience both in Australia and overseas, including tour operators, local government, tourists and rural land owners who might be considering ecotourism as a viable alternative to more exploitative land uses. The text is presented in three parts: an exploration of the challenges and attractions of nature-based travel; critical appraisals of more than 600 ecotourism operators in Australia with a total annual turnover of about $250 million. Dr Cock and Dr Pfueffer are senior lecturers in Monash University's Graduate School of Environmental Science. They bring a combined background in social science, environmental science and tourism to the text, which they claim is the only one available with an all-Australian focus.

Home: is it really where the heart is?

The terms 'home' and 'address' have been playfully kneaded and turned upside down in a new exhibition of sculpture by Monash students.

Judging by the work of second-year fine art and visual arts students, the words evoke memories and images that differ radically from individual to individual.

Address, on at Monash Caulfield's Concourse Gallery this month, is the culmination of months of thought and exploration of the concept of the domestic interior address. The home can be the ultimate merging of physical, emotional and spiritual sustenance, and a house for the imagination.

Home exists not only on the level of summer and cultural expression, but as a vessel for memories and dreams embraced and repressed. 'Home' can also be a remembered space. Monash students interpreted the brief with flair and wary humour.

Sohan Singh returned to the comfort of the den with a life-size Chesterfield chair fashioned out of wire mesh, while Melanie Griffith concentrated on the ubiquitous bar stool - but a version three metres high. For Clare Parish, the focus was growth and of planning the exhibition, from discussion on the final design to the opening, invitations and artwork labelling.

Monash sculpture student Ms Clare Parish with her exhibit, 'Cosleece'.

‘For these young artists, Address has been a valuable lesson in professional practice, working to deadlines and maintaining a work ethic,’ he said.

What: Address
Where: Until 6 October
When: Monash Concourse Gallery, Faculty of Art and Design, Monash Caulfield

The varied mix of individual artwork creates a stunning installation unified by a slightly surreal sense of the domestic house interior. According to sculpture studio coordinator and curator Malcolm Bywater, the students were involved in all aspects of planning the exhibition, from discussion on the final design to the opening, invitations and artwork labelling.

New Directions in Japanese Linguistics

Japanese Studies: Communities, Cultures, Critiques - Volume 4

Chief editors Vera Mackie, Allon Skotak, Alison Tokito

Monash Asia Institute

RPP: $57.50

Learning Japanese can prove difficult for many Australians, and students of the language often struggle with cultural differences that can impede successful language acquisition.

The text, by Sue Wesson, is designed as a living companion for Japanese language students and how those needs can be met through driver education and initiative. From discussions on the effectiveness of learning strategies for students of Japanese to essays looking at the difficulties of translating cultural nuances from a Japanese text into English, this book addresses a variety of topics within Japanese linguistics, Japanese language teaching and Japanese sociolinguistics.

Japanese Studies: Communities, Cultures, Critiques - Volume 4

Chief editors Dr Alison Tokito and editor Ms Rohan Spruce-Brown are senior lecturers in the Japanese department at Monash University.

The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy

Kevin Hart

Cambridge University Press

RPP: $31.95

In philosophy, deconstruction has gained the reputation of being an apocalyptic doctrine that is largely sceptical of theology. The text of the sign, a new book by Kevin Hart, argues against this reading of deconstruction, claiming that rather than rejecting theology, deconstruction offers us a way to free theology from 'totalising' metaphysics.

By avoiding obscure jargon in favour of well-researched and carefully crafted arguments, Hart has created a challenging work that should interest philosophers and theologians alike.

Kevin Hart is a professor of English and comparative literature at Monash University.
Therapeutic cloning breakthrough

BY TRACY HOCKING

Embryonic stem cell experts at the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development have taken another important step in the quest to develop therapeutic cloning techniques for the treatment of diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and diabetes.

Monash PhD student Ms Megan Munroe has removed the genetic material or DNA from an unfertilised mouse egg. She has replaced it with the nucleus or DNA of another developed cell from a 'target mouse'. This insertion of a nucleus from a developed or differentiated cell 'fertilises' the egg by introducing two complete sets of chromosomes.

"An embryo is grown, for several days to blastocyst stage," Ms Munroe explained. "Stem cells are then removed from the embryo and cultured in the laboratory."

"These stem cells have the same genetic make up as the original target mouse, and therefore if we were to program the cells to become a specific body type, theoretically they could be introduced to the target mouse to treat illnesses."

Monash Institute announced that they were the first in the world to grow nerve cells in the laboratory. The next stage in the development of this therapy was to grow these cells using a patient's own DNA, so that when introduced to the body, the immune system will not reject them.

In another world first for the Monash team, the scientists have announced that they had proven that this was theoretically possible by using a mouse as a model. The scientists established cloned mouse stem cell lines with the potential to grow into any type of mouse cell.

The deputy director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, Professor Alan Trounson, said it was an important development and proof of the principle of therapeutic cloning theory.

"Much research is still needed before we can take this treatment to the public, however this model is an important step that brings together the specialised skills of the team at Monash Institute," he said.

Making sense of a medical, legal and ethical minefield

BY SUE MCAULIFFE

They're two of the thorniest and most emotive questions confronting law and health professionals today — whether or not to disclose a client's confidential communications in the public interest, and whether or not to make such disclosures mandatory.

Dr Bernadette McSherry of Monash's Law faculty is seeking answers to these questions, because, she says, they reflect "an enormous grey area".

"In Australia, we don't, for the most part, have legislation, or even firm guidelines, to help health professionals evaluate which is paramount — a patient's right to confidentiality or the public's right to be warned."

In Australia, laws already exist requiring a health professional to breach confidentiality to report child abuse and certain infectious diseases. But, says Dr McSherry, physicians, and increasingly psychiatrists and psychologists, also need guidance on a much broader range of situations in which their duty to protect the patient and the public are in conflict.

After all, rigid adherence to confidentiality can have serious consequences. An extreme, though not infrequent, example is when a patient who is at risk of harming others remains at large because the health professional they have consulted, in does not disclose the risk to anyone.

This is an example of absolute confidentiality. However, Dr McSherry has found that a majority of health professionals favour relative confidentiality, which gives them the option of disclosure to protect the public.

Yet patients and their privacy need protecting too. Moreover, knowing that their communications might be disclosed could result in potentially dangerous patients not divulging critical information, or avoiding health professionals altogether — especially as Dr McSherry's research shows doctors are likely to err on the side of caution, making unnecessary disclosures.

To begin plotting a way across this medical, legal and ethical minefield, Dr McSherry looked at the routes taken by other countries. She found that Canada was "taking steps in the right direction". In a recent case (Smith v Jones 1999), the Supreme Court found that in order to weigh up breaching confidentiality, three factors should be considered. Is there a clear risk to an identifiable person or group of persons? Is there a risk of serious bodily harm or death? Is the danger imminent?

From her research so far, Dr McSherry thinks all-encompassing laws on disclosure will prove to be neither possible nor desirable in Australia. In particular, breaching confidentiality in the public interest should not be made mandatory. But, she says, "firm guidelines are needed urgently."