Refugee tribunal leads to legal maze: study

An international study by a Monash University law researcher has found Australia’s system of testing whether asylum seekers are genuine refugees is inefficient.

It has also found the current system has led to a blowout in the number of cases challenged in the courts. The tribunal processes used to determine a person’s refugee status were more adversarial, lacked transparency and were under-resourced compared with similar systems in Canada and Britain, the study’s preliminary analysis showed.

Senior lecturer in the Faculty of Law Dr Susan Kneebone has studied tribunal cases in Britain and Canada as part of a larger research project, comparing Australia’s processing of refugee claims with other nations.

The study, funded by a $50,000 grant from the Australian Research Council, will also examine the way refugee claims are dealt with in France, the US and Germany and how each country’s administrative laws on asylum seekers incorporate international human rights obligations.

Australia does not allow asylum seekers to be represented by a lawyer at hearings of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT), unlike Canada and Britain. Dr Kneebone, who works at Monash’s Castan Centre for Human Rights Law within the Law faculty, said the right to legal representation was a key ingredient in determining whether a refugee applicant turned to the courts for a judicial review of a tribunal’s decision.

In Australia, about 16 per cent of applicants seek a judicial review of an RRT decision, compared with less than 5 per cent of cases going to judicial review in both Canada and Britain.

“If there is legal representation, arguments are presented more thoroughly and objectively, and the applicant does not have the same sense of grievance when the decision goes against them,” she said.

“In Australia, we have this phenomenon of a huge number of people wanting judicial review - it has blown out of all proportion.”

Any legal services arriving in Australia must first apply to the immigration department for protection (refugee) visas. If their application is unsuccessful, they can ask the RRT, a one-person tribunal, to review the decision.

In Canada, most refugee applicants go directly to a two-person tribunal hearing. Britain’s three-member tribunal includes a lawyer and two lay people.

Both countries had better resources for their tribunals and more training for tribunal members compared with Australia, Dr Kneebone said. The multi-member tribunal system also seemed to lead to more informed decisions and fewer cases being challenged in the courts.

“In Australia, the (refugee) applicant is dependent on the one tribunal member to draw the issues out of the applicant and from what I have observed the tribunal member often seems to go in with a fixed line of issues,” she said.

“There is a worrying number of cases in which the courts have decided that a tribunal member was biased by not approaching the issues in an objective way.”

She said such an approach occurred when the tribunal did not allow asylum seekers to fully explain their case because of this bias and a lack of training about proper process.

The project, which is expected to take another four years to complete, will now be expanded to examine other overseas jurisdictions.

Designer wins award breaking the waves

A prototype submersible craft used to help rescue swimmers from the surf has won Monash University graduate Mr Paul Manczak the inaugural Dyson Student Award.

Mr Manczak, 22, was presented with the $7000 award at the prestigious Australian Design Awards presentation in Sydney in mid-April.

In addition to its lifesaving potential, Mr Manczak’s Goldie lightweight rescue craft, described by the judges as “awesome”, could become the next water sport sensation.

After using his own money to construct the $8000 prototype, Mr Manczak said he was “very, very happy - and so were my parents”. Winning the award also provided him with a valuable opportunity to showcase his creation to manufacturers.

Explaining how the 15-kilogram hand-held device works, Mr Manczak said it was powered by an electric motor, helping both lifesavers and swimmers power through strong surf breaks, a useful tool on Australia’s beaches notorious for powerful rip tides and crashing surf.

Before embarking on this project, I thought there were only two ways of rescuing people - either by using a rubber duckie (surf lifesaving rubber dugs) which can cost around $14,000 or by just swimming out to get them,” he said.

Over the past nine months Mr Manczak, who completed an industrial design degree at Monash last year, has been working with Surf Life Saving Victoria on making the craft more user-friendly.

Mr Manczak, who grew up on the beaches of Torquay, attributes inspiration for his design not only to his interest in surf lifesaving but also to a desire to contribute to the safety of the community.

More work on the mechanics of the prototype is scheduled to be carried out and Mr Manczak hopes full production can begin within a year.

Konrad Marshall

Processing the unlimited frustration and tensions boil over in a system beset with problems. Photo Newspix.
Monash Malaysia set to outgrow current location

Monash University Malaysia has experienced exceptional growth in its first four years of operation and has the potential to become the third largest campus of the university, according to Monash vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson.

"Monash Malaysia was our first offshore campus, and it has been extraordinarily successful — so much so that we can foresee it outgrowing its present site in two or three years," Professor Robinson said.

The campus has increased its student population by almost seven times since it opened in July 1998 with 257 students. This year, the student population has swelled to 1685, including more than 200 students from neighbouring Southeast Asian countries.

"On current trends, we will probably have around 2500 students by the year 2005, and that will be enough for our current site. We need a campus that will, in the long term, take us to around 10,000 students," Professor Robinson said.

Monash was the first foreign university invited by the Malaysian Government to establish itself in that country. Monash Malaysia currently occupies a building adjacent to Sunway College at Bandar Sunway, 18 kilometres southwest of central Kuala Lumpur.

Monash and the Sunway Group, the university's partner in Malaysia, have begun discussions that will see Monash Malaysia operating out of purpose-built facilities at a site close to its current location in 2005.

In a related development, discussions have also begun about including a medical school in the new Malaysia campus, with clinical teaching facilities to be located in Johor Bahru in southern Malaysia.

David Bruce

The student population of Monash University Malaysia continues to grow.

Legal centre to work for justice and development

SOUTH AFRICA

A new law centre established at Monash University's South Africa campus will aid development and reconstruction in southern Africa.

The Centre for Law and Reconstruction in Southern Africa (CLARISA), a joint initiative of Monash South Africa and the Monash Law School, will provide legal services and training and undertake projects focusing on critical development issues in southern Africa.

These include job and wealth creation; land use planning; management and development in relation to water, sanitation, housing, health and education; integrated development planning for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

Dean of Law Professor Stephen Parker said a key priority of the centre would be to establish a Legal Aid Board-funded justice centre providing legal services in the areas of local economic development, small businesses, land rights and land usage. A research, educational and training program would be developed as part of the justice centre's activities.

"CLARISA will also work funding from development agencies and other sources to undertake major development and reconstruction projects," he said.

A funding network for CLARISA projects is being established in cooperation with international aid organisations, the World Bank, international corporations, labour movements, governments of Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, and professional bodies committed to the development of Africa.

Professor Parker said CLARISA would also be a research institute and work closely with the four other research centres in the Faculty of Law on projects involving human rights, privatisation and public accountability, forensic studies and law and the digital economy.

"CLARISA will provide those interested in law and reconstruction in southern Africa with the opportunity to undertake a research masters degree or PhD in development-related fields of study," he said.

Professor Theo Schoepfer has been appointed as the centre's director. Professor Schoepfer was formerly deputy director of the Centre for Community Law and Development at the University of Johannesburg.

"A centre based in South Africa and linked to the Monash global network will bring many new opportunities for Monash academics and research students," he said.

Pharmacy pathway to MBA

Pharmacists will for the first time be offered a direct pathway to an MBA.

Due to commence in the second semester of 2002, the Pharmacy Management Program is a joint project of Monash University's Victorian College of Pharmacy and Faculty of Business and Economics.

The program, which was developed with significant input from the relevant peak pharmacy bodies, will foster management skills for pharmacists, nurses and health professionals.

Course director Mr Bill Sien said that combining the strengths of the two faculties would create a cutting-edge education program that combined practical and theoretical aspects such as retail pharmacy management and pharmacoeconomics with core MBA units in managerial and leadership skills and information systems.

Prison reform project promotes justice

A group of Monash law students undertaking a community development project is helping provide Victorian prisoners with greater access to legal resources and information.

The students successfully lobbied the Flinders Legal Service to provide a copy of the Law Handbook to all 13 Victorian prisons each year.

Founding VC mourned

Monash has paid tribute to its foundation vice-chancellor and visionary planner, Sir Louis Matheson, who passed away on 27 March, aged 90.

Sir James Andrew Louis McGeirr, who was vice-chancellor of Monash from its beginnings in 1960 until 1976, is survived by his wife, Lady Audrey McGeirr, and three sons.

Vice-chancellor Professor David Robinson referred his constituent to the family of Sir Louis and said that he had made a major contribution to the development of higher education in Australia.

"During its formative years, Monash University was a confident and able hands. Sir Louis set the tone for Monash as a university that had firm and innovative vision," Professor Robinson said.

An associate vice-chancellor and later governor-general Sir Zelman Cowen said after Sir Louis' retirement "[he] bowed to no one, and Monash grew into a university of high national and international standing. That is a great achievement, and it is his great and enduring monument as a vice-chancellor."

Founding Monash University in 1958, Sir Louis became the university's first chancellor and, with the collection of five masters and two doctorates, made a valuable contribution to our understanding of law and reconstruction internationally," he said.

Pharmacy management professor Professor Brian Polega said the late vice-chancellor had a strong and distinctive institutional presence.

In his book Monash — Armadale University, Professor Sitten Martignoni described Sir Louis' 16 years at the helm of Monash in the audit of challenges and change as "[he] one who changed the times.

"Student power notwithstanding, faculties have never been as staunchly well regarded by their constituents, or so successful in achieving their stated aims. If the times favoured a builder ... Matheson was a builder for the times," he wrote.

Sir Louis Matheson (centre) shows the then Premier Rupert Hamer (right) scale models of what would later become Monash University, Photo Monash University Archives.

For home delivery phone 13 27 82

Sir Louis Matheson (centre) shows the then Premier Rupert Hamer (right) scale models of what would later become Monash University. Photo Monash University Archives.

The Age are proud supporters of Monash University.

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Magnets show promise on depression: research

MENTAL HEALTH

Gently applying magnetic fields to specific areas of the brain is having encouraging results with clinically depressed patients in studies by Monash University's Department of Psychological Medicine.

The therapy is being trialled on 60 people with severe depression who have failed to respond to more conventional treatments, including the prescription of multiple medications and years of psychotherapy or counselling.

Senior lecturer Dr Paul Fitzgerald says preliminary results indicate that transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) is successful for about 40 per cent of the subjects being treated and partially successful with a further 20 per cent.

"These are people who are running out of options to improve their condition," he said.

Transcranial magnetic stimulation uses a small hand-held device to project pulses of electromagnetic energy 2 cm deep into the brain over an area about 2 cm squared.

The treatment takes about 15 minutes each day and does not require an anaesthetic or hospital admission.

"We aim at specific areas of the frontal lobes known to be involved in depression. The magnetic pulses influence brain cell activity, with higher frequency pulses being stimulatory and lower frequency pulses reducing brain activity," he said.

"We don't yet know enough about the links between depression and brain activity, but we have shown TMS to be an effective therapy for a significant number of sufferers who may not be helped by any other treatment.

The three-year trial at Dandenong Hospital, supported by an NHMRC grant, will end later this year. Further studies are planned.

Dr Fitzgerald hopes to improve the process by adding the capacity to target the therapy based on individual brain scans, better focusing the magnetic pulses on the relevant brain regions.

"I think this would enable us to improve our success rate and also to learn more about what is going on in the brains of patients with depression as they respond to treatment," he said.

The TMS team is also studying the differences between applications to the left and right sides of the brain, over a range of frequencies.

"There has been little work done anywhere in the world on right-sided treatment, and I think we'll be the first to demonstrate its effectiveness on very severe treatment-resistant patients," he said.

Another challenge is to develop the status of TMS from research to an approved medical procedure.

Project to halt the further destruction of our wetlands

The future of Australia's threatened wetlands is looking brighter, thanks to a new research and development project involving Monash University.

The $500,000 three-year project, led jointly by a research team from Monash's School of Biological Sciences and the School Life Sciences at Victoria University, will examine the ecology and management, and ultimately the rehabilitation, of wetlands fringing the Gippsland Lakes, an area beset by blue-green algal blooms.

It is hoped the work will provide findings that can be applied immediately to similar types of endangered wetlands.

Joint chief investigator and aquatic ecologist Dr Paul Bailey, of the School of Biological Sciences, says between 60 and 70 per cent of Australia's known wetlands are under threat.

"In Victoria, more than 70 per cent of wetlands have been irretrievably lost, mainly through clearing, modified water regimes and draining for agricultural production and development," he said.

Historically, they have been seen as swamps and bugs, areas where mosquitos breed, or as sites to be drained or used as landfills.

The research, based at the Dowd and Clydebank morass in the north Gippsland Lakes, will examine how a range of factors — such as salinity, water management and carp — interact to degrade a wetland.

"Research to the past five normally addressed single issues," Dr Bailey said.

"We have hypothesised that multiple issues, or multiple threats, can actually cancel and a synergistic effect can take place. As a result, a number of issues can have much more impact than just the sum of the single issues."

The 150-hectare Dowd Morass is dominated by a small, common tree belonging to the paperbark group (Melaleuca), interspersed with areas of open water. It is a diverse community of submerged water plants fringed by reeds and sedges — and it also happens to be home to one of the largest breeding colonies of this in Australia.

"For the past 20 years, this wetland has permanently contained 60 cm to 80 cm of water. It's the classic problem Government initiative. The remainder of the money is from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Student artwork selected to honour PM in New York

A scaled-down version of a sculpture by a Monash University student was presented to Prime Minister Mr John Howard recently when he was conferred with the American Jewish Committee's Distinguished Public Service Award.

The presentation in New York on 30 January was made by Australia/Israel Jewish Affairs Council director Colin Rubenstein.

The sculpture, titled 'The Tree of Life', was created by Mr Simon Kessel, who began his fine arts studies at Monash at the age of 45, having previously painted for many years. He is currently completing his masters at Monash on monumental sculpture, with a special focus on Holocaust themes.

The sculpture presented to Mr Howard is a smaller version of a two-metre work by Mr Kessel, on display in the foyer of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation.

The tree is a symbol of growth and renewal, and Mr Kessel wanted to express this concept in visual form.

Mr Howard was honoured by the American Jewish Committee in recognition of his government's ongoing support for the state of Israel.

Konrad Marshall

John Clark

Between 60 and 70 per cent of Victoria's wetlands are under threat. Photo: AAP.
**Pulmosonix to help babies breathe easier**

Research into lung diseases, particularly in premature babies, has received a significant boost with the establishment of Pulmosonix, a company creating new medical devices based on acoustic techniques.

The setting up of the commercial entity, which uses Monash University know-how, follows the recent signing of agreements between Monash Commercial and Pulmosonix.

The intellectual property being exploited by Pulmosonix developed from a long-standing research collaboration within the Ritchie Centre for Baby Health Research, involving bioengineer Dr Malcolm Wilkinson, physiologist Dr Philip Berger, and neonatal pediatrician Dr Andrew Ramsden.

According to Dr Berger, the establishment of Pulmosonix is an important milestone in attracting private venture capital to commercialise the intellectual property of biomedical researchers at Monash.

Pulmosonix is investigating the use of sound waves to assess lung inflation and upper airway patency.

With further devices on the drawing board, Dr Wilkinson says, the company has created a platform technology that has the potential to improve treatment and outcomes for neonatal diseases.

The first thrust of the studies being undertaken in the Ritchie Centre involves chronic lung disease, a major complication of premature birth, particularly among infants born at 28 weeks' gestation or less.

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

A new theory of probability forecasting being developed in Monash University's Faculty of Business and Economics could help swing economic planning back firmly in favour of the forecaster.

In a twist on the usual formula, a team in the Business and Economics Forecasting Unit is designing an economic model that can predict the probability of a forthcoming recession. Normally, the goal of economic forecasting is to predict output or growth.

The project—the brainchild of Associate Professor Heather Anderson, Associate Professor Farshid Valdi, and Mr George Abalos—aims to establish that our particular intellectual property of biomedical researchers at Monash is superior, either because they are over- or under-inflated.

At present, no practical method exists to monitor the inflation of lungs, with serious providing limited information.

Dr Ramsden, who is also director of gewhove services at Monash Medical Centre, is optimistic about new devices being designed at the company.

"We have now developed our acoustic technique to the point where we have prototype equipment suitable to test in small infants in the intensive care unit," he said.

"Initial research shows promise, and through the establishment of Pulmosonix there is great scope to extend the studies."  

Mary Viscovich

**Forecasting unit to keep weather eye on recession**

Giving lung research a breath of life: At the signing of the agreement were, back row from left, Mr Jeremy Cooper, Premier Bionics, Dr Philip Berger, Ritchie Centre for Baby Health Research; Dr Andrew Ramsden, Monash Medical Centre; and Mr Martin Soutar, Pulmosonix managing director, and front row from left, Mr Peter Marks, Premier Bionics; Monash deputy vice-chancellor (Resources) Ms Alison Crook; and Monash deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Development) Professor Peter Darvell.

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Normally, the goal of economic forecasting is to predict output or growth. Photo AAP.

The condition prolongs the amount of time babies spend in hospital intensive care units, and it develops when mechanical ventilation of the baby's immature lungs is inappropriate, either because they are over- or under-inflated. At present, no practical method exists to monitor the inflation of lungs, with serious providing limited information.

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Mary Viscovich
Towards a welcoming Australia

**OPINION**

Business leader NEVILLE ROACH AO told a recent Monash Leading Ideas Forum that the lucky country can no longer afford to turn away so much of its good fortune.

Migration and refugees do not come at a cost to the rest of us. They add to the strength of our country in many ways. The reason for choosing the extreme term 'highest priority' for today’s address was to emphasize how critical it is that we return rapidly to a positive view of all migrants and refugees, whether or not they are in the queues that our orderly minds and programs would like them to be.

In the minds of many Australians today, migrants and refugees have become a problem, and the asylum seeker is a national crisis. And yet, it was not so long ago that our collective view was that this country had been built on the continuous arrival of newcomers, and those already here, excepting of course Indigenous inhabitants, were always the better for their arrival. If we can return to a welcoming mind-set, we will once again celebrate their coming instead of needlessly worrying about them.

At the most basic level, we need migration because otherwise our population would already be in serious decline, which in due course would become irreversible. Our fertility rate is now below replacement level. Raising it through baby-friendly policies is worth trying but likely to have only a marginal effect. The entire argument in favour of migration is by making us a more diverse society. Non-discriminatory immigration continuously adds to our diversity, the economic benefits are greater. Multicultural and multilingual skills and inter-cultural competence helps us develop new products and services, access new markets and connect to international networks. Our fastest growing service industries, education of overseas students and tourism, could not have been so successful had our own diversity not already made us comfortable with difference.

A strong migration program also gives us continuous access to much-needed skills. Given the speed and unpredictable way in which technological and globalisation change skill requirements, we are fortunate that we have a great capacity to attract skilled people from around the world through permanent or temporary migration. We should also recognise the role migrants play in providing essential services in non-skilled jobs, such as care workers, people with disabilities, dishwashers, cooks, waiters, waitresses, and just get here, are likely to have the most impact.

"...by far the greatest way in which migration enriches us today is by making us a more diverse society."

Technology can make up for a relative shortage of people, and our defence alliances can help us to ease of overwhelming threat. From an economic perspective, migration is unlikely to have a huge and lasting impact on our major challenge, the small size of our domestic market. The answer must be found elsewhere, especially through exports to regional and global markets.

Migrants make our community collectively more hard-working and entrepreneurial: Neville Roach. Photo Maurice Grant-Drew.

Migration will also not have a major impact on the ageing of the population, even if we accept more parents. Besides, ageing will not be as serious a problem as it is sometimes made out, because older people are becoming fitter and will remain productive for much longer.

So some of the more simplistic arguments in favour of migration are unlikely to pass scrutiny. However, recent analysis agrees that, on balance, the impact of a net inflow of migrants is beneficial. In particular, economists today would generally accept that migrants create more jobs than they take. And studies commissioned by the Department of Immigration consistently show that, overall, our current migration program adds to per capita income and contributes positively to the federal budget.

While we need immigration to avert population decline, we should acknowledge that the earlier rationale for immigration, "populate or perish", is probably no longer an imperative and certainly not an imperative in strategic or economic terms. In today’s world, one-way ideas all depend significantly on having a large population to defend our shores.

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"...by far the greatest way in which migration enriches us today is by making us a more diverse society."

While Japan's monoculture under­mines innovation and creativity, the primary drivers of income and wealth creation today, as the recent experience of America and Japan so coherently demonstrates. While Japan's monoculture under­mines the disciplines of total quality management and continuous improvement, giving Japan dominance in the manufacturing economy of the Industrial Age, leadership in the knowledge economy of the Information Age has been seized by America, where diversity has unleashed unlimited creativity. When it comes to diversity, thanks to our migrants and refugees, Australia is very much like America, and the opposite of Japan.

While Australia was awarded the 1960 Olympics but could never have won the 2000 games - only Multicultural Australia could have run them and welcomed the world so naturally and so brilliantly.

This is an edited version of a speech by Neville Roach AO, titled 'Why welcoming migrants and refugees should be Australia’s highest priority', at a recent Monash Leading Ideas Forum, co-presented by the Monash Asia Institute and the Alumni visitation program, a regular public discussion on current world issues.

Mr Roach is a business leader and chairman of Fijiti Limited. He recently resigned as chairman of both the Council for Multicultural Australia and the Business Advisory Panel in protest at the Federal Government's treatment of asylum seekers.

For a full transcript of Mr Roach’s speech or further information on the Leading Ideas Forum go to www.monash.edu.au/uni/events/leading_ideas/roach_transcript.html
COLOURFUL SHOWCASE OF INDONESIAN DANCE

A Javanese folk tale about three sisters, a crown, and the reunion between a prince and princess will be brought to the stage in a colourful production at Monash University.

Andra Andro Luram - The Reunion of the Prince and Princess is a Cinderella-like story set in Jenggala, a traditional Indonesian storyteller narrating the tale in English.

The story of Putri Pitra and his beautiful wife, Dewi Sitar Tuld, is told through dance and music, with a traditional Indonesian storyteller accompanying the tale in English.

Producer Professor Margaret Kartoni, from Monash University's School of Music - Conservatorium, said the performance would include about 40 Japanese musicians, directed by well-known Japanese gamelan music critics and composers AI Suwardi, as well as 20 actors and dancers. It will also feature Javanese dance Soepri Soehodo as the lead dancer and director.

"It is a very colourful event as a beautiful performance," Professor Kartoni said. "It is set to a spectacular jungle backdrop, and the costumes are stunning."

Monash has been presenting large-scale Indonesian performances for the past 30 years. According to Professor Kartoni, a production such as this, which is being presented by the School of Music - Conservatorium, the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies and Monash Asia Institute, would not normally be seen outside Indonesia.

"Even in Indonesia, these kinds of shows are becoming rare because they are so expensive," she said.

What: Andra Andro Luram - The Reunion of the Prince and Princess

Where: Monash University Clayton campus +61 3 9905 1111, or for more information, contact Professor Margaret Kartoni, a lecturer and coordinator of strings at Australia, tenor Peter Mander, who the Monash ... as "a simple or straightforward

Javanese dancer Soepri Soehodo is lead dancer and director in a tale of love and reunion, Photo Peter Anikijenko.

Vioinists and voices hit a high note

The individual signature works of composers Antonio Vivaldi, Arvo Pärt and Johann Sebastian Bach were from the University of Western Australia, tenor Peter Mander, who the Monash University, the Grimethorpe Colliery Coal Band... in the UK. The Grimethorpe Colliery Coal Band will perform on 21 May at the Robert Blackwood Hall at Brc.

The evening began with a rendition of Arvo Pärt's "Fratres", described by conductor Tanya Murphy, winner of the concert featured the Monash... or the "Rainbow People".

The evening began with a rendition of Arvo Pärt's "Fratres", described by conductor Tanya Murphy, winner of the concert at the Robert Blackwood Hall at Brc.

Guest performers included acclaimed violin soloist Paul Wright, from the University of Western Australia, tenor Peter Mander, who lectures at Monash, and soprano Tanya Storlinden, who is currently completing a masters in performing arts at Monash.

The concert included works by Vivaldi's "Imperial" Four Seasons, a collection of concertos which depict the seasons.
Family secrets take flight for author

Sometimes the deepest secrets are neither political nor in the national interest: they're the ones that swell in your own family.

Just ask Professor Lynette Russell, the new head of the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies at Monash.

While researching the tragic story of her great-grandmother for a memoir a few years ago, Professor Russell officially unmasked a family secret she had already suspected: her father’s mother was Aboriginal — a woman who, with the help of police, made up as a white person.

The story of Professor Russell’s quest for the truth is revealed in her recently published book, A Little Bird Told Me (Allen & Unwin).

Suffused Family Secrets, Necessary Lies, the book examines the durability of a family’s secret in the face of a world prepared to pass swift judgement.

At its centre is the story of her great-grandmother, Emily, who was committed to a mental asylum at the age of 40.

“I knew my great-grandmother as a quiet and timid woman, reserved and very gentle,” Professor Russell said.

“But the picture I got from the asylum records was of a very strong Aboriginal woman who would say to staff ‘You can’t change me — I’m a dead woman’.”

Although the book began as an account of her great-grandmother, Professor Russell soon found she was writing about her own life and about how she felt as a person with Aboriginal heritage.

“It was a secret within the family throughout my childhood that we were of Aboriginal heritage. I suspected this for the past 10 or 15 years and acknowledged it openly,” she said.

Professor Lynette Russell, new Director of the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies at Monash, examines the durability of a family’s secret. Photo: Greg Ford.

Professor Russell is careful in describing her heritage — she doesn’t call herself an Aboriginal person.

“I think the discovery of her family’s secret has caused Professor Russell toponder the meaning of belonging. I think we’ve now reached a fairly sophisticated point where we can challenge the concept of being either black or white. I am both, yet neither,” she said.

“I am a person of Aboriginal descent: a subtle but important point.”

The story of Professor Russell’s family is one of resilience, strength and determination.

“Many Aboriginal women have been remarkably strong,” Professor Russell said.

“Family secrets take interest: they’re the ones that dwell in Monash.”

Family Secrets, Necessary Lies is published by Allen & Unwin.

Oh Brother! Reality takes centre stage

Reality TV will hit the stage this month in a production by the Monash University Student Theatre that is sure to break new ground.

The play, Mary Had A Little Lager, by short-year performing arts/law student Rhys Auteri, is the first Open Access Show for the year, and follows on from the success of In Transit and The Right Message in February and March.

Student Theatre artistic director Lyn Coleman says Open Access is a flexible program that aims to provide students wanting to experience theatre with the opportunity to become involved.

“Featuring colour and movement, pies and potatoes, drinking, dating, hilarity, heathenry and more sorcery delights, Mary Had A Little Lager challenges the audience to take its chances on Big Tempest Survivor Cammy, billed by Mr Auteri as ‘the most real, reality-based, realistic TV show on realism to date’,”

“The show is played very honestly by the theme of drinking alcohol in moderation — always an appropriate topic for university students,” Ms Coleman said.

And it is going to be great fun and very silly, with a bit of a mental at the end. Comedy and alcohol go together very well — in moderation! The cast laughed their heads off during the first reading of the script, so I know our audiences will definitely get a giggle.”

A shorter, modified production of the play will be shown at the Monash Halls of Residence and at several secondary schools in the Clayton area in second semester.

What: Mary Had A Little Lager Where: Student Theatre, Clayton campus

Who: For more information, contact Ms Lyn Coleman on +61 3 9905 8173.

Kwandah Marshall

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INPRINT--

Work, Employment and Transition: Restructuring Livelihoods in Post-Communism

Edited by Al Vaimakis, Adrian Smith and Adam Swan
Published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group

The former communist world has undergone a profound transformation in the area of work and employment. In the late 1980s, a transition that has given way to problems such as mass unemployment and increasing labour market inequality.

The authors contribute to our understanding of these transformations, which makes the book valuable reading for those studying transition economies. Scholars from across a broad range of disciplines will also be interested in its discussions of geopolitical issues from different standpoints.

Editor Al Vaimakis is associate professor in the Department of Management at Monash University. Adrian Smith is lecturer in the Department of Geography at the University of Southampton, and Adam Swan lectures in human geography at the University of Nottingham.

Commercial Law and Human Rights

Edited by David Kinley and Stephen Bottomley
Published by Ashgate Publishing Limited

In an era of globalisation, privatisation and corporatisation, the interaction of commercial law and human rights has raised many questions of international significance for commercial lawyers, governments and non-governmental organisations alike.

The book deals with the major interfaces between corporations and the law and includes contributions on the law of business and human rights, anti-discrimination legislation, native title, intellectual property, commercial litigation and the commercial development of biotechnology.

Editor David Kinley is professor of law at Monash University and director of the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law. Stephen Bottomley is professor of law and director of the Centre for Commercial Law at the Australian National University.

Economic Development and the Division of Labour: Inframarginal Analysis Versus Marginal Analysis

By Jeffrey Sachs and Xiaokai Yang
RRP: $88 (paperback)
Published by Blackwell Publishing

In this textbook, Jeffrey Sachs and Xiaokai Yang introduce students to development economics within a neoclassical economics context.

Taking advantage of the latest mathematical models, the authors analyse important development issues including the division of labour.

The pedagogical features of the text are intended to lead readers to a thorough understanding of the content, helping them to develop their critical and creative thinking skills.

Xiaokai Yang is a professor of economics at Monash University and Jeffrey Sachs is Columbia L. Stone professor of international trade and director for international development at Harvard University.

POSTscript

Consulting psychologist at Monash, John Waters has written a book, Spiritual Psychology: And the Ageless Wisdom, on building the relationship between our personality and soul through counselling, awareness techniques and self-help methods. The processes he describes examine the nature of an individual’s ‘soul-soul’ of consciousness and are both therapeutic and educational.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming book, contact monashnews@adm.monash.edu.au

Books featured in 'Inprint' are available or can be ordered at Monash's four on-campus bookshops. For example

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The theory that twins have less chance of survival as embryos than single babies has been disproved in a study of pregnant women, by Monash University researchers.

The findings of Dr Steven Tong and Dr Beverley Vollrath, from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Dr Simon Meagher from Monash IVF at the Epsworth Hospital, contradict the dogma of the 'vanishing twin theory', where up to 10 times as many twins are conceived than end up being born.

The vanishing twin theory was developed by US researcher Dr Charles Boklage in 1995 using largely mathematical models. He extrapolated backwards from ultrasound studies of women who aborted twins in the first trimester but ultimately gave birth to single babies.

"The alarming implication of this theory is that 12 to 15 per cent of all babies were once twins, but lost out or our siblings early in gestation," Dr Tong said.

Rather than mathematically extrapolate to produce results, Dr Tong and his colleagues made a point of directly observing what happened during weeks zero to six of pregnancy.

In doing so, they studied ultrasound scans and looked specifically for signs of ovulation where two eggs were released from the ovaries instead of one. (When the two eggs are fertilised, the result is dizygotic, or fraternal twins, unlike.)

The Monash team screened 504 pregnant women using ultrasound, and of these 27 were found to have two corpora lutea, indicating the release of two eggs, without the aid of fertility drugs. Of that group, nine sets of twins were conceived.

According to the vanishing twin theory, they should have only seven, or if any, set of twins born. The figure of nine out of 27 (or 30 per cent) sets of twins surviving twin pregnancies parallels well-accepted figures on the survival of single babies.

"The probability of the second egg also becoming fertilised seems to be similar to that of one egg becoming fertilised in a singleton pregnancy," Dr Tong said.

Dr Tong and his colleagues concluded that the presumption of huge losses of twins in early pregnancy is unfounded, as they would have seen far fewer twins from 27 double ovulations.

"There are no space issues when it comes to twins. The presence of one embryo does not affect the development of its twin," Dr Tong said.

Konrad Marshall

New $1 million hockey facility set to boost Peninsula sport

The Minister for Sport and Recreation, Mr Justin Madden, gets the Mornington Peninsula Hockey Club game under way at the new peninsula campus facility. Photo: Greg Ford.

Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation Mr Justin Madden recently opened a new $1 million hockey facility at Monash University's Peninsula campus.

The facility will provide a local point for students, staff and the local community to become a regional centre for excellence in the sport.

Launching the facility last month, Mr Madden said it provided a much-needed facility in the area and demonstrated what could be achieved when communities work together.

"Projects like this don't just happen," he said. "Even with funding provided, there is still a lot of collaboration and cooperation needed to make it happen.

"The synthetic pitch has been jointly funded by six organisations including the Monash University Student Union ($300,000), Monash University ($310,000), Frankston City Council ($50,000), Mornington Peninsula Shire Council ($125,000), Sports and Recreation Victoria ($250,000) and local hockey clubs ($56,000).

Monash deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Development) Professor Peter Darvall, who joined Mr Madden at the opening, congratulated all those who had been involved in the project.

"It is important that Monash takes an active part in the communities we are part of, our joint venture such as this show we are not just about teaching and research but also about cooperation in many areas," he said.

Young players from the Mornington Peninsula Hockey Club Under-11 and Under-13 teams took to the pitch after the official opening to try out the new facility.

Mr Paul Carlson with Ms Teryn Macfarlane, who has joined the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council for a work placement. Photo: Peter Anikijenko.

Integrated work program builds partnerships

WORK PLACEMENT

Monash students undertaking business and commerce degrees at the Peninsula campus will now get the chance to take part in an innovative industry placement scheme, benefiting both the students and the local community.

The Faculty of Business and Economics has introduced the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) program as a full-time, professional employment-based learning scheme for its second-year students.

The program enables students to take a 12 month leave of absence from their studies to work in a business-related field such as accounting, management or human resources.

Program coordinator Dr Susan Mayson says the placement gives students the chance to put their university studies into practice while gaining valuable professional skills.

"The program was designed as a partnership between the faculty and local businesses in the Peninsula region, with benefits to both students and business," she explained.

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