New hope to slow algal bloom

Mineral may keep urban lakes free of blooms, say researchers

The risk of algal blooms could be reduced by the addition of a common mineral to water bodies, Monash University research has shown.

Scientists from the university's Water Studies Centre (WSC) have been investigating whether calcite (calcium carbonate) is an effective barrier for slowing the release of nutrients, particularly phosphorus, into the water column. As well as being in phosphorus-rich rains, using the nutrient to become more abundant - a process that leads to algal blooms.

Professor Barry Hart, Dr Simon Roberts and colleagues from the WSC found that adding some fine, precipitated forms of calcium to the water was effective in reducing the release of phosphorus from sediments in urban lakes.

They took sediment cores from Lake Carramar, a small urban lake in Melbourne, to determine how much phosphorus was present and then measured the amount of phosphorus that was released from the cores with and without a calcite barrier.

Calcite research was published in the Australian Journal of Chemistry in March. Algal blooms occur about once a year in Lake Carramar, which is one of three inter-connecting, man-made lakes that form part of the Patterson Lakes system in the Melbourne suburb of Carrum Downs.

In some years, algal blooms have led to the lake being closed. Algal blooms frequently occur in water bodies where the water is clear, still and usually low in nutrients. In March, Lake Carramar, a small urban lake in Melbourne, to determine how much phosphorus was present and then measured the amount of phosphorus that was released from the cores with and without a calcite barrier.

Calcite research was published in the Australian Journal of Chemistry in March. Dr Roberts said that in water bodies where the water is clear, still and usually low in nutrients, algae are often not after photos of a rock wall on the Torres Strait island of Mua were Rock art: Mualgal elder Father John Manas examines the rock wall where paintings depicting a popular oral tradition has been found that adding some fine, precipitated forms of calcium to the water was effective in reducing the release of phosphorus from sediments in urban lakes.

They took sediment cores from Lake Carramar, a small urban lake in Melbourne, to determine how much phosphorus was present and then measured the amount of phosphorus that was released from the cores with and without a calcite barrier.

Calcite research was published in the Australian Journal of Chemistry in March. Dr Roberts said that in water bodies where the water is clear, still and usually low in nutrients, algae are often not after photos of a rock wall on the Torres Strait island of Mua were Rock art: Mualgal elder Father John Manas examines the rock wall where paintings depicting a popular oral tradition has been found that adding some fine, precipitated forms of calcium to the water was effective in reducing the release of phosphorus from sediments in urban lakes.

They took sediment cores from Lake Carramar, a small urban lake in Melbourne, to determine how much phosphorus was present and then measured the amount of phosphorus that was released from the cores with and without a calcite barrier.

Calcite research was published in the Australian Journal of Chemistry in March. Dr Roberts said that in water bodies where the water is clear, still and usually low in nutrients, algae are often not after photos of a rock wall on the Torres Strait island of Mua were Rock art: Mualgal elder Father John Manas examines the rock wall where paintings depicting a popular oral tradition has been found that adding some fine, precipitated forms of calcium to the water was effective in reducing the release of phosphorus from sediments in urban lakes.

They took sediment cores from Lake Carramar, a small urban lake in Melbourne, to determine how much phosphorus was present and then measured the amount of phosphorus that was released from the cores with and without a calcite barrier.

Calcite research was published in the Australian Journal of Chemistry in March. Dr Roberts said that in water bodies where the water is clear, still and usually low in nutrients, algae are often not after photos of a rock wall on the Torres Strait island of Mua were Rock art: Mualgal elder Father John Manas examines the rock wall where paintings depicting a popular oral tradition has been found that adding some fine, precipitated forms of calcium to the water was effective in reducing the release of phosphorus from sediments in urban lakes.
The recent election of seven women judges out of a total of 18 to the International Criminal Court was an important milestone for the court's legitimacy and success, according to Ms Cherie Booth QC, wife of the British Prime Minister. Ms Booth has sat as an international criminal court's legitimacy and success, court following earlier tribunals to prosecute genocide and violations of humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda.

Ms Booth has appeared in the European Court of Justice and in Commonwealth jurisdictions and has sat as an international adviser. She is also involved in the promotion of human rights through her position as a Fellow of the International Centre of Lawyers for Public Service.

CONTACT: monashnewsadm.monash.edu.au

Monash a family-friendly winner

Monash University has won an award for innovation and outstanding performance in workplace flexibility.

The benchmarking survey of 205 corporate and government organisations was conducted by the Sydney-based Managing Work/Life: Balancer consultancy. Included in the top 25 employers were Australia Post, ANZ, Banking Group, Ford Motor Company, Nissan Motor Company, Australian National University, Australia Post, the Federal Police and the City of Melbourne.

Monash, which has about 6000 academic and general staff on eight campuses in Australia, Malaysia and Singapore, was the only university to score a top 25 spot.

"Work Life and Family coordinator with Monash's Equity and Diversity Centre Ms Michelle Waters said most staff were using flexible working arrangements since the university launched its Work Life and Family Strategy in late 2000. "There has, been a 25 per cent increase in the uptake of a voluntary reduced working year, with the use of home-based work for general staff and job share arrangements also increasing," Ms Waters said. "And it's not just women who are taking advantage of the flexibility - men are making use of these arrangements too.

Managers are also reviewing work practices to make them more accessible to all staff in a flexible lifestyle.

"The aim is to help staff balance the competing demands of work, life and family while enhancing their effectiveness in the workplace."
Doctors failing to spot fatal disease

Crinomedology
Closed circuit television (CCTV) systems are becoming a common surveillance tool on streets and in public places, but a joint survey by Monash and Melbourne universities has called into question their value as a crime-fighting tool.

Dr Dean Wilson, lecturer in criminology and criminal justice at Monash, and Dr Adam Sutton from Melbourne, evaluated the effectiveness of CCTV surveillance systems in Australian public spaces and found no conclusive evidence that they had reduced crime.

"The evaluation, which was funded by the federal government's Canberra-based Criminology Research Council, surveyed local authorities using interviews and coursework visits. The research looked at technical aspects of the systems and where they were located and why, and intentions about future use.

"Dr Wilson said there were currently three times as many CCTV open street systems in operation across the country, nearly as many as seven years ago, even though there had been no research into their likely effectiveness.

"The average cost of a CCTV system is around $250,000 plus annual running costs. It is essential to carefully consider what their likely impact will be before they go ahead," he said.

"For instance, one scheme in Sydney which targeted inner-city-level drug dealing just dispersed the problem elsewhere. Drug users were at considerably greater personal risk because they were injecting in areas where they were less likely to find help if things went wrong. A scheme in Canberra also targeting drug dealers had a similar impact."

"Dr Wilson has been asked by the Victorian government to draft state guidelines for the installation of CCTV systems. He said he would urge local authorities to follow the example of the Alice Springs Town Council, which had recently commissioned the researchers to conduct a full feasibility study before proceeding with the systems.

"He wants councils to consider the overall outcome of installing a system and not just whether it is technically viable.

"In the case of Alice Springs, Dr Wilson found that putting cameras into Todd Mall was unlikely to solve the problem of persistent vandalism. His research suggested most incidents were spontaneous and drug or alcohol-related, and the presence of cameras would make little difference.

"He was also concerned about the social impact the system would have on the local population. He argued an individual would not drive away some groups in the community who already felt marginalised and who believed there would be targeted regardless of their behaviour."

"The town council has yet to decide whether to accept Dr Wilson's findings. Dr Wilson is also calling for greater community consultation. "CCTV makes good headlines for politicians, but I think the public would rather see better street lighting and more police officers on the beat," he said.

"In the future, Dr Wilson would like to conduct research inside CCTV covered rooms to find out more about how camera operators make their decisions on who to watch."

Community under watch: Security cameras are increasingly being used to keep an eye on activity in public places.

Patch offers new block to chemicals

Pharmacology
Atropine, a drug injected into people exposed to chemical weapons such as insecticides, may now be able to be delivered more effectively through a patch on the skin, Monash researchers have found.

"The research has implications for farmers affected by insecticides who find themselves far from medical aid and for police and civilian forces under threat of chemical attacks," Dr Richard Ewart said.

"Atropine currently can be delivered only by injection, and multiple injections are usually required because they are effective for little more than two hours."

"But Dr Robert Widdop, from the university's Department of Pharmacology, has been testing technology developed by Melbourne biotechnology company Vital Health Sciences that allows atropine to be administered to the body by patch or cream."

"His research indicated that atropine cream, designed to be administered with an adhesive patch, was active for up to six hours after its first application."

"When people are poisoned with insecticides, the symptoms such as sarin, it leads to a build up in the body of a neurotransmitter called acetylcholine," Dr Widdop said. "Acetylcholine is found naturally in the brain and nervous system and is used as a binding to receptors within body cells."

"His research suggested a build up of acetylcholine, too much of it binds to the cell receptors and people experience a number of unwanted effects such as convulsions in the lungs, dramatic drops in heart rate and contractions, leading to unconsciousness and respiratory failure. If left uncorrected, they can die.

"Atropine is an effective treatment because it blocks one of the receptors on which acetylcholine works."

"Dr Widdop said his studies indicated that atropine delivered via a patch was binding to the cell receptors to which acetylcholine usually binds. "It would be advantageous if there was a method of delivering atropine so that it was active in the body for several hours."

"Although preliminary, the studies suggest that an atropine patch could be an effective and user-friendly alternative to atropine injections."

Tiny sea creatures found in mine rocks

Biological Science
Tiny fossils of primitive sea algae about 500 million years old have been discovered by a senior technical officer from Monash School of Biological Sciences, in an area of Victoria where fossils are extremely rare.

Mr Ian Stewart said his find of microfossils, known as acritarchs, in rock samples from the Stawell Gold Mines, 250 km west of Melbourne, was significant because no fossils had previously been found in rocks in the area.

"The research helps confirm fossil dating of the rocks, which is important for mapping gold-bearing deposits and predicting where new deposits may be found," Mr Stewart said.

Acritarchs, so small they cannot be seen by the naked eye, are thought to be the remains of microscopic marine algae that lived in warm tropical and sub-tropical seas.

Around the time they were deposited in the rocks at Stawell, the area was part of a volcanic island located near the equator.

"When I first identified these slices of the Stawell rock under the microscope, I had no idea what I would find," said Mr Stewart. "It was exciting to see the acritarchs, because fossils like this hadn't been discovered before in the older rocks in our part of western Victoria."

"The species I found have hollow, spherical bodies with prominent radiating spines. Some show a characteristic split, leading to the theory that acritarchs may have been reproductive structures containing spores that would have created a split when released. So far I've identified five species and hope to find even more after examining further rock samples from the Stawell area."

Mr Stewart had been researching microfossils for many years and is often given rock samples to examine because of his known expertise in the area. He was given the Stawell samples by Dr Rick Squire of Melbourne University's School of Science, who is mapping structural geology at the Stawell Gold Mines.

- Michele Martin

CONTACT: dean.willson@arts.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9903 1238

Tracking time: The discovery of microfossils in rock samples from the Stawell area will help predict where gold may be found.

CONTACT: lan.stewart@scl.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9905 5615

- Penny Fannin
Flexible learning for developmental disability program

**PSYCHIATRY**

Psychiatrists, general practitioners and health workers around the world will soon be able to undertake study in the area of psychiatry of intellectual disability without leaving their workplace. The world-first flexible learning program is a collaborative project between Monash University and King’s College London.

Dr Jenny Torr, who is leading the project, said there was an urgent need to help practising psychiatrists worldwide improve the mental health care of people with intellectual disabilities.

"Mental health problems are more prevalent in people with intellectual disability, but often remain unrecognized and unaddressed, resulting in increased individual suffering, carer burden and costs to the community," she said. "The new program will help us by providing psychiatrists, other medical practitioners and clinical psychologists with flexible professional training in intellectual disability psychiatry. Participants will also benefit from worldwide shared educational expertise as well as professional links to major geographical areas including the UK, Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia."

The World Psychiatric Association has expressed interest in being involved in the development of the program, which is expected to be operational by March 2005. The program is just one of a range of major projects being undertaken by CDDHV, which is leading the flexible learning initiative.

**Third-year student first winner of Indigenous law scholarship**

**FLEXIBLE LEARNING GENIUS**

*By Karen Stichtenoth*

Third-year Monash University law student Ms Jeannette Vaha’akolo is the first recipient of the Arnold Bloch Liebler (ABL) Australian Indigenous Law Student Scholarship.

The ABL scholarship, founded in partnership by Monash University’s Cavan Centre for Human Rights Law and the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies (CAIS), assists an Australian Indigenous person to enter or continue studies at Monash University’s law faculty by covering the costs of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme.

Ms Vaha’akolo, a 34-year-old, mother of two and a member of the Yorta Yorta community, said winning the scholarship was a huge relief and would enable her to finish her law degree.

"I made the decision to study law at Monash a couple of years ago, partly for my own career development but primarily to assist Aboriginals in relation to equal opportunity. I would like to make a real difference for my people," she said.

Ms Vaha’akolo, who is studying full-time, is on leave from her job as co-ordinator of Indigenous Programs at Victoria’s Equal Opportunity Commission until she completes her degree in mid-2005.

"The Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria (CDDHV), in collaboration with the School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine at Monash and St Thomas’ Medical School at King’s College London, is working to develop the program."

The world-first flexible learning program is a collaborative project between Monash University and King’s College London.

Dr Jenny Torr, who is leading the project, said there was an urgent need to help practising psychiatrists worldwide improve the mental health care of people with intellectual disabilities.

"Mental health problems are more prevalent in people with intellectual disability, but often remain unrecognized and unaddressed, resulting in increased individual suffering, carer burden and costs to the community," she said. "The new program will help us by providing psychiatrists, other medical practitioners and clinical psychologists with flexible professional training in intellectual disability psychiatry. Participants will also benefit from worldwide shared educational expertise as well as professional links to major geographical areas including the UK, Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia."

The World Psychiatric Association has expressed interest in being involved in the development of the program, which is expected to be operational by March 2005. The program is just one of a range of major projects being undertaken by CDDHV, which is leading the flexible learning initiative.

**Third-year student first winner of Indigenous law scholarship**

Third-year Monash University law student Ms Jeannette Vaha’akolo is the first recipient of the Arnold Bloch Liebler (ABL) Australian Indigenous Law Student Scholarship.

The ABL scholarship, founded in partnership by Monash University’s Cavan Centre for Human Rights Law and the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies (CAIS), assists an Australian Indigenous person to enter or continue studies at Monash University’s law faculty by covering the costs of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme.

Ms Vaha’akolo, a 34-year-old, mother of two and a member of the Yorta Yorta community, said winning the scholarship was a huge relief and would enable her to finish her law degree.

"I made the decision to study law at Monash a couple of years ago, partly for my own career development but primarily to assist Aboriginals in relation to equal opportunity. I would like to make a real difference for my people," she said.

Ms Vaha’akolo, who is studying full-time, is on leave from her job as co-ordinator of Indigenous Programs at Victoria’s Equal Opportunity Commission until she completes her degree in mid-2005.

Director of the Castan Centre Professor David Kinkela said the ABL scholarship represented an early step in the centre’s long-term goal of improving the availability of legal education not just to Indigenous Australians but also to other groups in the community who have been under-represented in the practice of law.

"The practice of law in general, and human rights law in particular, can only be strengthened by improving the access to legal training of all groups in Australian society and especially Indigenous Australians," Professor Kinkela said.

Professor Lynette Russell, chair of Australian Indigenous studies and director of Monash Aboriginal Programs, described the scholarship as an exciting initiative that combined philanthropic motives and corporate responsibility.

"Arnold Bloch Liebler is to be congratulated on their commitment to social justice and Aboriginal reconciliation. Jeannette Vaha’akolo is someone who epitomises the spirit of the Aboriginal community," she said.

ABL Partner Mr Peter Seddell said the firm was proud to offer the scholarship to Ms Vaha’akolo.

"Ms Vaha’akolo has already made a strong contribution to her people and will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the practice of law in Australia," he said.

**Contact:**

thomas.davies@law.monash.edu.au

**Making a difference:** Ms Jeannette Vaha’akolo, first winner of the ABL Australian Indigenous Law Student Scholarship.

**SCHOOLS**

**Teachers’ seminar**

The Monash Teachers’ Seminar will be held on Thursday 12 June at the Clayton campus. All careers and Year 12 coordinators are welcome to attend this university-wide event. Programs and booking forms will be sent to schools this month. For more information, contact Ms Val Foster on +61 3 9905 4164.

**At Monash Seminar Series open for registration**

The At Monash Seminar Series provides senior secondary students with the opportunity to explore Monash faculties more closely. Year 11 and 12 students will be on hand to provide information at each of the seminars, which are aimed primarily at Year 11 and 12 students.

**Education and Nursing**

Tuesday 22 May, 7.30 pm to 9 pm, Faculty of Arts and Design Lecture Theatre, Caulfield campus.

**Engineering and Information Technology**

Tuesday 27 May, 7.30 pm to 9 pm, Robert Blackwood Concert Hall, Clayton campus.

**Pharmacy and related sciences**

Thursday 22 May, 7.30 pm to 9 pm, Connor Hall, Parkville campus.

**Art and Design**

Monday 26 May, 7.30 pm to 9 pm, Faculty of Art and Design Lecture Theatre, Caulfield campus.

**Business and Economics and Law**

Tuesday 27 May, 7.30 pm to 9 pm, Robert Blackwood Concert Hall, Clayton campus.

Bookings can be made online at www.monash.edu.au or contact the Prospective Students Office on +61 3 9905 4164.

**DO YOU WANT TO ADVERTISE?**

For details on how to advertise in Monash News, call the Media Communications unit on +61 3 9905 9314 or email monashnews@adm.monash.com.au
Rebuilding the trade union – making women count

After an increase in trade union membership for two consecutive years, numbers again began to decline last year, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures. Monash researchers Professor Carla Lipsig-Mumme, Dr Jennifer Curtin and Dr Ingrid Nielsen take a closer look at the figures.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics’ release of annual figures revealing a declining union membership in 2002 after two years of modest increases suggests there are a number of challenges facing the trade union movement in Australia.

In 1988, union density (trade union membership as a proportion of all employees) was 41.6 per cent. The lowest point occurred in 1997–99, when density dropped from 30.3 per cent to 25.7 per cent. From this time on, although density has been slowly in decline, a modest rise in membership numbers was apparent. In 2002, however, recovery seemingly came to a halt – membership dropped by 69,000, density dropped from 24.5 per cent to 23.1 per cent.

Australian decline has been abrupt and radical in comparison with the European Union, Canada and even the US, where the creative hostility to unionism of employers and legislation is notorious.

Behind the Australian statistics is a quieter story – women’s trade union membership. In part-time jobs, which are becoming more common, the unionisation rates of women were lower than those of men, for example, in an 8.6 per cent difference in 1992. And women represent 43 per cent of total union membership. In part-time jobs, which are being created faster than full-time jobs, the unionisation rates of women were on the rise until 2001, with only a modest drop (0.5 per cent) in 2002.

The number of women trade union members is now higher than the number of male union members in the public sector, where the overall unionisation rate is 66.5 per cent. But the picture is uneven: Seven out of 10 Australian jobs are part-time and casual employment. There are the fastest-growing sectors of the economy, and women are in the majority. Second, women’s union membership has proven more resistant to cuts than has men’s, partly because of the nature and type of their employment, but perhaps also because of changes in the culture of trade unionism. The union movement’s experimentation with new forms of recruitment, the flexibility and creativity that potential members see in the unions they encounter, is a far cry from the union and workplace unionism during the Hawke/Keating government two decades earlier. If this is not a feminisation of unionism, it is certainly more hospitable.

Perhaps more alarming for union strategists should be projections about how many new members will have to be organised to maintain overall union density at 23.1 per cent. This means more than 81,000 per year. For male employees, membership will need to increase by about 34,000 per year over the next five years to maintain the current density rate of 24.5 per cent, while for female employees, membership will need to increase by about 28,000 per year over the next five years to maintain the current density rate of 23.5 per cent.

Of course, these projections do not take account of the need to maintain the existing membership base. Thus, both recruitment and retention remain important for the long-term viability of the trade union movement in Australia, and the challenge is considerable.

Professor Carla Lipsig-Mumme is research professor in Monash School of Political and Social Inquiry and director of the university’s Centre for Research on Work and Society in the Global Era (WAGE). Dr Jennifer Curtin lectures in Monash’s School of Political and Social Inquiry and a member of WAGE. Dr Ingrid Nielsen is a research fellow at WAGE.
**Making the punishment fit the corporate crime**

**Review**

**The Prosecution of Corporations**

By Jonathan Clough and Carmel Mulhern

Published by Oxford University Press

RRP: $75

Judges must be given tougher and more varied sentencing powers, if corporate prosecutions are to be effective. This is one of the central conclusions of *The Prosecution of Corporations*, co-written by Mr Jonathan Clough, senior lecturer in law at Monash University, and Ms Carmel Mulhern, general counsel in finance and administration with Telstra.

To illustrate this point, the book cites the case against Eass Australia after the Longford gas explosion in September 1998. The blast killed two workers and cut Victoria’s gas supply for nearly two weeks. Three years later, Eass was found criminally liable for the incident by the Victorian Supreme Court and fined $2 million, a record for a workplace offence in Australia. But the authors point out that the fines pale into insignificance compared with the reported net income of US$18 billion for the year by Eass’s parent company, Exxon Mobil Corp.

In corporate cases, a sentencing judge will often be limited to imposing a fine, the book notes. The authors suggest this situation is unacceptable and that there is an urgent need for sentencing guidelines to be directed specifically at corporate offenders.

One sentencing option is corporate probation, where the court imposes conditions on the company. These conditions may require the company to change its internal processes to help ensure it does not reoffend. They can also be used to ensure the company will repair any damage it has caused. For example, where a company has caused environmental damage, such an order could compel it to take full responsibility for the clean up.

Another possible sanction is an adverse publicity order, where a corporation would be compelled to place advertisements promoting the results of the case against it.

"Companies are quick to seek publicity for their wins," the book notes. "We saw this recently with Cola taking out a series of ads stating it was ‘not guilty’ after the ACCC dropped investigations into alleged breaches of the Trade Practices Act." Mr Clough said. "An adverse publicity order would make sure that the public was made equally aware when a corporation is found guilty of a criminal offence."

The Prosecution of Corporations also addresses the reasons for prosecuting corporations in addition to, or instead of, individual officers of the company.

"In many cases," Mr Clough said, "it is very difficult to isolate one person within a company who could be held criminally responsible. There is often a more general problem with the company’s internal structures."

"In those cases, prosecuting an individual may do nothing to change the nature of the corporation. It may, therefore, be appropriate to prosecute the corporation itself."

The book argues that the law governing corporate prosecutions in Australia is often unclear and calls for greater consistency.

"This is the first book to comprehensively examine the law of prosecuting corporations and sentencing in Australia," Mr Clough said. "While it is primarily aimed at legal practitioners and academics, company officers will also find it helpful in understanding the potential criminal liability of their corporations."

- Richard Ewart

Contact: jonathan.clough@law.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9905 3391

**Gilbert and Sullivan double bill**

Two of Gilbert and Sullivan’s most popular works – HMS Pinafore and Trial by Jury – return to the stage this month in a lavish production presented by the Savoy Company at the Alexander Theatre.

The Alexander Theatre will host five evening performances beginning Wednesday, September 21 and matinees on Friday and Sunday, September 16 and 17. Ms Reilly-Lloyd takes the title role of Josephine in Pinafore, while Mr Clough will play the part of Sir Joseph Porter, First Lord of the Admiralty in Trial by Jury.

A highlight for the evening is the finale of HMS Pinafore when the entire cast appears on stage to sing a medley of Rule Britannia – Karen Stichltenhon

***Show Notes***

What: Gilbert and Sullivan’s HMS Pinafore and Trial by Jury
When: Wednesday, September 16, 17 and 18
Time: 8 pm; matinees Thursday 17 May, 2 pm
Where: Alexander Theatre, Clayton campus

For bookings, contact the Monash Box Office on +61 3 9905 3391
Award-winning ideas in design

Monash University visual communications students have won two of three design awards presented at the 2003 AGIdeas international design conference, held in Melbourne recently.

The conference, hosted by the Melbourne-based Design Foundation, is one of the world's leading design events, attracting more than 2000 young designers from Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Singapore and Argentina.

The awards are intended to help students or professional designers undertake residencies or attend conferences overseas.

Third-year student Ms Jacinta Sullivan won the Fabrica Award to undertake a residency at the magazine's London office with leading graphic designer Terry Jones. Entrants were judged on their artistic response - in either 2D, 3D or multimedia format - to a quote by US designer Tibor Kalman: "Design is two things: invention and styling. There needs to be a lot more of the former and a lot less of the latter."

Ms Sullivan described her winning design as an AS jacket with clear acetate pages and an elaborate gold jacket, enlivened up with a collage of RomanJetts and classical images of beauty and excess. "The book plays on the idea of surface and superficiality, with its empty page, devoid of text except for one wry quote by Oscar Wilde: 'I can resist anything except temptation.'"

Ms Sayumya said her design, which won both the 2D and 3D awards, uses 'an image of discarded newspapers. It's up to the viewer how we perceive events through the media,' he said.

Miniature worlds reflect a parallel universe

Tasmanian-based artist, curator and writer Mr Shaun Wilson takes the audience into a miniature parallel universe in his provocative Nextworlds exhibition, on show at Monash's Switchback Gallery in Gippsland until 22 May.

In the exhibition, Mr Wilson invites us to glimpse a stop parallel universe depicting contrasting Western urban and war-ravaged landscapes.

The reality work in the exhibition, 'Thunderdrome of Miniatures,' is a recreation of a civic war zone. It reflects the current political situation in Iraq and, in particular, makes reference to 'Thunder Road,' the phrase used by the US army to describe its advance into Baghdad.

Using a small video camera, viewers are able to interact with the work by producing their own commentary and images of the miniature war, which are projected on to a television monitor.

For his Western upland scenes, Mr Wilson has constructed a series of wall-based dioramas representing western notions of peace: harmony and tranquillity.

Through the two parallel worlds, the viewer experiences the role of social and political commentary and people's perceptions of such constructs.

"The exhibition aims to invite the viewer to engage with this artwork - it is an exploration of the way in which we perceive events through the media," he said.

No image can sell a thousand newspapers. It's up to the viewer how they interpret an image and what propaganda or visual tools they wish to believe. -  Nicola Vance

Simple elegance: Ms Evendrani Sayumya uses pencil shavings to portray ballet dancers in her award winning work.

In Brief

Postgraduate students' research exhibitions

The Faculty Gallery, in Monash's Faculty of Art and Design at Caulfield campus, is holding three consecutive research exhibitions by postgraduate students during May.

Ms Green Houseywell, a PhD candidate in fine art, set the ball rolling with her solo exhibition of mixed media, multimedia, soundscape and sound work, Colours of the Kitchen Cabinet.

A group exhibition of new works by masters students with links to various Australian art and design institutions will be on display until 17 May. Artists include Andrew Hall, Josie Half, Jenny Kemp and Crocida Collette.

The final exhibition in the trilogy runs from 19 to 24 May and comprises works by current masters students including Megan Campbell, Shirley Cans, Emily McIntosh, Mark Music and one of the faculty's current lecturers in multimedia and digital arts, Matthew Perkins.

Contact the gallery for more details on +61 3 9903 2707.

Lunchtime artist talks at Caulfield

Monash University's Faculty of Art and Design continues its tradition of promoting local and visiting international artists and designers during May.

This year's schedule of informal discussions and visual presentations takes place in the faculty's lecture theatre at Caulfield campus, with lectures commencing at 12.30 pm. Confirmed artists and dates are:

14 May - sculptor and public artist Adrian Mairtra
21 May - visiting UK jeweller Mali Kaha
28 May - Jarrod Rawlins, Uplands Gallery, and Michael Graves, WestSpace

For bookings or a calendar of events, contact the Faculty of Art and Design on +61 3 9903 2882.

Concerto concert

The Monash Chamber Orchestra will perform selected works from the concerto repertoire on 15 and 17 May. The concerts, conducted by Dr. David Rawlin, feature some of Monash's most talented students from the School of Music Arts and Conservatorium.

Performances will be held in the Otto Auditorium, Performing Arts Centre, at Clayton campus at 8 pm on Thursday 15 May and at 5 pm on Saturday 17 May.

For information and bookings, contact +61 3 9903 1111.

World of art in the spotlight

founder-filmmaker Ms Fiona McKlash will present her artistic take on the art world this month as part of the Le Club Series joined by Monash School of Library, Visual and Performance Studies.

Ms McKlash has been a research fellow in the university's visual culture department for the past three years, during which she used a computerised video editing suite at Monash to create her work, Museum Emotions.

She will present her film at 12 noon on 22 May in Room 7506, Menzies building, Clayton campus.

Museum Emotions, which was funded by the Australian Council, will be be screened in LA, New York and Europe this year.
COUNTING THE REAL COST OF HEROIN

Heroin addiction costs Victoria $244 million a year, with an estimated 27,000 Victorians dependent on the drug, a report by researchers at Monash Centre for Health Program Evaluation and the Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre has found.

Senior lecturer Mr Anthony Harris and research fellow Ms Elena Gospodarevskaya authored the March 2003 report with researchers from the Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre.

Commissioned by the Premier's Drug Prevention Council, the report, titled "What's the Deal? - The Cost of Heroin Use in Victoria: Investigated heroin use costs related to health care and social services, social security, justice, the prison system and lost tax revenue.

Costs associated with crime were estimated at $132 million per annum; social security benefits at $244 million, with estimates of $160 million for lost tax revenue, $105 million for health care and social services and $74 million for prison costs.

Mr Harris said estimates were based on the experiences of 282 Victorian heroin users - totals per person ranged from about $20,000 to around $46,000 per year.

"Heroin costs Victoria more than any other illegal drug," Mr Harris said. "The report illustrates how high the social price is for the community and provides an incentive to do something to prevent dependence.

"Effective prevention programs are likely to represent value for money, but current investment in drug prevention is less than one per cent of the estimated community costs of heroin use.

"There is a social imperative to do something about dependence on heroin and other drugs, but the case studies helped to highlight these aspects," Mr Harris said.

"Capital of the report are available via www.druginfo.adf.org.au.

-Michele Martin

NEWS

Published monthly by the Media Communications Unit of Marketing and Public Affairs, Monash University.

Editorial inquiries: +61 3 9387 4314
Fax +61 3 9387 1297 or email manunews@adm.monash.edu.au

For the latest in research and opinion from Monash, visit www.monash.edu.au/news/

Drinking the myth about techno music and road rage

PSYCHOLOGY

A commonly held belief that the type of music that drivers listen to while driving may influence their behaviour on the roads is about to prove to be a myth, according to a Monash University academic.

Dr Nikki Rickard, from the Department of Psychology, says her study on driving anger, based on answers from self-reporting questionnaire initially pointed to fans of techno and rock music having significantly higher levels of driving anger than those who listened to classical music.

But further analysis, which took other factors known to predict driving anger into account, suggested that a link with music type was likely to be spurious, with a driver's tendency towards anger and anxiety as well as stress levels being considerably more powerful predictors.

However, Dr Rickard said it was not possible to be conclusive without further research. "The next step is to monitor people as they drive, using the simulator at the Monash University Accident Research Centre," she said.

"By measuring heart rate and arousal levels against different types of music, the speed of the music and the volume, it should be possible to establish definitively if music is a causal factor in driver anger.

"If there is a link between music and driver behaviour, people need to know about it because road rage is such a significant social problem these days."

An application to fund a further study is currently being considered by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau. If the grant is approved, Dr Rickard plans to work with a research group of about 200 people - a mix of younger and older drivers, experienced and inexperienced.

The new research would involve asking a sample group of drivers to listen to certain types of music they wouldn't normally listen to while they were on the road.

"Far from adding to driver stress, there is some evidence that a person listening to their music of choice, even techno or heavy metal, can experience some degree of stress release, but we need more research to confirm this," Dr Rickard said.

CONTACT:
Nikki.Rickard@med.monash.edu.au Phone: +61 3 9903 2223

Surgical simulator to set new standards

MEDICINE

A virtual reality surgical simulator developed a Monash University could have a dramatic impact on surgical standards and skill levels in hospitals around the world.

The simulator will enable surgeons to master keyhole techniques which are being sought for an increasing number of operations such as hysterectomies, tumour removal and the removal of ectopic pregnancies - procedures that previously required major surgical intervention.

Professor David Healy, head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology based at the Monash Medical Centre, Contact for Biomedical Engineering deputy Associate Professor Ian Brown, PhD student Ms Zorana Mayooran and masters student Mr Cory Seligman have filed a patent to protect key aspects of the device.

The device, which has been nicknamed 'Kylie' because, says Professor Healy, "it is small, elegant, hi-tech and made in Melbourne", will allow surgeons to 'operate' on a 3D patient and work at a computer screen on real time. "They will actually be able to feel the weight and texture of tissue and organs as they operate," he said.

Professor Brown said 'Kylie' was a great example of what Monash researchers could do when they worked together. "The simulator/ward would not have been possible without the combined efforts of the engineering and medical faculties," he said.

"Now that we have a demonstration model and intellectual property protection for the simulator, we can press ahead in the search for 'venture capital'."

The simulator's inventors are seeking the financial backing to further develop the device at an estimated cost of $1 million to $1.5 million. They believe this could prove to be a tiny figure when matched against the $60 million currently paid annually in Victoria alone to nose claimants against public hospitals.

"Kylie' could help plug those claims dramatically by producing surgeons who are better prepared and less likely to make mistakes," Professor Healy said. "Up until now, it hasn't been possible to set a specialist surgeons competency before they go into the operating theatre, but with the simulator we will be able to credential surgeons throughout their careers.

The current version simulates operations that proceed without complications, but the hope is that future models will test surgeons' skills when things go wrong.

"If you make the comparison with an aircraft simulator at the moment 'Kylie' allows us to practice landing at Melbourne airport on a calm, sunny day. Eventually we want to be able to practice in a heavy storm," Professor Healy said.

The project has the support of Monash Commercial Business development manager Dr David Lyerz who said the group had visited the teams in helping to identify ways to protect the intellectual property embodied in 'Kylie' and to identify potential investors and commercial possibilities.

- Richard Ewart

CONTACT:
Ian.Brown@med.monash.edu.au Phone: +61 3 9905 1984 or david.healy@med.monash.edu.au Phone: +61 3 93871000

Contact: michele.martin@med.monash.edu.au Phone: +61 3 9387 4417

THE MONASH NEWS

March 2003

Michele Martin