Work on the Australian Synchrotron at Monash University will begin almost immediately following the State Government’s announcement last month that construction company Thiess would design and construct the building to house the machine. Vice-chancellor Professor Peter Darvall said the announcement signalled the start of an exciting period in Monash’s history. “The Australian Synchrotron at Monash will be an essential tool for scientists who want to be at the leading edge of research into drug development, information technology, biotechnology and mineral processing,” Professor Darvall said. The synchrotron will be built on Monash land at the corner of Blackburn and Wellington roads, Clayton.

New drug may slash health cost

**MEDICINE**

The huge cost of treating people with arthritis and other inflammatory diseases such as multiple sclerosis could be cut significantly by the development of a new drug at Monash University.

Monash researchers are working on a compound that blocks the negative effects of a protein that is fundamental to the development of inflammatory disease. Macrophage Migration Inhibitory Factor (MIF) activates cells to release harmful products into sites of inflammation and may also promote the growth and accumulation of harmful cells.

Associate Professor Eric Morand, from the Department of Medicine at Monash Medical Centre, and Dr Magdy Iskander, from the Department of Medicinal Chemistry at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, have developed molecules that work as potent inhibitors of MIF.

Dr Morand said drugs targeting MIF have the potential to replace steroids that are widely used to treat inflammatory diseases, but they can have serious side effects or are so expensive that they are not available in Australia.

“Our technology has the potential to make the first small molecule cytokine antagonist, which could replace these treatments with a convenient tablet,” Dr Morand said.

He and Dr Iskander have established a company, Cortical Pty Ltd, to commercialise their research.

Dr Iskander said work was continuing on designing compounds that would block MIF effectively.

“We are conducting optimisations to increase the potency of these compounds and make them into potential drugs,” he said. “We expect it will take 18 months to two years to optimise the molecules, then we will go to the pre-clinical phases and then clinical trials.”

Cortical has already developed drugs that successfully bind to and disable MIF in animals.

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Costello opens chambers
Federal Transport Mr Peter Costello officially opened the Monash University Law Chambers, located in the heart of Melbourne, on 21 July. The Treasurer is accompanied by Monash vice-chancellor Professor Peter Durrall (left) and Monash deputy vice-chancellor and Law dean Professor Stephen Parker. The chambers, at 6/2 Burke Street, provide law postgraduates with computer laboratories, modern conference rooms and meeting spaces, as well as online access to all Monash libraries.

Science Centre recognised for sustainable architecture

Professor Graham Currie. Photo: Melissa Di Ciero

Science Centre, located on the university's Clayton campus, has won the 2003 Sustainable Architecture Award presented secondly by the Victorian chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA). The $3.9 million building was designed by Williams Boag Architects and opened to the public last July. Professor Currie said, "An engaging building, this is an exciting space, and the staff are all learning about living in it." Other environmental considerations include internal zoning, passive heat gain, automatic louvres for ventilation, systems.

Monash first in food industry business management program

Australia's first business management program for executives in the food industry will begin at Monash next year. The postgraduate program is designed to boost the leadership, direction and future survival of Australia's food industry, which generates $26 billion to export annually. The Monash Food Business Management program is an initiative of the $102 million National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS), a Federal Government project that aims to increase export growth, innovation, skills, quality and profitability in the Australian food industry. Monash was selected following a competitive tender process.

Monash News, August 2003

IN BRIEF

Understanding Islam
Monash University Malaysia has signed an agreement with the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia to collaborate on future activities, which will promote the understanding of Islam.

Ismail bin Jain, Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Saji Abdul Hamid said the co-sponsoring of understanding (MUI) was the first fund signed with an English-speaking and non-Islamic university. "It will pave the way for the two institutions to carry out combined research, exchange scholars and documents and co-organise joint seminars and conferences," he said.

Monash University Malaysia Professor Bob Bigrigg said the MUI would also help Monash draw on the international Islamic banking and finance.

The first collaborative activity will be the International Islamic Banking Conference, to be held at the Monash Prato Centre in Italy on 9 and 10 October.

Award reveal

A rino of Monash art and design graduates won two prestigious Beauty Industry Association awards presented in Melbourne last week. Mathias Poem, James Tien and Allen Yang were recognised in two categories for their creation of an innovative CD-ROM aimed at promoting careers in the beauty industry to students in years 10 to 12.

The award-winning work was the result of a joint initiative between the Victorian Government Departments of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development and Monash's Department of Multimedia and Digital Arts in the Art and Design Faculty.
Preserving Colombia’s disappearing turtles

BIOSCIENCE
South America is the setting for a research project by a Monash University PhD student who is studying two of the world's most endangered turtle species.

Dr Richard Ewart, a PhD researcher in Monash School of Biological Sciences, is investigating the genetics, population structure and feeding ecology of olive ridley turtles and black turtles.

He has been interested in the turtles since 1988 when he was director of the San Agustin National Park.

He was concerned that domestic dogs were attacking the creatures and that local communities were over-harvesting them.

"Olive ridleys and black turtles have been drastically depleted over the years," Mr Amorocho said. "They have been harvested for meat, their eggs have been collected for food, and they have been trapped by shrimp trawlers."

He said nothing was known of turtles' feeding ecology, which although under threat, are still found in significant numbers in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Colombia.

Mr Amorocho, who will conduct field surveys in the turtle nesting and feeding grounds from now until December 2006, said nothing was known of turtles' feeding ecology, which although under threat, are still found in significant numbers in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Colombia.

"We want to know if they belong to the turtle populations that nest in the Galapagos Islands or the north of Mexico, or if they are a different population," he said.

The research will also genetically assign the turtles nesting in the north in Utria National Park and in the south in San Agustin National Park to separate populations.

"It's important for management purposes that we establish the facts," he said. "If the populations are different and the northern colony is on the verge of being wiped out, we won't be able to use the olive ridleys from the south to replenish the area."

"We also want to find out what they eat on the open sea and whether the young turtles have a different diet to adults. By learning more about these aspects, regional and national recovery plans can be based on the most available, accurate and reliable scientific data."

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Monash student is Young Victorian of the Year

A Monash student with a passion for helping the poor has been named 2003 Young Victorian of the Year.

First-year business student Mr Hugh Evans was awarded the honour in recognition of his public and community service on behalf of some of the world's most disadvantaged people.

In 2001, Mr Evans spent seven months working in the impoverished Embo Valley in South Africa. During that time, he managed the construction of a sports field and a community library, and worked in an AIDS orphanage where he established a child sponsorship program through World Vision.

He has just returned from South Africa, where he attended the official opening of the community facility he helped to establish. Mr Evans has dedicated his young life to helping the poorest people in the world and since he experienced the squalor of the Manila slums in the Philippines during a World Vision study tour as a 14-year-old schoolboy.

He has since established Australia's first youth-run aid organisation, the Oaktree Foundation, whose mission is to empower developing communities through education.

- Robyn Ann

Young Victorian of the Year: Mr Hugh Evans pictured with children of South Africa's Embo Valley.

New scholarships aim to attract high achievers

**EDUCATION**

Monash University is aiming to attract Australia's highest achieving Year 12 students under a new scholarship scheme for 2004.

Ten Scholarships for Excellence will be offered to students who achieve the highest scores in their Year 12 studies.

The scholarships are open to students in Year 12 in Australia this year and will cover their HECS debt and provide an extra $6000 each year up to a maximum of five years of study.

A separate Indigenous Scholarship for Excellence will be offered to the highest achieving student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

As a member of the Group of Eight leading universities in Australia, Monash has a reputation for groundbreaking teaching and research excellence, with specialties in hundreds of areas of study. The Group of Eight undertakes 70 per cent of all Australian research.

The Monash scholarships will allow students to study any course across the university, provided they meet the normal entry criteria for that course, she said.

"They offer far more options for the successful students because they allow them to study any course across the university, provided they meet the normal entry criteria for that course," she said.

Monash pride itself on preparing its students to generate ideas and support bursaries for disadvantaged students.

To apply, students can submit an application online at www.adm.monash.edu.au/scholarships or email scholars@adm.monash.edu.au.

- Dizzea Squires

**SCOLARS**

Information night for behavioural neuroscience

Behavioural neuroscience is an exciting new biomedical science exploring the biological basis of behaviour and cognition.

Monash is holding an information night for anyone interested in finding out more about the Bachelor of Behavioural Neuroscience degree and career opportunities for graduates.

It will take place at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 27 August in lecture theatre 163, building 94, Clayton campus. For further information, please contact Ms Charlotte Holden on (03) 9905 9196.

**NEWS**

Engineering Information Evening

Year 10, 11 and 12 students are invited to attend a program that focuses on engineering courses at Monash and the professional and career opportunities available.

Speakers will include Engineering Dean Professor Tam Sibun, a current student and a graduate of the Faculty.

Students will be able to talk with departmental advice about course options, prerequisites, engineering double and employment opportunities. The evening will include a tour of the faculty teaching, laboratory and research facilities.

It will take place at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 3 September in lecture theatre CL1, building 65, Clayton campus.

For further information, visit the Engineering web page at www.eng.monash.edu.au and follow the links under 'News and Events'.

**Faculty of Business and Economics brochures**

The Faculty of Business and Economics brochures kit is now available, and has been posted to all schools. To receive additional copies of the kit or any of the brochures, contact Ms Charlotte Holden on (03) 9905 2958, or email charlotte.holden@BusEcon.monash.edu.au.

**International Application Day**

International Application Day is for international students in Australia who want to know more about studying at Monash.

Course experts will be on hand to discuss undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree opportunities, as well as Monash pathways programs, Monash College and Monash University English Language Centre.

Specific information for international students about entry requirements, fees, entry requirements, student services and application procedures will be available. Students who bring their completed applications will receive immediate assessment and can apply on the day to avoid the $50 application fee.

International Application Day will be held this year on Saturday 30 August between 10 am and 3 pm at Monash University International Centre, Clayton campus.

For more information, contact (03) 9905 8546 or visit www.monash.edu/international.
Taking care of rural business

If Australia’s small to medium-sized businesses are to prosper, they need to take advantage of new technology. But without the right advice and guidance, firms risk wasting time and money, says Ms Cate Reilly, manager of the Monash Regional Centre for Information and Communications Technology (MRCICT).

“... many SMEs have ‘spent’ on rather than ‘invested’ in technology.”

Technology transfer is the process of transferring solutions into a company (based on one case on academic research and development) that will benefit its business.

These solutions could range from something as simple as raising awareness of new technology to developing a sophisticated new industrial process.

The new strategy, known as the Technology Transfer Gateway, has provided a whole range of fresh research opportunities for MRCICT and the wider Gippsland campus. It also offers academics from different disciplines the chance to engage directly with local industry and SMEs in particular.

As a result of securing funding from the Commonwealth’s Innovative Access - AusIndustry Program (an initiative of Backing Australia’s Ability) and the Faculty of Information Technology, we are now able to provide this much-needed technology transfer service to SMEs.

The mantra for the project is “technology for business.”
ABORIGINALS

Rights by Bain Attwood Published by Allen & Unwin RRP: $39.95

In this groundbreaking work, Bain Attwood clarifies the century-long struggle for rights for Aborigines in Australia. He tracks the ever-shifting perceptions of race and history and how they impacted on the ideals and goals of campaigners for rights for Indigenous people. He looks at prominent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal campaigners and what motivated their involvement in key incidents and movements.

Drawing on oral and documentary sources, the author investigates how the two groups found enough common ground to fight together for justice and equality for Aboriginal people.

Bain Attwood is associate professor of history at Monash University.

Turtle Nest

By Chandani Lokuge Published by Penguin RRP: $22.95

Arani returns to Sri Lanka, the land of her birth, with a burning desire to discover the truth about her mother, the wild and exotic beach girl, Mala. Happy for the first time in her life, Arani believes she has found the place where she truly belongs. But as the tragic story of Mala's life unfolds, Arani finds that belonging means making her own relentless claims.

Turtle Nest is a compelling, disturbing novel by the acclaimed author of The Moon Smiled.

Chandani Lokuge lectures in the School of Literary, Visual and Performance Studies in the Faculty of Arts at Monash University.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

A Changing Society

By David Holmes, Kate Hughes and Roberta Julian

Published by Pearson RRP: $45.95

This book offers the concepts of sociology as tools to better understand and manage a rapidly changing society. The authors provide crucial historical perspectives and introduce sociological theories within the context of contemporary debates to encourage students to think critically about the changes and challenges that characterise society at the beginning of the 21st century.

Australian Sociology also provides an interactive companion website designed specifically for the text useful for both lecturers and students.

David Holmes lectures in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University. Kate Hughes is a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Technology and Roberta Julian is a senior lecturer at the University of Tasmania.

POSTSCRIPT

Written in 1880, Nick Leyshon is regarded as Danish writer Jens Peter Jacobsen’s masterpiece. Australian-born Henry Handel Richardson was the first to translate the novel into English in 1896 and now, for the first time in almost a century, the book has been reprinted as part of the Monash University Performing Arts series.

Clive Probyn, who is professor of English at Monash University, and John Groen and directed by Kate Gaul, on 11 September, with three evening performances scheduled.

The exhibition will feature a series of war drawings by Paul Gough, as well as work by other British artists including Akiko Usami and James Jayes.

Since her appointment in 2000, the Artist/Designer in Residence Program has attracted respected artists and designers around the world.

Participants stay on campus at the Faculty of Design and Media Arts apartments in Caulfield and spend their time in the studio teaching, researching and creating.

The program has been designed to complement and support study programs established by the facility at the Monash Centers in Prato and London.

Karen Stichtenoth

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Dark secrets make for wicked entertainment

A darkly ironic tale about suspect friendships and survival of the fittest is the latest play to feature in the 2003 Monash University Performing Arts season.

Wicked Sisters, written by award-winning Sydney playwright Nina De Genn, directed by Kate Gaul, begins its run at the Alexander Theatre on 11 September, with three evening performances scheduled.

The relationship between the woman and Alice are splintered in mystery. While going to the ghostly hill of Alice's study, buried restlessly suddenly roars, making them believe that he is moving, they think he is just a trick, but it is too late. This story of deceptions and illusions turns into a reunion of old friends.

The play stars Diane Craig as Lydia, Lorna Lockier as Merida, Bell Peppers as Judith and Judith Roter as Hortense.

Note: For bookings, contact the Monash Box Office on +61 3 9905 1111.
Australia's fertility rate: babies born per woman

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**More help needed on leaving state care**

Federal laws should be created to protect young people leaving state care, according to a Monash University academic.

Dr Phillip Mendes, from the Department of Social Work, said the government needed to provide a framework to ensure suitable assistance was available across Australia.

In his project 'Graduating from the child welfare system: a critical examination of support services for young people leaving state care', Dr Mendes is investigating the levels of such support in both Victoria and New South Wales.

In the mid-1990s, both major political parties in Victoria pledged to provide state-wide support for young people who leave foster care, but in the end, only the Coalition made good on the promise.

However, Dr Mendes said a lot more needed to be done.

"In coming years, it is likely that far more young people will leave state care, and we need to ensure they are supported in some way," he said.

Dr Mendes' 12-month project, which commenced earlier this year, was funded by a $60,000 grant from Monash's Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. It aims to document relevant legislation and support programs for care leavers and identify the role of various groups in helping or hindering policies.

"NSW is clearly well ahead in helping care leavers," Dr Mendes said.

"While there is an enormous amount of concern, enthusiasm and energy for such programs across government departments in Victoria, there is little government support." 

Young people who have suffered physical or sexual abuse or neglect often have nowhere else to turn. They are placed in state care, but care orders can be cut off at any time, even though the young person may still be in secondary school.

Nearly 600 young people, aged 14 to 18, leave the care system in Victoria every year. Many of them end up homeless.

Dr Mendes said he believed all young people in care should remain there until they are at least 18 and should receive support until they are 21, as is the case in NSW.

"In Victoria, the state is essentially saying that it can do a better job than some parents in looking after young people, but then when the child is 16, 17 or 18 they are out the door and we won't offer any further help," he said.

"This means they are forming relationships and completing their final years of education, usually with no help from young people to have continuing support."

Dr Mendes said research showed the programs had helped foster care leavers for young people by providing housing and financial support.

**New insights into the childless choice**

A falling fertility rate equals an ageing population equals a shrinking tax base — hence the Federal Government's concern at Australia's 1.73 per cent birthrate. Monash University researchers are investigating the reasons behind the decline. ALISON HARDING reports.

Many young people are choosing not to marry or to have children, because of their negative perceptions of their parent's relationships, according to a new study by Monash University team leader Associate Professor Naomi White.

"Young people are aware of the high incidence of divorce, she said. "Many have experienced it in their own families, and they have a view about the permanence of relationships, which makes them rather wary."

While media reports have focused on women's reluctance to commit to marriage and having children, Dr White found that men had the same reservations.

The young men interviewed in the study had "low or indifferent" views toward the high rate of divorce and were so less inclined to want children.

"This was the case even when both parents had jobs and were working full-time," she said.

"The young women felt that if they were to have children, they would be burdened with domestic and child care responsibilities and would have to sacrifice their careers."

"Their concerns were verified by the men's expectation that child care would primarily be the partner's responsibility."

But Dr White said those were not the only factors influencing the women.

Income, employment and educational opportunities and the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles was another factor, she said.

"While married women can maintain a close relationship with their children and go on to achieve higher income levels, the opposite appears true for women," she said.

"Women's wage-earning capacity is much less affected in the short term by delaying marriage and in the long term by delaying childbirth."

— Diane Squires

**Why many young people are rejecting marriage**

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**Australia's declining fertility rate is generally blamed on middle-class professional women refusing to take time out from their financially rewarding careers.**

But a study by a team from the School of Social and Political Inquiry at Monash University has come up with some surprising revelations, revealing that paid maternity leave and policy initiatives such as the Federal Government's 'baby bonus' have limited impact on the decision to have children.

The study also revealed that the ability of friends and family to help with child care was another factor in the decision-making process. One woman, for example, said the proximity of family was equal to her decision to have a third child.

"Most of the women we interviewed were not content with the high rate of divorce is associated with perceptions from both sides about the possibility of having a stable, two-parent family."

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The voices of poverty

HISTORY

Older people in Australia's most impoverished regions have told Monash University historian Dr Mark Peel they fear the country is slipping back into a depression like that experienced during the 1930s.

Dr Peel, senior lecturer in the School of History, spoke to as many as 400 people in three of Australia’s most disadvantaged areas - Broadmeadows in Victoria, Inala in Queensland and Mount Druitt in New South Wales - about their experiences of living in poverty.

His findings have been documented in the book The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty, published this month by Cambridge University Press.

Dr Peel said many of those he interviewed felt the insecurity and poverty they experienced as children was on the way back.

"Their children and grandchildren are looking into the future and not seeing jobs," he said "When someone is made redundant at 40 and not finding new employment."

But he said it was society's perceived acceptance of poverty that gave people most cause for concern.

"According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3.8 million people do not have enough work - that means almost one-fifth of adult Australians want more work."

"We are not talking about people wanting to buy luxuries; we are talking about people trying to afford necessities. And yet unemployment and poverty is being talked about as if people with training but would not be able to find work."

Dr Peel says poverty is about the kind of lives people are forced to live because of a lack of income - the aspirations they are forced to forgo and the insecurity they face.

"Most people know that feeling of spending too much in December and being anxious in January. But they are not talking about the gas bill when you don't blow out your overdraft."

"Imagine living with that every day one more time a year when you put off paying the gas bill so you don't blow out your overdraft."

"People are not thinking about people who are anxious in January, they are thinking about how they are going to pay the gas bill."

"If we choose to do nothing, we are not building a society that protects people from plunging into poverty "when and if they are unlucky, or weak, or incapacitated"."

"We are all vulnerable, and one of the kind things we can do is to protect each other from the consequences of inequality and poverty. If we choose to do nothing, our children and grandchildren will have to live with this decision."

- Diane Squires

Photographic memories win national prize

FINE ARTS

Monash fine arts student Mr Domenico Cozzolino was presented with the national Biennial Kodak CCP Documentary Photography Award for 2003/2004 at the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne recently.

The judges for Australia's most prestigious survey of contemporary documentary photography singled out his series, Arcadia 1994, saying it showed how documentary photography could be used to combine the historical with the personal.

The series is a digital reworking of shots taken by Mr Cozzolino as a teenager, which show his parents as first-generation migrants. "As my parents get older, this series is a way for me to remember and honour them," he said.

Mr Cozzolino, who has pursued a career in design over the past 20 years, is currently studying for a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in the Faculty of Art and Design at Monash.

His winning series of photos will tour to Sydney, regional Victoria and New South Wales next year.

Domenico Cozzolino's reflections on his award-winning photographs:

"By throwing the shots even more out of focus than they were I found a way of anonymising them so I am more interested in exploring the concept of memory and how photography affects memory."

"Many people are depicted as nostalgic for the 'good old days'. But the images evoke for me mainly negative feelings of regression and a longing for the 'good old days'."

"I am also very interested in the concept of focus than they were I found a way of documental photography could be used to combine the historical with the personal."

"I am also very interested in how photography affects memory."