Duo fears for DNA privacy

Two Monash law academics are calling for urgent state government action following the disclosure that a private Melbourne company holds the DNA records of millions of Victorians.

Professor Graeme Hodge and senior lecturer Dr Jonathan Clough from the Law faculty have expressed alarm at a recent newspaper report regarding Genetic Health Services Victoria (GHSV), where blood samples taken from Victorian newborns since 1970 were part of the material.

They believe a joint parliamentary committee should be set up to investigate the ownership of all records from state-contracted work, as well as the ethical and legal aspects of using the blood sample cards.

Every baby born in hospital in Australia undergoes a routine heel prick test, in which a small amount of blood is streaked onto an absorbent card and then tested for a range of conditions. In Victoria, this testing has been conducted by GHSV under government contract since 1976.

According to the newspaper report, the Parkville company believes it owns the cards and controls access to them. Professor Hodge, director of Monash's Centre for the Study of Law, says the government should clarify its position on ownership of records held by GHSV.

"I would like to know what privacy safeguards are in place regarding the files at GHSV," he said. "I understand that files can be accessed by police under an agreement with GHSV, and the state coroner has used samples to confirm the identity of bodies. But what would stop the company providing access to its files to insurance companies, or to someone pursuing a paternity case?"

Dr Clough said medical technology appeared to have outstripped the contractual relationship between the government and the company.

"When they started testing all Victorian newborns 34 years ago, the concept of accessing DNA was not on the horizon," he said. "Now I believe it is vital that the state government reviews the ownership and control of the file cards and ensures they are subject to all the proper safeguards."

Professor Hodge said it would be a tragedy if parents contemplated refusing blood testing of their newborns because of concerns over inadequate ethical and legal safeguards.

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Fired up over electrical cables

A material that changes from a plastic to a ceramic, jointly developed by a team of scientists including Monash researchers, is being used to protect electrical cables from fire.

The 'ceramifiable polymer' is an insulating material that behaves as a plastic at normal temperatures. But at high temperatures, such as those experienced during a fire, it changes into a hard ceramic that protects wiring and enables electrical systems to continue functioning.

Dr Yi-Bing Cheng and Dr Don Rodrigo, from Monash's School of Physics and Materials Engineering, were part of the material development team of researchers from Monash, RMIT, the University of New South Wales, CSIRO, the Defence Science Technology Organisation and Olex Cables.

The team, brought together under the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Polymers, were recently presented with a CRC Award for Excellence in Innovation by Federal Science Minister Mr Peter McGeever.

In conventional electrical cables, the plastic insulating sheath surrounding the copper conductors breaks down under conditions of extreme heat, causing the cable to short and its associated electrical systems to shuts down. But the protective properties of ceramifiable polymers mean that electrical devices such as sliding doors, elevators and computer and emergency equipment can continue to operate during a fire.

Dr Cheng and Dr Rodrigo were involved in developing the ceramic material that is blended with the plastic.

Olex's range of Pyrolex Ceramifiable fire performance electric cables made using this new material was launched onto the marketplace in July last year and already millions of dollars worth of cables have been sold.

An independent company, Ceram Polymeric, has established a range of other products made from ceramifiable polymers.

Professor Hodge said it would be tragic if parents contemplated refusing blood testing of their newborns because of concerns over inadequate ethical and legal safeguards.

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Monash athletes bound for Athens

Six Monash students will be part of Australia's team at the Olympic Games in Athens this month.

The students are Lauren Hewitt (athletics), Patrick Murphy (swimming), Trevor Smoker (boxing), Daniel Tremor (tennis) and Andrew Collett (judo).

Mr Trenton, who also coaches the Monash swimming team, won a silver medal at the 2000 Olympic Games. Mr Collett will be competing in his second Olympics, while it will be Mr Hewitt's third.

Earlier this year, new Olympian Mr Murphy (pavement) won the men's 200m backstroke in the seventh fastest time recorded in Australia. Also this year, Mr Zalcberg won his first international table tennis title, taking gold in the men's doubles at the Oceania Championships in New Zealand.

Mr Brooks is one of only three Victorians in Australia's Olympic hockey squad.

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From the vice-chancellor's desk

A monthly column by the vice-chancellor of Monash University, Professor Richard Larkins

At the recent Council meeting, a report on the progress achieved and future directions for Monash’s South African campus that I commissioned from an external consultant was received, and my recommendations based on my own experience, as well as on the report, were adopted.

Despite the selective comments in the media, the external consultant’s report was overwhelmingly positive. He highlighted the achievements that had been quite spectacular, and that the campus had the potential to be a “jewel in the crown for Monash”. He had made very specific recommendations about improving the efficiency of the campus and for increasing student flows and attracting external funding support for more of the students. His judgements indicated that the campus was likely to break even by 2007 or 2008.

I was very satisfied with his comments. Having come from outside the university, and having heard many negative comments about the progress of the campus, I was struck by how surprised and very impressed by what has been achieved. I was delighted to feel a campus buzzing with excitement and with outstanding students from all over Africa and very committed and enthusiastic staff. The first graduation ceremony last year and the subsequent dinner were very moving so that it will be self-sustaining and to recover the benefits to Monash and the country.

I do not believe that we should be returning great biotechnology, and Monash University’s flight from the Melbourne campus to Clayton turned out to be a “wonderful event”, attended by around 500 music scholars and musicians from around the world.

A world of music at Monash

The Monash World of Music Organisation was one of the high lights at the opening of the 2004 Symposium of the International Musological Society (SIMS) at Robert Blackwood Concert Hall, Clayton campus, on Sunday 13 July. SIMS, jointly sponsored by Monash and the Victoria College of the Arts, is held every five years in different world cities and was last in Australia in 1988, in Melbourne. SIMS 2004 co-chair Professor Margaret Karstens said it had been a “wonderful event”, attended by around 500 music scholars and musicians from around the world.

Monash leads in research grants

Monash University researchers have so far obtained the largest slice of funding of any Australian research institution in this year’s National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Program Grants.

University scientists were awarded almost $27 million for five major programmes exploiting allergic disorders such as asthma, chronic heart failure, male fertility, prostate cancer and pregnancy, malaria and inflammatory diseases. The grants were announced by federal Minister for Health Mr Tony Abbott in Perth last month.

Deputy vice-chancellor (research) Professor Edwin Cornish said the grants reflected the university’s diverse strengths in medical research.

The grants, for research that will last about three years, will allow $7.73 million to investigate the processes that affect the fertility of men; $6.65 million to develop new approaches to controlling malaria, led by Professor Ross Coppel from the Department of Microbiology; $5.96 million to develop new strategies for preventing and treating chronic heart failure, led by Professor Henry Krum from the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine; $5.31 million to understand the molecular and cellular mechanisms controlling airway inflammation in allergic disorders such as asthma, led by Professor Royce O’Hehir from the Department of Medicine.

David de Kretser, director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, said $5.2 million to investigate the molecular and cellular events responsible for infertility in the kidneys, joints and blood vessels that lead to diseases such as arthritis and atherosclerosis, led by Professor Stephen Holdsworth, head of the Department of Medicine at Monash Medical Centre.

Briefly

Monash IVF pioneer wins international recognition

Monash in-vitro fertilization pioneer Professor Alan Trounson has been awarded the 2004 Burrell Foundation Award in Reproductive Health for his outstanding contribution to the field of assisted reproductive technologies.

Professor Trounson, director of the Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories and recipient of the Burrell Foundation’s award, was also awarded his degree by the University of London in the UK in 1986.

Monash’s Research grants Projects for the round were worth $7.25 million, made up of $4.24 million from the Australian Research Council, $1.73 million from industry and $3.97 million in industry partner contributions.

From robots to antibiotics: Monash research linked

Monash has topped Victorian universities in Round 2 of the Australian Research Council’s 2004 Linkage Projects.

Monash’s ARC Linkage Projects for the round were worth $7.25 million, made up of $4.24 million from the Australian Research Council, $1.73 million from industry and $3.97 million in industry partner contributions.

This was on top of its $12.75 million attracted in the first round of ARC Linkage Projects funding last year to help creative projects. Monash has received $20 million for ARC Linkage Projects funding for this year.

New head for arts and sciences in Malaysia

Plant biotechnology expert Professor Pau Eng Chong has been appointed inaugural head of the School of Arts and Science and chair of biotechnology at the university’s Malaysia campus.

The appointment will see Professor Pau play a major role in developing research projects relevant to Malaysia, in association with staff at Monash.

Professor Pau said that because the fields of sciences and arts were so broad, the campus would focus on niche areas in which it excelled.

He singled out his biotechnology as an area where Monash Malaysia could complement the efforts of the people of Malaysia to attract investment and a share of the market in emerging technologies.

"Malaysia is committed to pursuing biotechnology, and Monash University Malaysia can complement that effort through its engagement in cutting-edge research and by producing high-quality graduates with world-class capabilities," Professor Pau said.

Vale Professor Xiaokai Yang

Professor Xiaokai Yang, who held a personal chair in Monash University’s Department of Economics, passed away on July 7, aged 53.

Professor Yang was known for his groundbreaking research on China’s market reforms. Professor Yang’s research was extraordinary. Born in China, he was a teenager when the cultural revolution broke out in 1966. While still in high school, he published a political tract challenging Chairman Mao’s one-way flight from Melbourne Monash. Signed up for the communist regime. As a result, he was arrested in 1968.

After his release, he published two influential monographs on economics and studied for his PhD at the University of British Columbia in Canada. He received his PhD in 1998. He subsequently accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University.

Professor Yang came to Monash as a lecturer in 1982 and was appointed to a personal chair in 1999.

He was awarded a personal chair in 2000.

Monash News, August 2004

www.greenfleet.com.au

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Keeping foreign doctors in the country

Dr Han said that although professional satisfaction was generally considered a priority in terms of the doctors remaining in rural areas, social integration had been largely ignored. He said the majority of overseas-trained doctors in Australia in recent years had been from non-English speaking backgrounds and non-Western backgrounds. Many of those interviewed said it was important for them to maintain their cultural and religious values and their relationships to their respective ethnic communities, whether in the city or the country.

"Those we spoke with felt it was important to be able to continue contact with their ethnic group, as this was how they maintained their cultural beliefs," he said.

The study found that while doctors appreciated housing being provided to them and articles in local papers announcing their arrival, they were more concerned with the attitudes of their neighbours.

Indifferent attitudes, such as neighbours ignoring new doctors and their families, caused a high degree of anxiety and discomfort. But Dr Han said that while the overseas-trained doctors did not expect excessive support from the community, they appreciated Australia's culture of welcoming and embracing differences.

"Not surprisingly, studies show that newly arrived migrants tend to experience much less loneliness and isolation when offered friendship and guidance by local residents and generally better integrate into the new community in a short span of time," he said.

"Professional satisfaction and reward also have an impact on their stay, but how they and their families integrate into the community is crucial." - Diane Squires

Cancer study to focus on orchardists

Monash University researchers are investigating why more than 70 per cent of child poisoning cases involve medications - including those that should be in child-resistant packaging.

The Barriers to Child Poisoning Prevention project, which started in July 2004, is also examining why children in regional areas are at higher risk of poisoning than their city contemporaries.

"We are particularly keen to establish why children in rural areas remain a prime cause of hospitalisation in children under five." - Professor Ozanne-Smith

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Fact finding: From left, Dr Malcolm Sim, PhD student Mr Ewan MacFarlane and Dr Geza Banke aim to compare rates of cancer in the study group with rates in the general population. Photo: Greg Ford

Child poisoning cases scrutinised

Monash University researchers are investigating why more than 70 per cent of child poisoning cases involve medications - including those that should be in child-resistant packaging.

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"Although deaths are now rare, poisoning still remains a prime cause of hospitalisation in children under five." - Professor Ozanne-Smith

Child poisoning danger: Household medications a risk factor.

Photo: Greg Ford

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Child poisoning cases scrutinised
Sweet music exhibition

An exhibition showcasing the diversity of music collections at Monash University is on show at the Sir Louis Matheson Library at the university's Clayton campus.

The Music at Monash exhibition features scores (manuscript and published), sound recordings, images, instruments, books, pamphlets and programs from the university library's Music and Multimedia and Rare Books collections, and from the Monash Music Archives located within the School of Music - Conservatorium. More than 60 items are on display.

Among the highlights is the gamelan Digul instrument crafted by Indonesian musician and political activist Pontjapangrawit during his internment at the notorious Dutch East Indies prison camp at Tanah merah in Upper Digul (in Irian Jaya, West Papua New Guinea) between 1927 and 1932.

Pontjapangrawit made the gamelan Digul and 18 other instruments from materials found in the prison camp such as saucepans, pails, and wooden crates. The instrument was transported to Australia in the 1940s and is now housed in Monash's Sumarran Music Archive.

The earliest piece on display is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Dictionnaire de Musique - a reference book of music definitions and explanations of relationships in music published in Paris in 1768.

Other exhibits include items connected with Melbourne-born composer and pianist Percy Grainger and the E. W. Cole Book Arcade, as well as Indian musical instruments sent to Australia by Indian musician S. M. Tagore for the 1886-81 Colonial Exhibition in Melbourne.

Music and Multimedia librarian Ms Georgina Bins said the exhibition highlighted the multidimensional nature of music.

"Music at Monash exposes materials normally housed in closed access storage and archive boxes and provides a medium for alerting people to the richness and depth of our collections," she said.

Show notes

When: Until 26 September
Where: Matheson Library, Monash University, Clayton Campus
Who: For information, contact Ms Georgina Bins on +61 3 9905 5054 or visit www.lib.monash.edu.au.

Centre studies farm accidents

Accident research

The Monash University Accident Research Centre is investigating serious farm machinery accidents to gather information about their major causes and ultimately improve farm worker safety.

The two-year project, managed by mechanical engineer Mr Wayne Baker, is funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and is linked to a similar study conducted in the Canadian grain belt.

Since earlier this year, seriously injured farmers and farm workers seeking treatment in one of 14 Victorian hospitals have been questioned by research staff about their accidents and alerted to the study. Where farm workers have been willing to be involved, Monash researchers have visited the farm to inspect the machinery.

"Operating farm machinery has historically been one of the most dangerous occupations," Mr Baker said. "Serious accidents don't only affect the farm worker, but also their family and sometimes the viability of the farm. This project is looking at machinery operation and design to determine the most common causes of accidents."

Monash researchers are also contacting farmers not involved in accidents for permission to assess machinery which might be similar to that involved in the accidents. This machinery is being used as an experimental control. Mr Baker hopes to investigate 40 accident cases and 80 control cases during 2004 and 2005.

The research project has the support of former chief executive officer of the Australian Football League Mr Wayne Jackson, who was lucky to survive serious injuries when he fell from a trailer while transporting hay at his South Australian property in 2001.

Mr Jackson, who broke eight of his ribs and suffered a collapsed lung, said it was a frightening experience, and it had reminded him of the potential dangers of farm work. He encouraged other farmers to take part in the study.

"For a moment, I really thought this was it - then I realised my head was clear and I started moving my legs," he said. "I spent a couple of days in intensive care and was told that had I been a smoker, I probably wouldn't have survived the trauma."

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Science course, career information evening

Wednesday 8 September
7.30 pm lecture theatre E7, building 63 Clayton campus

Prospective students are invited to attend an Engineering faculty information evening, covering engineering professions, career opportunities and courses available at Monash; Speakers will be from faculty and Associate Professor Tim Still, a current student, and a grandstand of the faculty.

Students will be able to talk with departmental advisors about course contents, prerequisites, double degrees and employment opportunities. Also included in the program is a tour through key teaching, laboratory and research facilities.

Seats are limited. For further information, visit www.eng.monash.edu.au and follow the 'Information evening for prospective undergraduate students' link under 'Spotlight.'
Two cultures, two laws, no justice

A conversation with two young Aboriginal women was the starting point for my book that investigates Aboriginal family violence.

Both women told me they would not tolerate violence from an Aboriginal man in an urban setting, but that they would do so if they were living a traditional lifestyle - that this was expected and it would be part of their life under customary law. If they could not agree to be subject to this violence, then they could not live in that community.

These two women were strong, intelligent women, but they did not accept that they could live without violence within an Aboriginal community.

Of course, non-Indigenous women experience violence too, and the law does not always protect them as well as we would like. But why would Aboriginal women - especially educated women - accept violence and abuse as their lot?

I think part of the answer is that traditionally there has been quite a lot of inherent violence towards Aboriginal women within Aboriginal society. A lot of that violence is now attributed to the impact of European culture on Aboriginal culture. That has been a significant factor, but it is not the only explanation.

Traditional Aboriginal culture is very legalistic, very strict, with very strong laws. If people do the wrong thing within an Aboriginal community, they can be exiled. Women can be beaten for a transgression, or even subjected to what is called "sacred rape" as a punishment.

But Aboriginal women have never had reciprocal rights under this system - do violence, it seems, is all one way.

Our European judicial system, particularly in the past, has supported very strict paternalistic Aboriginal culture and its rules.

I think the judiciary today remains very sympathetic to, and respectful of, Aboriginal culture. Some judges have been reluctant to convict Aboriginals because they have felt they should not interfere in their ways.

Traditional Aboriginal culture, in which women are still precluded from speaking about sexual matters in mixed company, means they feel extremely uncomfortable giving evidence in court in cases of alleged sexual assault.

You can have male judges, male lawyers and male Aboriginal defendants all lined up against Aboriginal women. The result, in court, can be one patriarchal system talking to another.

As well, in recent times Aboriginal culture has received more recognition in relation to land rights, particularly through the Mabo case in which the High Court, in its 1992 judgment, rejected the legal position of Terra Nullius and upheld native land title.

This has made society and the courts more conscious of Indigenous land rights and cultural rights. But there is a paradox here, in that the legal system still often puts the rights of traditional Aboriginal culture (with its inherent violence towards Aboriginal women) above the universal human right of those very women to live free from violence.

A fundamental problem is that many Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals have competing views about which set of human rights should prevail.

I believe the basic human right to live free of violence overrides Indigenous rights.

Ms Lewis O'Donoghue, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission chair from 1990 to 1996, was one of the first people to publicise endemic violence towards Indigenous women. She has commented that Aboriginal men cannot avoid responsibility by claiming they are victims themselves of white rule.

In the Hyllus Mali lecture at La Trobe University in 2001, she said that violence had now become an issue beyond the confines of the Aboriginal community and that whatever the wounds of a devastated past, "simply accusing violence on the grounds that the perpetrator is a victim too is not on".

There is a pyramidal structure in our society with white men above white women who are then above black men, but at the bottom of the heap are Aboriginal women and children.

We need refuges for Aboriginal women who have suffered violence so they can break the cycle. This requires financial support from government. Aboriginal women's councils should be given money and be in charge of spending that money, separate from the men. I think heavier penalties for Aboriginal men who are violent toward women will also help to effect.

Aboriginal women are heroes; they carry their communities. They are strong - they have to be. They have an important and separate role in traditional culture, but ultimately it is one that is secondary to men's power. Now they need to be seen as equal.

Mrs Joan Kimm is a PhD student in the Faculty of Law. Her book, A Fatal Conjunction, Two Laws and Two Cultures, published by Federation Press, is out now.

Why do Aboriginal women in Australia experience such high levels of violence in their own communities? And why has the Australian legal system failed to punish their attackers? Monash PhD student Mrs Joan Kimm argues that laws, policy and practice in Australia place too much emphasis on Indigenous culture and too little on the rights of battered Aboriginal women.
Helping Abused Children and their Families

By Chris Trotter
Published by Allen & Unwin
PBP: $39.95

Child protection is one of the most challenging and frustrating fields of practice in human services. In this book, Chris Trotter explores what works and what doesn’t in child protection, providing a useful resource for children’s protection workers and students as well as general readers interested in child welfare.

Drawing on a major study and current international research, the author shows that rates of re-abuse and client and worker satisfaction can be improved with an evidence-based approach to intervention. He also explains his research-based practice model, including role clarification, problem-solving, pro-social modelling and client-worker relationship skills and uses case studies to show how the model can be used in a range of situations.

Chris Trotter is an associate professor in the Department of Social Work at Monash University.

Practical Legal Skills

Second Edition
By Ross Hyams, Susan Campbell and Adrian Evans
Published by Oxford University Press
PBP: $39.95

This updated second edition of Practical Legal Skills provides a guide to key legal skills such as interviewing, advising, negotiating and mediating, letter writing and drafting and advocacy. The authors have more than 30 years’ collective experience teaching such skills.

Aimed at students and practising lawyers, the book contains a series of exercises that teaches practical skills by simulating real legal situations.

It also focuses on the ethics of legal practice, highlights the professional duties of lawyers and discusses the ethical decisions they often have to make.

Information on advocacy and negotiation skills is included, with an emphasis on commercially focused exercises and examples.

Ross Hyams, Susan Campbell and Adrian Evans all lecture in law at Monash University and practise as solicitors.

The Green State

Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty

By Robyn Eckernser
Published by Massachusetts Institute of Technology
PBP: $46.95

This book explores what might be required to create a green democratic state rather than the classical liberal democratic state. It seeks to connect the moral and practical concerns of the environmental movement with contemporary theories about the state, democracy and justice.

The author says the book reflects her attempts "to reach beyond the horizons of existing environmental governance, using current institutions of governance as a point of departure".

Getting against the grain of much current thinking, she argues that the state is still the pre-eminent political institution for addressing environmental problems.

Eckernser has long been inspired by critical theory and in this book has attempted to provide a green perspective. She discusses what would be needed to create a distinctly green democratic state, including ecological citizenship and more enlightened environmental governance.

Robyn Eckernser is a former lecturer in environmental ethics and politics in Monash’s School of Political and Social Inquiry. She lectures in the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne.

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

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The Arts/Books

Australia’s sporting image on display

With the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens this month, a timely exhibition looking at the process behind designing identities for two of the world’s largest sporting events — the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games — is on display at Monash University’s Caulfield campus.

The Design Game exhibition at the Arts and Design Faculty Gallery shows the vast scope and scale of these design projects — from the signage in the stadium to the event tickets and programs, uniforms and barley-collectibles.

Exhibition highlights include the Olympic torch designed by Blue Sky Design that was inspired by the Sydney Opera House and the boomnetig, and Sydney 2000 Barbie collectables that combine ‘Barbie pink’ with the Olympics’ visual identity and reproduce the emblem, to scale, on Barbie’s sporting outfit.

The exhibition also displays sketches and development work for the 2000 Olympics, much of which was not pursued but formed the basis of the final legal look.

Computer-generated images that show how the Commonwealth Games design team envisaged the ‘look’ of the Games and how this might appear throughout Melbourne in March 2006 are also on show.

Exhibition curator Ms Georgia Callfit said the exhibition, which took three months to produce, provided an opportunity to delve into the designers’ world.

“The Design Game explores the challenges of visually communicating an Australian ethos within a global, and multiethnic, branded event,” Ms Callfit said. “The exhibition reveals how the designers almost need the stamina and determination of athletes when working on these vast projects.”

“While putting together the exhibition, I was able to work closely with designers and gain an insight into the creative processes required to design for international sporting events such as these. In the case of the Sydney Olympics, some 800 concepts were considered before two were selected as the most suitable. The Sydney Olympic design worked spanned around 10 years, so to maintain energy with the project and to consistently remain faithful to the visual identity was an amazing feat.”

“How designers go about conceiving a single logo that reflects the ambitious aspirations of such events, and has the world as its audience, is probably the ultimate creative challenge.”

Authors: Bianca Durrant or +61 3 9903 2082

Designs on Sweden

Two innovative home appliance designs created by Monash University industrial design honours students have been selected for a major exhibition in Stockholm, Sweden.

The designs will be displayed at the Electrolux Design Center, which features the work of industrial designers from around the world. They were developed in 2005 as part of a major project supported by Electrolux and the Australian government, which saw six student designers participate, including a cook top as well at air-conditioning, outdoor kitchen and refrigeration units.

The project was led by Associate Professor Arthur de Bono, head of design at Monash’s Caulfield campus, senior lecturer in design Dr Jon Allen and Electrolux’s home products design director Mr Lars Eriksson. Designs by students Matt Weichard and Matt Smith will be displayed in Sweden.

The ‘Circa’ barbeque created by Mr Weichard, to enhance the Australian outdoor cooking and entertaining experience, has already attracted considerable interest in both Australia and Sweden.

The compact stainless-steel cooker has barbeque style top versatile stainless-steel grill section — all powered by gas, and an electric fidge in the central segment. The lids over each cook top can be repositioned to form bench tops.

“At students we were given the opportunity to come up with a design that was marketable,” Mr Weichard said.

“This project took the design process a step further than I had ever thought it would. It was an eye-opening experience to see how it all came together, and I was really grateful the Circa was selected to go to Sweden.”

The second item being exhibited in Sweden is a fruit storage and refrigeration unit conceived by Mr Smith. Mr Smith said his ‘Huu Kotinga’ (Mood for fruit harvest) comprising three ornate wall-based made of Australian oak and a ladder to enable access, was designed for people living in high-density inner-city dwellings.

Each basket has a perforated aluminium base that can be removed for cleaning. An air-conditioning unit mounted below the baskets circulates thermodynamically controlled air under the fruit stored within the baskets.

Associate Professor de Bono said the opportunity to collaborate with the world’s largest household company and the support from Electrolux were a welcome development for Monash, and further collaborations with the company were likely to be explored.

The home appliances industry has emerged as an exciting area for industrial design. Our students had the opportunity to explore ideas and concepts that redefined these products into systems,” he said. “The capabilities of these students have now been professionally exhibited with the best work on show than the world’s leading whitegoods companies.”

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Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games computer-generated image showing proposed designs decorating Melbourne landmarks. FutureBrand

Reproduced courtesy of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation.
In 1980, a young woman named Deborah Wardley punched a hole in the glass ceiling when she won the right to be trained as a pilot with Ansett Airlines. Her legal journey had started the year before at the first case to be heard in the Victorian Supreme Court and the High Court but was forced to accept her in the next intake.

Four years later, in 1984, discrimination on the basis of gender was struck another blow when Australia's Sex Discrimination Act was signed into legislation. The Act made it illegal to discriminate against people on the grounds of gender. Ansett challenged the board's finding in the Victorian Supreme Court that Ansett had discriminated against her because she was a woman. Ansett lawyers claimed that 20 years of the Sex Discrimination Act have achieved equality.

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Communications

Email, an indispensable communication tool in the contemporary workplace, is fast becoming an important political weapon in its own right, a Monash research study has found.

The study by Dr Susan Yell, head of communications at the Gippsland School of Humanities, Communications and Social Sciences, has identified a number of "good" and "bad" uses of email, including its growing role as a means of gaining or maintaining power.

Dr Yell interviewed white collar workers aged 30 to 65 from a range of levels and jobs in three organisations - a manufacturing company, a public service department and a university - asking a series of questions about email use and policies.

She then analysed the relationship between organisational policy responses to the problems of uncontrolled email practices such as spam and email "wars," and users' adherence to these policies.

Other employees were more influenced by their own codes of "good" and "bad" email practices, and did not always follow organisational policies. Most interviewees knew their organisation had an email policy, but were not very clear on what it did and did not allow.

"Email has been in widespread use in Australian workplaces for more than a decade, yet its effects on workplace communication are still being debated," Dr Yell said. "My research sought to explore one of the many apparent paradoxes of email - that it is seen and experienced as a space in which unruly communicative behaviour occurs, but also as a highly regulated space."

"I wanted to focus specifically on users' experiences of email in working life in the same room emailing each other to raise concerns common - rather than speaking face to face - to resolving an email war."

Other employees included storing emails that showed the sender in a bad light as future ammunition against them, mailing group emails blaming subordinates for mishaps without all aware of their defence to the whole group, and working send messaging emails to bring about their aims.

"One instance involved a staff member of a group to say he had completed a job, which the interviewer interpreted as 'tag-noting' himself,' Dr Yell said. "Consequently, he replied with a sarcastic email, ceding the group to 'ask what he took so long', in order to 'kick him off his pet' before being told to bear his pet."

"These types of unread email practices form part of routine power struggles within organisations and are not unique to email but merely exploit email's characteristics as a medium."

"The temptation to use email in this way for some appears irresistible, even when they have much to lose and little to gain."

Dr Yell said that despite the negatives, most interviewees were highly enthusiastic about the positive aspects of email.

"Even those who admitted they preferred the phone or face-to-face interaction heaped praise on email in regard to aspects such as the potential for speedy response, in-cost-effectiveness, the ease of sending documents electronically and the opportunity it provided for working from home."

- Michele Martin

Recording our true Indigenous history

Indigenous studies

Victoria's Indigenous history will be documented and archived in a manner determined for the first time by the state's Indigenous communities.

The joint project, between Monash University and the Victorian Government, aims to interview 100 Indigenous people aged 30 to 65 from a range of levels and jobs in three organisations - a manufacturing company, a public service department and a university - asking a series of questions about email use and policies.

She then analysed the relationship between organisational policy responses to the problems of uncontrolled email practices such as spam and email "wars," and users' adherence to these policies.

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Stellar prediction on Saturn's moon

Astronomy

The Cassini-Huygens spacecraft mission to Saturn has confirmed Monash astronomer Dr Andrew Prentice's prediction for the chemical composition and density of Saturn's outermost moon, Phoebe.

Dr Prentice predicted a decade ago that Phoebe's surface would be made up of pure methane ice, with the moon's mass and chemical composition consistent with a distance of 2000 km. Both Saturn and Phoebe are more than one billion kilometres from Earth.

Two weeks later, the Cassini Project, managed by the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, announced the discovery of large-scale deposits of carbon dioxide on Phoebe's surface and a mean density for this historic, battered moon of 1.6 grams per cubic centimetre.

Prior to these discoveries, Dr Prentice, a reader in the School of Mathematical Sciences, had predicted three different chemical compositions and mean densities for Phoebe based on his controversial Laplacian theory of Solar System origin. This theory proposes that when the Sun first formed, it was a huge swirling cloud of gas and dust (the protosolar cloud). When this cloud contracted towards the present Sun, it cast off a concentric family of orbiting gas rings. The planets later condensed from these rings.

It was Dr Prentice's third prediction for Phoebe - that it originated beyond the orbit of Neptune as a "first cousin" of Quaoar - that proved correct. The Kuiper belt is a large ring of icy, primitive objects.

"Three possible compositional models for Phoebe needed to be considered, and it was here exactly where this moon originated," Dr Prentice said. "Unlike Saturn's other main satellites, which all revolve on circular orbits close to the planet and in the same common direction as defined by the planet's own spin, Phoebe is the only one of its orbit is highly eccentric and the moon also goes around the planet in the opposite direction. This suggests that Phoebe is a captured body, rather than being a natural satellite.

Dr Prentice's three predictions for Phoebe's origin - that it condensed at Saturn's distance from the Sun, that it was a left-over planetary building block from Neptune's orbit, or that Phoebe was a "first cousin" of Quaoar - all accounted for the moon's unusual orbit.

But the Cassini spacecraft measurements indicated that the moon contained a substantial quantity of carbon dioxide ice, as well as rock, water ice and graphite. Both the