

CONNECTIONS

ISSUE 18 SUMMER 2012

 **VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

OLYMPIC VIRTUOSO

Australia's international student of the year Garry Kuan loves helping others

SIGNS OF ANOTHER TIME

A wind-blown trail of yellowing papers prompts a journey of historical research

COLLEGES FOR A NEW ERA

VU's sweeping transformation includes replacing all faculties with eight new colleges

EDUCATION WITHOUT BORDERS

VU is a leader in transnational education, with more than 13,000 international students

FROM THE EDITOR

THIS IS A TIME OF GREAT CHANGE FOR THE UNIVERSITY; the most fundamental transformation since it amalgamated with the Western Institute in 1998. An overview of some of those changes is told in the 'Colleges for a New Era' and 'Innovating Curriculum' stories in this issue. The Vice-Chancellor's column, 'Talking Point', focuses on new degree programs being introduced as part of the significant curriculum changes being introduced over the next few years.

Victoria University has one of the most – if not the most – culturally diverse student populations of all Australian universities. This mix of more than 90 nationalities greatly enriches the student experience, and this issue includes a story that gives a little insight into the strength that diversity of background offers.

Two students profiled are great examples of this diversity. Originally from Malaysia, Garry Kuan trained as a violinist at London College of Music before taking up a role as first violinist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Garry (that's him on the cover of this issue) is now completing his PhD in sport psychology. His boundless energy and dedication to helping others lead him to be named Australia's international student of the year for 2012.

Victor Victor was 10 years old when he arrived in Australia from Sudan as a refugee nine years ago. He had never been to school and could barely read, let alone write. His journey since then was rocky and remarkable. This year he was named young Victorian of the Year, and some of you will remember seeing him on the panel of the ABC's Q&A program towards the end of 2012.

This issue also includes a four-page spread on some of the University's inventive and original education programs that are empowering this country's next generation of educators. Other stories range from research to help save the Tasmanian devil to award-winning furniture-making students to student nurses on a study tour of Vietnam – all stories that offer a glimpse of the breadth of activities that make up our University.

PHIL KOFOED
MANAGING EDITOR 

Connections iPad app coming soon

Connections is being published for the iPad. In the New Year you will be able to visit the Apple App store and download the *Connections* app. It will include all the content of the print version and extra photos, plus have the convenience and interactive reading experience that the iPad can offer. iPad and print versions of future issues of *Connections* will be published simultaneously.



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CONTACT US

Phil Kofoed, Managing Editor
+61 3 9919 4956
publications@vu.edu.au
PO Box 14428
Melbourne Vic 8001 Australia
vu.edu.au



COVER PHOTO:
Australia's international
student of the year Garry
Kuan. The London College
of Music-trained concert
violinist is studying towards
his PhD in sports psychology
at Victoria University.

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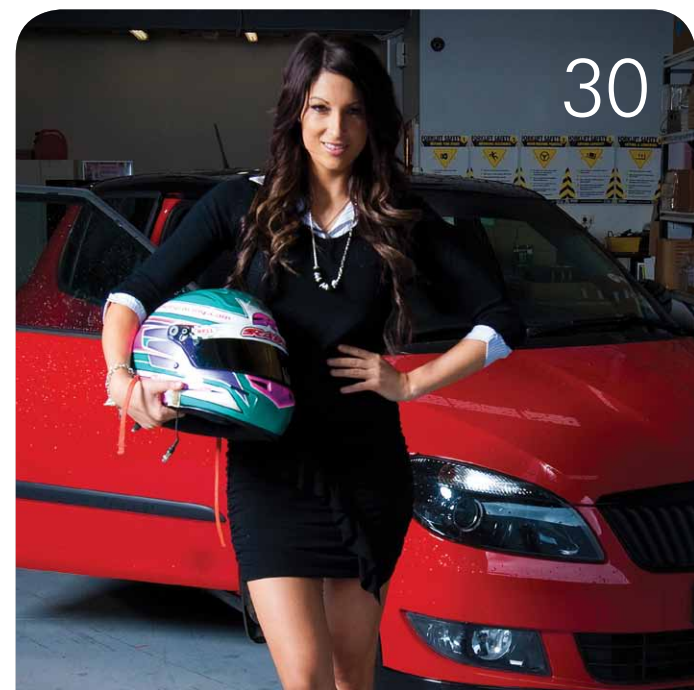
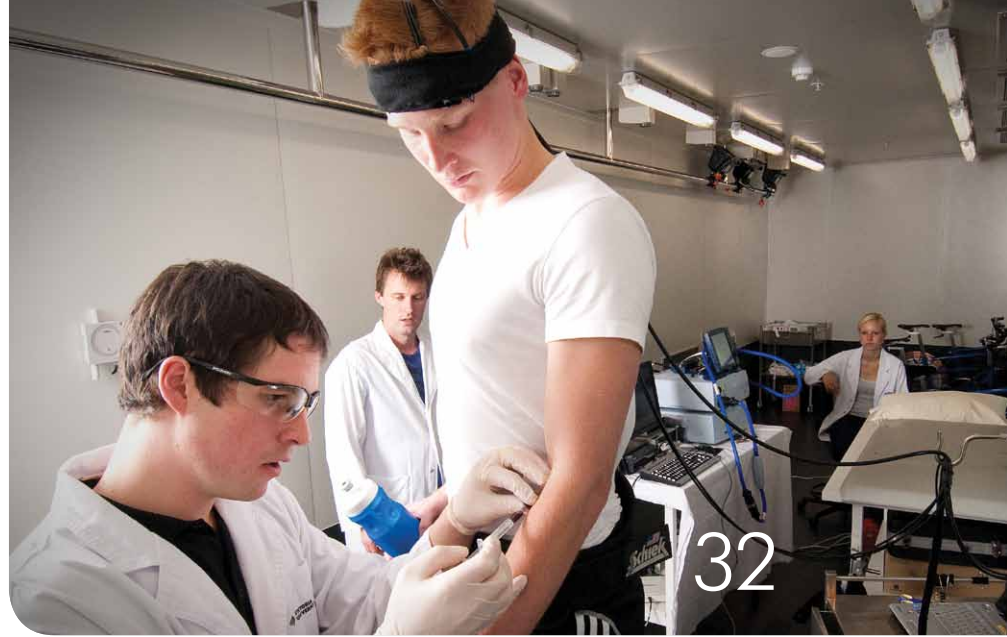
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OLYMPIC VIRTUOSO

WHETHER HE IS OFFERING FREE VIOLIN LESSONS TO STUDENTS OR HELPING FINE-TUNE THE PERFORMANCES OF OLYMPIC ATHLETES, PHD STUDENT GARRY KUAN JUST LOVES TO BE OF SERVICE.

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT

GARRY KUAN IS AS MUCH AT HOME in a lavish concert hall as he is in a sweaty gym.

After moving to Australia from Malaysia four years ago, Kuan became first violinist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra – the culmination of more than 20 years' devotion to the instrument – while completing a PhD at Victoria University in sport psychology.

His current research exploring how music and imagery can improve the athletic performance of

Olympic-level weightlifters and air-pistol shooters has received national and international sport psychology awards – and the research is not even finished.

Kuan presented his thesis to leading sport scientists at a pre-Olympics convention in Glasgow before he headed to London to help prepare several Australian Olympians for their events. His study found that unfamiliar relaxing music accompanied by imagery training can improve performances for both power and fine-motor-skill athletes.

While none of the athletes in his study won medals, two weightlifters came top 10 in their categories, much better than expected.



WINNING WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

KUAN'S DOCTORAL THESIS, titled *Music, Imagery Training and Sport Performance*, examines how athletes can get that extra edge over their competitors through music and imagery. Imagery training, a widely used psychological technique for elite athletes, involves a mental rehearsal of successful results – for example, a diver who trains to visualise a perfect pike before attempting it.

Kuan's study of more than 20 elite shooters and weightlifters adds music to the technique. His initial hypothesis was that 'arousing' music would enhance the performance of athletes in power and endurance sports such as weightlifting, while relaxing music would have the same effect on athletes using fine motor skills, such as shooters.

The athletes in Kuan's study completed 12 imagery sessions accompanied by either relaxing or arousing music with the addition of scripted messages from coaches that helped them imagine perfect performances.

But the results were surprising: relaxing music with imagery training worked best to improve performances, no matter what sport. Kuan's study has important implications for the use of particular types of music with imagery training.

"This research has important implications for sports psychology and sports performance," says Kuan. The Footscray resident also has a passion for community service, and is a regular award recipient for his volunteer work and leadership. Kuan was recently selected as one of 20 international university students to join the City of Melbourne's new EDGE program for international student leaders.

Shortly after that, he was named international student of the year by the Council of International Students Australia (an organisation that represents Australia's half-million overseas students) not only for his academic excellence, but also his contributions to the wider community.

For example, the London College of Music-trained violinist has offered free weekly violin lessons at VU for more than a year. He has taught more than 100 people to play, ranging from pre-schoolers to 80 year olds. He also helped raise money for children's music therapy programs and organised a mission trip with his local church to donate used violins to a refugee camp in Burma.

On top of all that, Kuan has served as a volunteer student representative on several VU committees, including the University's governing Council. In October, he was named as the University's outstanding student alumnus for 2012.

But the quietly spoken Kuan says his greatest source of pride to date is becoming a first-time father earlier this year.

- Kuan describes his sport psychology research on the effects of imagery and music on athletic performance to TAFE sport science student Connor Danaher.

"Having a child is the best accomplishment anyone could ever have," he says.

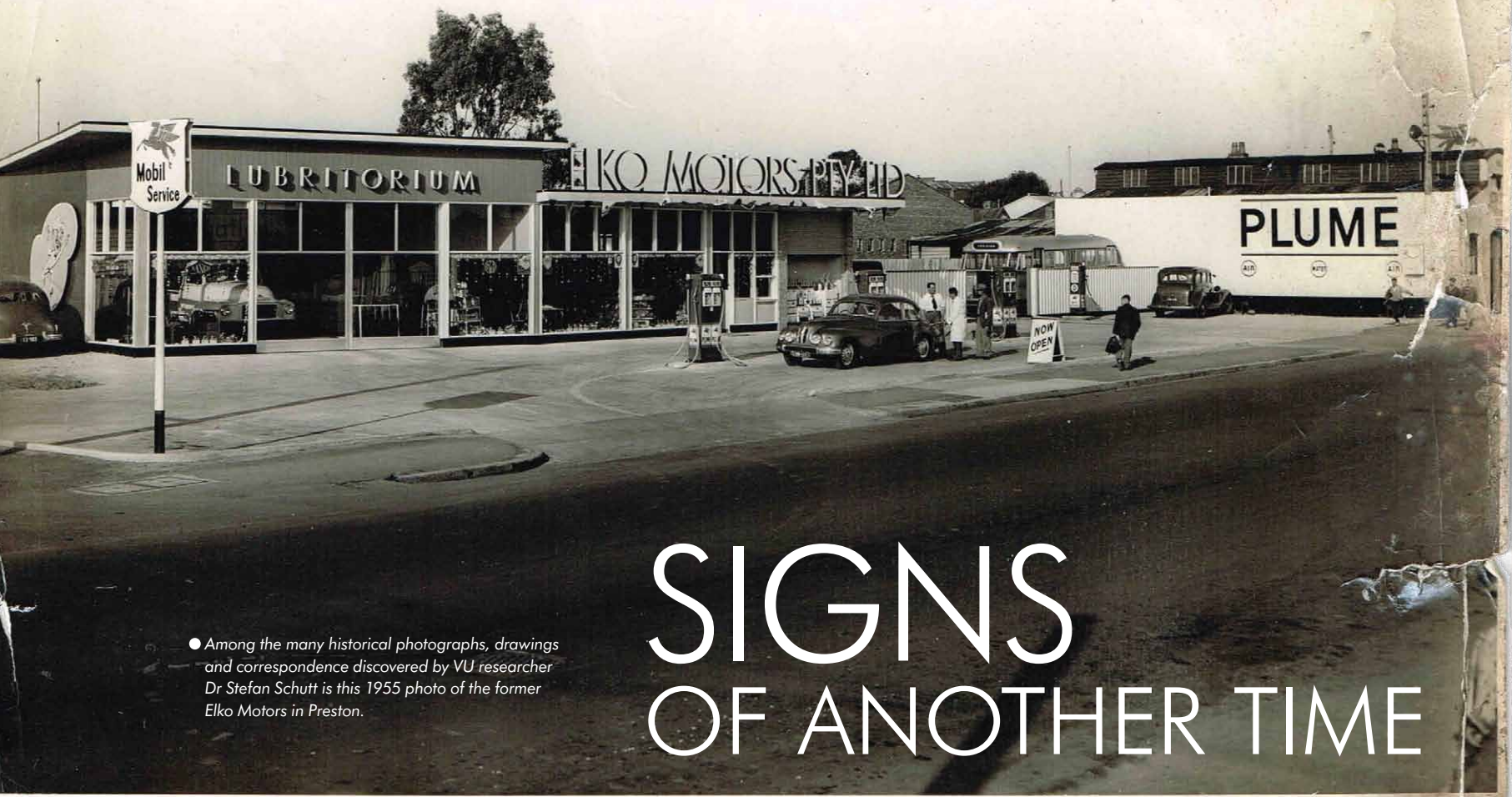
Yet Kuan's role as a promising world-class sport scientist could have ended much differently. In fact, Kuan first intended to arrive in Australia as a musician, rather than a sport researcher, after a successful audition landed him a spot at Sydney University's Conservatorium of Music.

"I got in, but then I realised music was not my life," he says.

Instead, the sports-mad Kuan, who represented Malaysia in karate, rowing and dragon-boat paddling in his school days, chose to continue the sport science studies he started in Malaysia. He picked VU from among several universities in the US and Asia so he could study under sport psychology researcher Professor Tony Morris.

Now a part-time VU lecturer and tutor himself, Kuan continues to add to his seemingly endless whirlwind of accomplishments and community service. While he has taken a step back from his orchestral role because of the increasingly unmanageable practice time, Kuan is a member of the community-run, audition-free Newport Fiddle Orchestra. He is also in the midst of establishing a Christian fellowship church based at VU.

"I like to keep busy and I love meeting and helping people," he says. "Australia has been very good for me." ☺



- Among the many historical photographs, drawings and correspondence discovered by VU researcher Dr Stefan Schutt is this 1955 photo of the former Elko Motors in Preston.

SIGNS OF ANOTHER TIME

A TRAIL OF YELLOWING PAPERS BLOWING DOWN THE STREET LED A VU ACADEMIC ON AN INTRIGUING JOURNEY OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH.

JESSICA JURY INVESTIGATES.

ON A WINDY MELBOURNE DAY in February 2012, Victoria University researcher Dr Stefan Schutt was outside his office on Whitehall Street, Footscray when something compelled him to examine a nondescript sheet of paper that floated to his feet.

The yellowed document was a 60-year-old business invoice. Intrigued, Schutt looked about and saw similar scattered papers. He followed their trail to a demolition site next door. Jumping the fence, he soon discovered a large pile of documents bulldozed into a corner.

"I've always loved exploring industrial sites – I've done a lot of urban archaeology," Schutt says. "But this time I knew I'd stumbled upon something special."

The stash included photographs, sketches, invoices and correspondence from the 1920s to the 1960s, many of them belonging to former South Melbourne sign writing company Lewis & Skinner, which ran from the early 1900s until it closed its doors in the 1960s.

Sign-writing documentation relating to more than 1000 commercial signs around Victoria gives a rare insight into life at the time. The signs range from hand-painted service station murals to milk bar advertisements. There are even painting contracts for the Queen's royal visit in 1954 and the Melbourne Olympics in 1956. Many old painted signs (known as 'ghost signs') can still be seen today on walls and hoardings, and Schutt is now on the hunt for any of Lewis & Skinner's that might have survived.

"Some of the sketches are lovely and rather naïve, and the photos and other documents provide a glimpse into the past," Schutt says. "For instance, the three languages used on the signage for the Zoological Gardens – Italian, German and English – reveal Australia's post-war migration waves. And the increase of service station signage shows a surge in the popularity of motor cars at the same time that the first Holdens rolled off the assembly line."

How the documents found their way from South Melbourne to Footscray and remained hidden for years (within what became a Vietnamese mechanic's premises) before they were discovered by Schutt was, until recently, a mystery. But there are clues to their journey.

The stash also included correspondence books from Australasian Radio Productions (ARP), producers of radio serials during the 'golden era' of radio in the 1940s. Some of the letters were penned by colourful characters from Australia's past, including ARP co-owner and producer Morris West, who would become Australia's most internationally successful author. Both Lewis & Skinner and ARP were later bought out by UK-based advertising company Frank Mason, explaining their coming together. Frank Mason then moved to 2-4 Whitehall Street in 1960, leaving the documents in their former home for 52 years before being unceremoniously turfed out onto the ground.

The ARP correspondence provides another rich source of inquiry and will become the focus of a separate research and narrative exploration by Schutt.

Meanwhile, Schutt is enjoying full access to the State Library of Victoria's historic records, including photographs and information that will help him understand the social history around the Lewis & Skinner documents. His research is funded by a Berry Family Fellowship, which carries a grant of \$12,500 for exploring an aspect of the social history of Melbourne or Victoria, based on the State Library collections. This information will soon

appear on the Lewis & Skinner online archive (www.lewisandskinner.com) created by Schutt and funded by the Telematics Trust.

Schutt gained his PhD in 2011, looking at how people use the internet to construct a sense of identity and belonging by constructing and sharing life stories. Forming a web community around the Lewis & Skinner documents was a natural progression.

RICHARD BERRY: HERO HOARDER

THE BERRY FAMILY

FELLOWSHIP is offered every second year to commemorate the contribution of the Berry family to the cultural life of Melbourne and Victoria. With his wife Fran, Richard Berry ran an antique shop in Melbourne's Flinders Lane from the 1960s until 1993. The shop was described as an Aladdin's cave, with part of its folklore that the Berrys would only sell to customers who appreciated an item as much as they did. Dealers were said to have been refused service because the Berrys sensed they were only after profit. Regular customers included Barry Humphries and Phillip Adams.

Berry was a renowned hoarder, and it is the collections of his ilk that help make historical archival research possible.

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24th March, 1948



DR STEFAN SCHUTT

Senior Educator Research and Learning,
 Work-based Education Research Centre

AS A YOUNG ADULT, the Professional Writing and Literature-qualified Schutt played in rock bands and worked as a copywriter before discovering his love for the internet in the 1990s. He gained his PhD in 2011 in animation and interactive media at RMIT. His specialty is new technology and its use by young people, as well as narrative and the internet.

Schutt runs a range of virtual world, mobile phone and web technology projects for VU, and is co-founder of the Lab – a technology club engaging young people with Asperger's Syndrome. Visit thelab.org.au

Dear Sir/s,

Due to the shortage of tinsplate, and supplies of tinplate, it is difficult to find...

"We might have no control over buildings being torn down and the physical changes around us, but we can still reclaim a sense of place during times of change, and we're using new media to do that," he says.

Schutt's website is built from customised archival software called Omeka, created by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, to archive and exhibit the documents, allowing people to engage with and discuss the history he has uncovered.

In addition to the online community, Schutt is planning an exhibition of the photographs, hand-painted drawings and posters, and plans to send VIP postcard invitations to the residents and business owners who now reside at the addresses shown on the signs.

And so Milk Bar
 391 St George Rd off St Jorges
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7 1/2" x 8 1/4"

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TELEGRAPHIC & CABLE ADDRESS
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Yours faithfully,
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 Secretary.

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 PORK AND BEANS.
 VEGETABLE SOUP.
 JAMS AND JELLIES.
 SALT CRYSTALS.

The intrigue surrounding the cache has provoked Schutt to get up to a bit of mischief.

"I snuck an old sheet for a milk bar under the door of a business that now operates at the same address," he says. "I thought they would get a kick out of a 60-year-old job sheet somehow making its way back to them, especially since they are now a real estate agency."

As reflected through the popularity of films such as *Midnight in Paris*, and online initiatives like the ABC's Looking into the Past, there is a growing public fascination with connecting the past to the present. And it is an interesting twist that Schutt, like others such as the National Trust, (creators of the Lost! iPhone application) are using the latest technology to engage the community to examine historical artifacts.

"There is a melancholy to modern urban life. In its dynamism and restlessness, familiar places and lives are forgotten or destroyed, often without local people having any say in the matter." Schutt says. "I believe that these ghosts of the past invariably return to haunt the present – so it's interesting to see how people use the remnants of the past to reclaim a sense of place in the present."

"Communities are tied to locations, and now that we have all these mobile and networked forms of digital media at our disposal, people are creating their own crowdsourced forms of memory and community through photo sharing sites, blogs and the like."

Join Schutt's online community and take a step back in time with the Lewis & Skinner exhibition: www.lewisandskinner.com



A VIETNAM CHALLENGE

A GROUP OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY NURSING STUDENTS SAW A DIFFERENT SIDE TO VIETNAM DURING A STUDY TOUR TO VISIT SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN.

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT REPORTS.

MANY YOUNG AUSTRALIANS HEAD TO VIETNAM for a cheap holiday of fun, sun and good food. But a group of nursing students from Victoria University's St Albans Campus have seen another side of the country.

As part of their Diploma of Nursing program, 10 students went to Vietnam in September 2012 on a two-week study tour, volunteering at Hanoi's National Paediatric Hospital, the Hoa Binh Peace Village, (an orphanage for disabled victims of Agent Orange) and at Blue Dragon, an organisation that helps rescue trafficked children.

Co-ordinator and tour leader Dr Susanne Kristy says the students were challenged physically, academically and emotionally in a supported environment during their tour.

"My experience on previous study tours has been that students improve significantly in their ability to work in culturally diverse and challenging environments," she says. "For many, this is a life-changing event." Before they left, the students collected donations of

hospital equipment including stethoscopes, torches, scissors and thermometers, as well as toys from op shops that Kristy personally cleaned and repaired.

At the National Paediatric Hospital, the group's first stop, the students worked in four areas: neonatal intensive care, neonatal surgery, oncology and a day program for children with autism.

"It was very hot in the hospital, and sweat just ran down our backs," says student Ashleigh Davies. "It's really sad because the parents are often taking their very sick babies home to die."

The tour also reflected a Victoria University goal to train nurses for employment in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Kristy says.

"On their return, if the students go on to work as nurses in western Melbourne, they will benefit from their Vietnam experience if caring for people from different religious and cultural backgrounds."

Student Kellie McWilliam says seeing a health system in a developing country made her appreciate how lucky she is to live in Australia.

"I realise we take so much for granted in Australia," she says. "I will definitely be looking to use my skills to volunteer overseas again."

The group's study tour is part of a growing number of overseas experiences Victoria University offers its vocational education students. In the past few years, students in areas such as nursing, engineering, children's services and hair and make-up services have completed study tours abroad, with funding support from the federal government.

Victoria University's Diploma of Nursing provides students with qualifications as a Division 2 nurse, able to work in a variety of fields from public or private hospitals to private nursing homes or community care facilities. Graduates receive credit in VU's Bachelor of Nursing or Bachelor of Midwifery after completing their diploma. ∞

- VU nursing student Ashleigh Davies delivers donated items from Australia to children in the cancer ward at Hanoi's National Paediatric Hospital.

Did you know?

In Vietnam today there are about 70,000 children orphaned by AIDS, 25,000 children infected with HIV, and 16,000 children living on the street. (Vietnam Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.)

LEARNING IN STORE

THE LEARNING STORE AT MARIBYRNONG'S HIGHPOINT SHOPPING CENTRE IS PART OF A VICTORIA UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

KAMINI RAJARETHNAM

FORMER FLIGHT ATTENDANT and Niddrie resident Karen Fitzpatrick struggled to get good advice when she was contemplating a career change. While visiting a careers expo in Melbourne's CBD she picked up a brochure and discovered The Learning Store at Highpoint Shopping Centre, just a few kilometres from where she lives.

"I contacted The Learning Store quite early in my decision-making process and they helped me decipher the VTAC (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre) Guide, showed me which courses suited my educational qualifications and ambitions, and the options if I was unsuccessful in being accepted into a degree course straight away," Fitzpatrick said.

Today she is undertaking a Bachelor of Social Work part time at Victoria University's Footscray Nicholson Campus with the aim to secure a job working with families and children.

The Learning Store is part of Victoria University's Community Gateways initiative, established in partnership between VU, Highpoint Shopping Centre and The GPT Group, part owners of Highpoint.

The Community Gateways strategy is overseen by the University's VU College. The College supports educational pathways, and language and learning development for all students across the University as well as co-ordinating the University's Youth Strategy.

Christine Mountford is Strategic Initiative Manager for VU College and has managed the Community Gateways strategy since its inception in 2009. Mountford sees its shopping centre location as an opportunity to engage the community about education in one of the region's iconic community spaces.

"It's unique being located in a shopping centre," says Mountford. "There isn't anything like it anywhere in the country."

Since it became operational in 2010, Community Gateways has helped more than 3000 people with their educational and career ambitions, with more than half accessing The Learning Store's resources for career education and counselling. Those making use of Community Gateways' many programs come from all walks of life – mature-age job seekers wanting a career change, young mothers, the unemployed and disengaged youth.

The Learning Store is a permanent site on Level 4 of the shopping centre and caters for anyone interested in further education and training. Two skilled career counsellors offer free professional career counselling and guidance on course opportunities. It also offers skills recognition referrals and short courses in hospitality and Information Technology. You can also find out about educational activities offered by local community centres and neighbourhood houses in the region.

Workshops are available on career-specific topics such as how to develop a winning job application, how to apply for jobs online and how to improve interview skills.

The Learning Store also offers accredited programs for retailers and staff at Highpoint, including a Certificate II in Retail and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL is an assessment process that

recognises previous learning achieved through study, and life and work experience to give students subject credits for similar learning in courses they wish to study.

Highpoint is undergoing a \$300 million development, and the first stage opened in October 2012 with 2000 new jobs to become available by mid 2013. VU worked with Highpoint's management to help job seekers with their applications, and provide training in food safety, responsible service of alcohol and barista training for staff working at Highpoint's Fresh Food Market.

Community Gateways also includes the VU Kiosk, also located at Highpoint. The Kiosk is a portable booth located on the shopping centre's Level 2. Highly visible to thousands of passing shoppers each day, anyone can register for one of the many programs and short courses run by The Learning Store or make an appointment with a career counsellor. Shoppers can also pick up information about programs and courses offered at VU.

Gateways also includes a state-of-the-art classroom on wheels. Known as the Mobile Gateways Vehicle, it takes programs and classes out into the community by visiting community centres, libraries and festivals across Melbourne's western region. Featuring laptops, the vehicle can be customised to suit any program, from a bricklaying workshop to a science lab.

- The Learning Store at Highpoint Shopping Centre offers short courses, workshops and counselling to anyone interested in further education and training.

GROWING WEST

MELBOURNE'S WEST is a rapidly growing region and the diversity of its workforce is one of its greatest strengths.

The Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations says Melbourne's western and outer western suburbs will lead the way in national job creation over the next five years, with employment increasing by 33,600. This region has the largest working-age population (15–64 years) and employment growth is likely to be dominated by healthcare and social assistance (7000), construction (4500), and professional, scientific and technical services (4300).

"We are providing a service for people who may not otherwise access it," says Mountford. "It's all about building strong relationships and taking education out to the community."

The Learning Store is located at Highpoint Shopping Centre, Professional Suite 1, Level 4. For further information, contact the Learning Store on (03) 9919 4158 or email thelearningstore.highpoint@vu.edu.au





BETTER THE DEVIL WE KNOW

THEIR BITE IS WORSE THAN THEIR BARK. BUT DESPITE THEIR FIERCE REPUTATION, TASMANIAN DEVILS ARE IN TROUBLE. RESEARCH TO HELP SAVE THE CARNIVOROUS MARSUPIAL HAS FOUND THAT WHEN IT COMES TO BRAINS, SIZE DOES MATTER. **JESSICA JURY** REPORTS.

Although it is difficult to determine numbers, scientists estimate that 84 per cent of devils have succumbed to DFTD with more currently carrying the disease. First identified in 1996, DFTD became widespread throughout the population by 2002. In 2009 the Tassie devil was declared endangered. The search for a cure continues, but in the meantime the disease continues to spread throughout the devil population. For the remaining devils it is a doubly downward spiral. The smaller the population, the smaller its genetic diversity, which means when a devil encounters the disease its immune system is virtually incapable of fighting it.

Scientists are now turning to captive breeding to repopulate the species. However, there is concern about the ability of these captive-bred animals to survive once released back into the wild.

Dr Guay and Dr Randall Robinson – from VU’s School of Engineering and Science, and Institute for Sustainability and Innovation – are working with partners Zoos Victoria, the Zoo and Aquarium Association, and Save the Tasmanian Devil Foundation to determine whether the brain size of devils bred in captivity decreases over several generations, thereby limiting their survival instincts in the wild.

Animals bred in captivity with too much human interaction may lose the need to fend for themselves and maintain a wariness of predators. In evolutionary terms, if there is no need to be ‘smart’ to survive, there’s no reason to keep a large brain. In domestic species, it is typical to see a significant decrease in brain size (8 to 34 per cent) compared with their wild ancestors.

“It’s a case of ‘use it or lose it’ when it comes to brain size in these animals,” Guay says. “They need to keep practicing their hunting and awareness of predators. Otherwise, when we release them in the wild, they won’t cope.”

To date, Guay’s research has found that devils’ brain size doesn’t decrease if bred in an enriched captive environment. But he says research showed that with domesticized animal species that don’t need hunt or fend for themselves it is typical to see a decrease in brain size of 8 to 34 per cent when compared with their ancestors.



● Devil facial tumour disease has decimated the species’ population by 84 per cent. (Photos this page courtesy Save the Tasmanian Devil Foundation.)

“THEY MAY NOT BE THE CUDDLIEST OF SPECIES, but devils appeal to a wide range of people and are worth saving for the future,” says Victoria University ecologist Dr Patrick Guay.

In fact, safeguarding the wild temperament of Tasmanian devils (*Sarcophilus harrisi*) is crucial to their survival.

Since European settlement, Tasmanian devils have faced the challenges of road traffic, culling by farmers and habitat loss. But as the media has widely reported over the past few years, what is proving most devastating to the species today is the highly infectious and terminal devil facial tumour disease (DFTD).

DFTD causes tumours to form mostly in and around the mouth, interfering with feeding and eventually leading to death by starvation. Scientists have discovered at least nine strains of the cancer, which means it is evolving, which not only complicates the development of a vaccine but may mean it could spread to related species. DFTD is spread by Tasmanian devils feeding on the same food, fighting and aggressive mating.

● Victoria University ecologist Dr Patrick Guay's research is contributing to saving the Tasmanian devil from extinction.



DEVILS' ADVOCATES – WHY WE LOVE THEM

FARMER'S FRIEND

The world's largest carnivorous marsupial, Tasmanian devils are known as the 'sheep farmer's friend' because they feed on carrion – the decaying flesh of animals – thereby preventing the breeding of maggots and subsequent fly strike in sheep. They are also described as the vacuum cleaners of the forest because they mainly eat animals that are already dead.

OUT-FOXING THE FOX

Devils played an important role in Tasmania 150 years ago, keeping introduced foxes to a minimum and therefore preventing the huge problems that foxes have caused to the ecosystem on the Australian mainland.

SCRATCHING FERAL CATS

Tassie devils help keep feral cat numbers under control, helping protect native birds and animals.

STAMINA TO BURN

Tracking the unique square shaped paw print of the Tassie devil shows they can walk 20 kilometres in a single night.

NO HASSLES

Tasmanian devils may look vicious but they would sooner escape than fight. They do not attack people, although they will defend themselves if attacked or cornered.

EVER THE UNDERDOG

Tassie devils were once widespread across Australia, but the introduction of the dingo 3500 years ago is believed to have caused their extinction on the mainland.

DRAMATIC LOVE LIFE

Tassie devils can be unstoppable in their quest to reproduce. Their mating ritual begins with genial courting but can escalate to violence and domination.

Females will seek a mate that possesses physical strength and dominating characteristics – often attacking males that are too timid. The male will drag the female to his den, where they mate. Once the mating ritual is complete, the exhausted male falls into a deep sleep.

The female – wanting to breed with several males to get the best possible genes for her offspring – will then feign sleep before attempting to sneak out of the den. The male usually catches her and drags her back. But if she is really determined to get away, she will put up a fight.

His research follows trials he previously conducted with the captive-bred stripe-faced dunnart, a small Australian marsupial, in collaboration with the University of Melbourne and Zoos Victoria. The research revealed that when these animals were kept in an enriched environment that allowed them to express normal survival behaviours, they too showed little or no decrease in brain size.

Zoos Victoria is helping Guay by providing funding, co-ordinating devil research undertaken by various institutions and providing the remains of deceased devils from the wild and from Healesville Sanctuary, a major native animal captive habitat 65 kilometres northeast of Melbourne that manages a successful breeding program of more than 90 devils to help conserve the species.

But any long-term future for the Tasmanian devil could lie on a tiny island off the Tasmanian west coast. In August 2012, the Federal Government gave the green light for a release program to be administered at a national park on Maria Island. By the end of 2012, devils will be released on the island under the close but unobtrusive observation of researchers and wildlife experts.

If it proves successful, the next step will be to return the devil back to its Tasmanian homeland, once a cure has been found for the devastating disease or it disappears as mysteriously as it appeared.

To find out more, or to make a donation to help save the Tassie devil, visit www.tassiedevil.com.au

DESIGNS WITH DIFFERENCE

ATTRACTING SOME OF THE STATE'S PREMIUM TALENT TO ITS FURNITURE-MAKING COURSES, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY CONSISTENTLY PRODUCES STATE AND NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING GRADUATES. **JESSICA JURY** REPORTS.

IN A NOISY UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP, dark solid timber is being lovingly sanded and finished; one young man wearing a safety mask meticulously applies the final coat of lacquer to his latest creation with a spray gun.

Victoria University's furniture-making students are putting the final touches to their last creations for the year, hoping they too will achieve the admiration and possibly one of the many awards their classmates are renowned for.

Over the past few years, VU has dominated the Melbourne region of the WorldSkills Australia competition, taking the three top spots in just about all trade categories, including cabinet-making, steelwork, bricklaying, joinery, carpentry and hairdressing. With the high calibre of current students, teachers expect the outcome at this year's WorldSkills competition will be no different.

Furniture-making and finishing teacher Mark Thomson continues to be surprised and inspired by the capabilities of his students.

"I'm blown away sometimes when a kid comes up with an amazing idea and puts it into action," says Thomson. "We really encourage thinking outside the square – if it's a crazy design, that's a good thing. We embrace students with flair."

Instilling in his students the importance of the planning process – from responding to a client's brief and budget to developing technical drawings and working prototypes – they quickly learn to refine some of their crazier ideas.

"Through this design process, they come to understand how to incorporate a wild idea into something that is possible," says Thomson.

VU's furniture-making courses – which include pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, with specialisations in Cabinet-Making, Wood-machining, and Furniture-Finishing – have evolved over the past two years to adapt to the changing needs of industry. For example, cabinet-making students can now broaden their skills through furniture and kitchen manufacturing.

In December 2011, first-year student Matthew Christodoulou (Certificate III in Cabinet Making) won first place in his WorldSkills category.

"At WorldSkills, VU offers each student a mentor to guide them through the tasks at hand and the process involved," says Christodoulou. "The idea of turning an idea into a product and the satisfaction of seeing the final piece is so enjoyable."

In July 2012, VU's Certificate II in Furniture-Making graduate Sam Eyre took out top honours in his category at the Australian Furniture Association Awards with his contemporary dining table.

Made from Victorian Ash, his table was designed specifically for a VU boardroom used by the Vice-Chancellor and senior staff. After winning VU's outstanding pre-apprentice award for furniture-making and finishing, Eyre entered his table in the Victorian Furniture Industry Training Awards (VFITA) and won his division. The table was then exhibited as part of the VFITA stand at Furnitex, Victoria's leading furniture trade show.



SAM EYRE, 28

Graduate of Certificate II Furniture Making and Finishing

Winner: 2012 Australian Furniture Association's Furniture Industry Training Awards

"It's humbling to have such incredible recognition for my work. I feel very lucky to have such strong support and guidance from my teachers.

After four years working as an architect I wanted a career change – a career that would provide me with the flexibility I would like for family living. I feel that designing and making furniture gives me more creative freedom than architecture.

I also really enjoyed the camaraderie with fellow students.



IN DEMAND

IN THE AUSTRALIAN


GOVERNMENT'S Skills Shortage report (December 2011), the strongest growth in manufacturing employment was stated as being in the wood product, furniture and other manufacturing category.

At 28, Eyre is older than the average trade student, but the courses also attract retirees and those seeking a career change. Eyre was previously an architect and wanted the opportunity to be more creative and eventually run his own small business. He sought a study option with flexibility and supportive staff.

"The course allows students to progress at their own pace," says Eyre. "I have never had the opportunity to work so closely with staff before. There was great workplace simulation with students and staff working and strategising together. I plan to create my own furniture business, working out of my backyard shed and making bespoke pieces of furniture and commissioned pieces."

Thomson says the quality of the work produced in these trade courses is a true reflection of the quality of its graduates.

"They take a lot of pride in their work, focusing on detail like colours and textures," he says.

"People may think these guys are 'just chippies', when they're much more than that. They're creative and passionate about producing something really special." 



MATTHEW CHRISTODOULOU, 21

Second-year Certificate III in Cabinet Making (Wood Machining)

Winner: 2012 Regional WorldSkills competition

"I'm a second-year apprentice working full time for KCA Steel Furniture in Sunshine. I enjoy using different tools and machinery, and the alternative tasks needed to construct different types of furniture, as well as applying attention to detail to each piece. My skills allow me to visualise various ways of approaching the problem at hand."

"I entered the regional WorldSkills competition and achieved first place. From there I qualified to represent Melbourne and VU at the national competition in Sydney."

"The teachers make VU unique through their mentoring and support. I'm going to do more study in wood machining once I finish my course, and I plan to run my own cabinet making business focusing on kitchens."

DISHING UP SUPPORT

A CHEF TURNED YOUTH WORKER IS USING HIS CULINARY SKILLS TO CONNECT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, WRITES ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT.

A FEW YEARS AGO, Clark Mitchell was living the high life. A chef by training, he was travelling the world, first in London, then in Singapore where he lived in a two-storey penthouse and worked as a caterer for wealthy expatriate parties.

"The lifestyle was great," says 29-year-old Mitchell. "I was living the dream earning stupid amounts of money." But something was missing.

Mitchell realised he felt most alive when he mentored a team of apprentice cooks who were several years younger than him.

"They had no cooking background and it was really rewarding to see their enthusiasm grow as they improved," he says. "Sometimes they taught me more than I taught them."

Returning to Melbourne, Mitchell went back to work as a chef for another two years with the thought of a career change never far from his mind. "I was starting to lose my passion for hospitality after eight years, but I'm glad I gave it one last shot to know for sure."

Mitchell enrolled in VU's Diploma of Youth Work in 2010, choosing to start with a TAFE program before proceeding to higher education. He was immediately hooked and realised he'd found his calling.

"Being an advocate for young people on important social and political issues is now such a strong drive," he says. "Providing a lead and a voice for them really inspires me."

From the start, the course provided practical on-the-job placements in a variety of programs with local councils, schools and community groups. One of the most rewarding was working at Harvester Technical College, a Sunshine school for students seeking an alternative completion to secondary school that focuses on vocational training.

"Their response to me and the weight they placed on my advice really surprised me," he says. "I was aware of the enormous change that could be made through a good youth worker."


Like Jamie Oliver, he started to use food and cooking as a tool to connect with some of Harvester's more disengaged students.

"I see myself more as a facilitator than an educator," he says. "The students told me what they wanted. Sometimes they said they weren't in the mood to do anything but make pancakes, so we'd make pancakes and then eat them."

Mitchell's passion, commitment and hard work earned him the title of runner-up in VU's vocational student of the year awards for 2012. He was also employed through VU's Students as Staff program to work as a youth partnerships officer. Through this role, Mitchell and a colleague received University-wide attention for a cyber-bullying awareness campaign they developed.

Mitchell is now completing his Bachelor of Youth Work and plans to head to a regional area, or even back to Singapore where issues of teenage depression, class struggle and pressure to succeed are strong.

Wherever he ends up, Mitchell – a member of the international Slow Food movement, which counters fast food and the disappearance of local food traditions – says he'll never abandon his interest in food.

"I'm passionate about knowing where food comes from and how it supports you as a person," he says. "Food is the most basic, sustaining thing in life, whether you're old or young." 



● Clark Mitchell.



Youth work has quickly grown from an activity undertaken by compassionate volunteers or human services workers to a professional career in its own right, says Dr Robyn Broadbent, co-ordinator of VU's Bachelor of Youth Work.

VU is at the forefront of Australia's youth work training, offering programs ranging from TAFE certificates and diplomas to a Master in Youth Services Management. It also offers a combined youth work and recreation management degree.

"The study pathways from certificate to postgraduate level are particularly important in providing opportunities for migrant students to work as advocates for their communities," says Broadbent.

● Seeking Justice (L-R): Kimberleigh Rogers, Kate Bartlett and Michael Tourkakes

STEPPING STONE TO LAW

MANY STUDENTS ARE OPTING TO STUDY A TAFE COURSE AS A STEPPING STONE TO A DEGREE, INCLUDING LAW, WRITES **KAMINI RAJARETHNAM**.

LAW SCHOOL CAN BE A GRINDING, HUMBLING EXPERIENCE that requires mental toughness and hard work. Three Victoria University graduates were prepared for the challenge thanks to the practical skills they first gained at TAFE.

When Michael Tourkakes was in high school he wanted to study biomedical chemistry or biotechnology. However he realised in Year 12 that calculating logarithms in a laboratory wasn't as inspiring as he first imagined. But not having studied legal or business subjects at school, he was unable to pursue law at university, the profession he realised he really wanted.

Rather than be discouraged, Tourkakes sought help from a career counsellor who suggested he enrol in VU's two-year Advanced Diploma of Legal Practice, which would prepare him for further study in law.

Today, eight years later he is a junior solicitor at boutique-sized firm LAC Lawyers in Melbourne's CBD where he advises clients on a range of topics including intellectual property, unfair dismissal and taxation.

"The advanced diploma is an area of the industry that is different, but I saw it as a stepping stone that would potentially get me into a law degree," says Tourkakes.

Unlike many of his peers studying undergraduate degrees, Tourkakes found the transition into his law degree relatively stress-free because of the strong foundation he developed during his diploma course.

"Many of my friends really struggled going straight from high school to university degrees, whereas I found the learning concepts in first year easier to understand because I learnt about the fundamentals in my TAFE course," says Tourkakes.

Law graduate Kate Bartlett shared a similar experience at VU. Unlike Tourkakes, Bartlett knew she wanted to be either a lawyer or a pilot from a young age. After high school, she studied physics at VU before realising that a career in law was what she really wanted. However she didn't meet the prerequisites for the Bachelor of Laws program at VU because legal studies had not been offered at her high school.

She took the advice of a career counsellor at VU and sought to gain industry experience and undertake related studies at TAFE. She enrolled in the Advanced Diploma in Legal Practice at VU and completed it while working as a legal secretary for law firm Blake Dawson (now Ashurst Australia). While Bartlett felt a diploma would further her employment prospects as a law clerk, the driving factor for selecting the advanced

PATHWAYS INTO LAW

STUDENTS CAN CONTINUE through one of VU's registered pathways from the Advanced Diploma of Legal Practice to either the Bachelor of Arts (Legal Practice) or the Bachelor of Legal Practice Management. Students can also lodge an internal transfer application to the Bachelor of Laws, and are considered on academic results and availability of places. Visit the website to find out more about study pathways: vu.edu.au/courses/study-pathways

diploma was the ability to continue into a law degree.

"My job helped me through my diploma, and vice versa," says Bartlett. She went on to study law and graduated in 2011.

Bartlett now works as a practising lawyer at Russell Kennedy, a commercial law firm in Melbourne's CBD.


First-year Bachelor of Laws student Kimberleigh Rogers made the same move into law as Bartlett and Tourkakes. Like them, Rogers chose to study the diploma when she missed out on a place in the undergraduate law course.

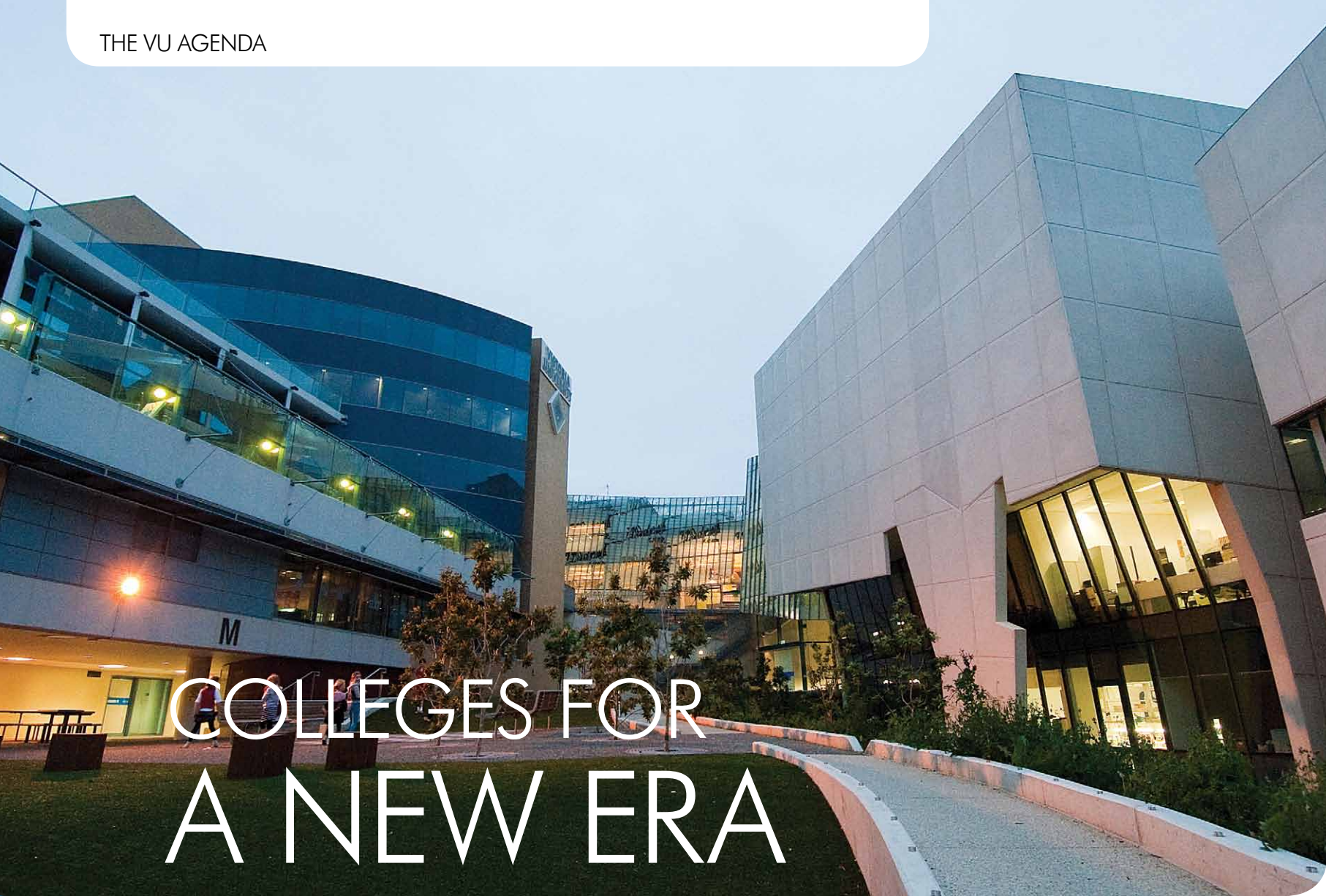
"I still got to study the field of law straight after school, and I found the diploma a lot easier than going straight into a degree," says Rogers. "The bachelor course was a bit of a shock at the beginning, but I understand the theory a lot easier because of the basics I learnt at TAFE." Rogers is a firm believer in the right of everyone to receive justice and plans

to work as a solicitor specialising in family law after university.

Studying a TAFE course as a stepping stone to get into a degree is commonplace for many students who don't qualify for direct entry into a degree program.

Research has shown that TAFE graduates make great higher education students because they have the practical knowledge in their field that can be applied directly to the subjects they study in an undergraduate degree. The bonus of already being in the study groove also makes for a smooth transition into higher education.

From nursing to education, engineering to business, many professional fields of study are now offered at both a vocational and higher education level at VU, allowing students to gain practical foundation skills before they progress to degree studies. Students can also receive up to one year's credit in their degree for their TAFE study. 



COLLEGES FOR A NEW ERA

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY IS UNDERGOING A SWEEPING STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION THAT WILL INTRODUCE EIGHT NEW COLLEGES AND HIGHLIGHT THE UNIVERSITY'S DISTINCTIVE SPECIALISATIONS. **KAMINI RAJARETHNAM** REPORTS.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN for 2012–2016 includes an aim for the University to be well known nationally and internationally in the near future for targeted specialisations. As a result, the *VU Agenda* was developed to implement the strategic plan. The *VU Agenda* and its associated four areas of major reform (Organisational, Workforce, Curriculum, and Campus and Infrastructure Reform) will position the University as an excellent, engaged and accessible institution in today's "demand-driven" tertiary education environment.

OUR EIGHT COLLEGES

- COLLEGE OF ARTS
- COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
- COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
- COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE
- COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE
- COLLEGE OF LAW AND JUSTICE
- COLLEGE OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE
- TRADES COLLEGE



As part of the Organisational Reform, as of January 2013 seven colleges will replace the current six faculties and their respective schools.

Each college will focus on a specific broad discipline area – arts, business, education, engineering, health, law or sport science (see list of colleges). Discipline-specific higher education and TAFE courses will be integrated into the colleges, along with associated research institutes.

An additional Trades College will focus on vocational training and form the foundation for an innovative Trades Academy in 2014.

The new structure will also provide a more efficient environment for improved student and research outcomes because the TAFE, higher education and research institute areas within each college will share their professional and administrative services.

The restructuring program is being overseen by Professors Diane Mayer and Michelle Towstoles, each being newly appointed with the title, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Colleges and Distinctive Specialisations. Towstoles says the restructuring encompasses everything VU does as a University and gives it a point of distinction.

“We will have more focused entities, whereas most of our competitors are going to mega-faculties or divisions which don’t have a particular identity,” she says. “The colleges will reflect a true integration for vocational and higher education.”

As a result, she says students will have better access to unique course pathway combinations.

“In the past we’ve had an organisational and physical separation of our TAFE and higher education sectors, and students have had to move from one organisational unit to another when their study pathways moved between the two sectors. Under the new integrated structure, students can come into a college and immediately have better choices in terms of entrance and exit strategies – from certificates to PhDs.”

The establishment of colleges is also part of the University’s Curriculum Reform Program which will offer VU students unique undergraduate degrees. These will include a small set of Career Start Bachelor Degrees, as well as a larger number of restricted Professional Bachelor Degrees. (Read more about these specialised degrees and the University Curriculum Reform Program on page 21.)

As a key part of the restructuring, the University’s has categorised its study and research strengths into 11 distinctive specialisations (see list of specialisations). Each college will drive the agenda for the specialisations within its discipline area.

One of the pillars of VU’s Strategic Plan is to build either a national or world reputation for excellence in a number of its distinctive specialisations for VU’s learning and teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities.

VU is already on target to becoming nationally and world-renowned in the field of sport and exercise science. Its Institute for Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) has internationally recognised research teams conducting research with prestigious partners including the Australian Sports Commission and Australian Institute of Sport. ISEAL also has strategic collaborations with several international sports bodies such as the Brazil Olympic Committee and the French National Institute of Sport (INSEP).

The considerable structural transformation that will align the University’s higher education and TAFE courses as well as research by discipline and specialisation will further the University’s educational standing and advance its objective to become a leading university of the 21st century, built on excellence, engagement and accessibility. ∞



OUR DISTINCTIVE SPECIALISATIONS

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

ECONOMICS, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION

FINANCIAL SERVICES

FOOD AND NUTRITION

HEALTH

LAW AND LEGAL SERVICES

MAJOR EVENTS – HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

SPORT, EXERCISE AND ACTIVE LIVING

SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS



STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

WITH STUDENTS FROM MORE THAN 90 COUNTRIES, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY IS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST CULTURALLY DIVERSE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. IT CONTINUES TO GROW ALONG WITH THE BENEFITS BROUGHT BY THE MINGLING OF ITS DIVERSE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND WAYS OF THINKING. **JESSICA JURY** REPORTS.

LOCATED IN WHAT IS ARGUABLY Victoria's fastest-growing and most culturally diverse region – the west of Melbourne – Victoria University forms an integral part of the landscape. The University values openness to new ideas and provides a supportive environment to not only educate, but nurture all individuals.

A key element of the University's strategic plan is to empower students from diverse countries and cultures, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, and prepare them for the ever changing world of work.

With almost 44 per cent of its 52,000 student population coming from a non-English speaking background, it is important to offer services that support students through their studies. Students from southern and South-East Asia, the Middle East, parts of Africa, eastern Europe and the UK are most strongly represented.

Professor Kevin McDonald, director of Victoria University's Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing says in addition to celebrating the University's diversity, it must also consider the situations some students come from, and provide an understanding and supportive environment to help them reach their potential.


"Melbourne's west is a region of vibrant economic activity, changing suburbs and the continued presence of Aboriginal communities. All this generates extraordinary creativity," he says. "But we also encounter significant disadvantage in pockets of entrenched unemployment, poor housing and in the lives of refugees who have experienced violence and trauma."

Students have access to a number of support, counselling and advisory services on campus that include developing language and academic skills, career planning and addressing safety concerns. Chaplaincy services include prayer rooms and spiritual support for a range of religions to help students feel comfortable to continue their religious practices in an accepting environment.

The Moondani Balluk Indigenous Academic Unit provides support services specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, such as academic tutoring and mentoring, careers advice, scholarship information and counselling.

Events such as the Multicultural Festival – a week of food, music and performance across four campuses organised by VU's Student Engagement department – provides a platform for students to share their customs and experience other cultures.

So why is cultural diversity so important in an educational context?

"It's the idea that we are all incomplete as people – that's the basis of how and why we interact with others," McDonald says. "We need to grow and discover that the world doesn't revolve around us. Encountering people from different backgrounds can give us a more enriched life, and helps students gain cultural awareness which is so crucial when they enter the workforce." 

VU'S STUDENT LIFE area oversees more than 30 clubs and societies for social, religious, cultural, academic and special interests. Some of these are:

- Australian Christian Fellowship
- Islamic Society of Victoria University
- Victoria University Greek Society
- Victoria University Indonesian Student Association
- Victorian Malaysian Association (YUMA)
- Victoria University Turkish Society
- Victoria University ALLY Club (support networks for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer and Intersex communities)
- Creative Arts Collective
- The Socialist Alliance
- Sustainable Living and Gardening Group

13,489

THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT VU

44%

THE NUMBER OF VU STUDENTS FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS



THE TOP RATING, GIVEN BY VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR ITS CULTURAL DIVERSITY (GOOD UNIVERSITIES GUIDE)

WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST MELBOURNE'S GREEK-SPEAKING POPULATION (AFTER ATHENS AND THESSALONIKI)

36%

THE NUMBER OF ONSHORE VU STUDENTS NOT BORN IN AUSTRALIA



"It's so nice to have friendship groups with people from different backgrounds. It's a great learning experience." **Mariam.**



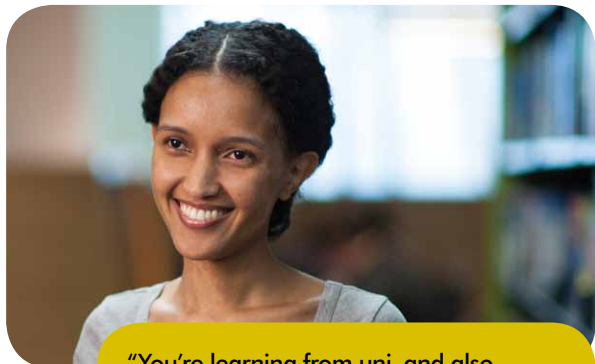
"I love all the different cultures here it makes it so diverse learning other people's cultures and traditions. It makes university fun for everyone. **Mitch.**



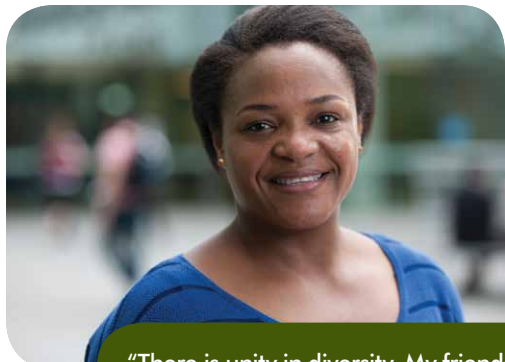
"Sharing cultures with people creates a real community feel. It's something you wouldn't get at other unis." **Richard.**



"Education in a multicultural environment deepens our understanding and respect for other cultures. It also enables us to deepen our own cultural identity." **Ali.**



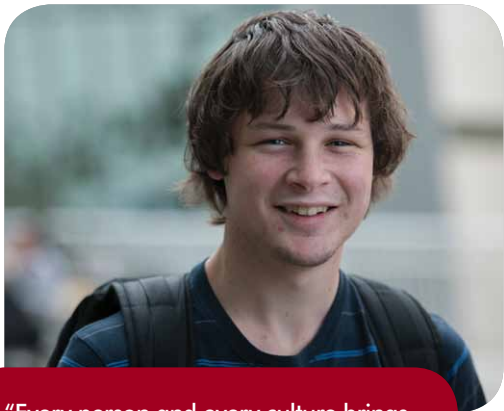
"You're learning from uni, and also learning from your classmates. It's been one of the highlights of my time at uni." **Sara.**



"There is unity in diversity. My friends are all from different cultures – we may be different, but our goals are similar." **Theresa.**



"VU is one of the few places where people from so many different walks of life come together and help each other to achieve the same goals." **Romain.**



"Every person and every culture brings something new to the University. We need a range of values, beliefs and opinions surrounding us, opening our eyes to new things" **Brendan.**





CHILDHOOD OBESITY

CHILDHOOD OBESITY IS INCREASING at an alarming rate in Australia and it is a major risk to children's long and short-term health.

Overweight children are more likely to be teased by their peers or to develop low self-esteem or body image problems. Childhood obesity often leads to adult obesity.

Apart from the social issues surrounding childhood obesity, overweight or obese children are more likely to develop serious future health problems, including:

- high blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- high cholesterol levels
- asthma
- feet development problems
- liver disease
- sleep apnoea
- eating disorders

* Information from The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

GYM FIT FOR TEENS

HEART-PUMPING GYM PROGRAMS ARE INSPIRING A GROUP OF WERRIBEE TEENAGERS TO FALL IN LOVE WITH FITNESS.

● Students at Suzanne Cory High School are enjoying a balance between exercise and their studies thanks to the Teen Gym Program.

KAMINI RAJARETHNAM

ONE IN FOUR AUSTRALIAN YOUTHS is overweight or obese, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. And less than half meet recommended physical activity guidelines – the Australian Government says young people need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day to stay fit – and few consume the daily recommended amount of fruit and vegetables.

These statistics are one of the driving forces behind a Teen Gym program being run at Victoria University's Fitness Centre at its Werribee Campus for students from a nearby local secondary school.

Apart from helping them lose weight, increase fitness and build strength, the program is helping the students from Suzanne Cory High School build their self-confidence.

With a focus on strength and conditioning, the program welcomed its first group of 16 Year 9 and 10 students in May 2012. For a small fee each term, students participate in an eight-week after-school program focused on overall health, nutrition and safe gym training techniques.

VU personal trainers first give each student an initial health assessment followed by a tailored training program that they work through over the course of each term. The students come for two-hour sessions, three days a week to learn resistance and cardio training techniques, and how to safely use weights and exercise machines.

VU Sport Facilities Co-ordinator Timothy Burdeu says the majority of students in the program have had no experience in a gym.

"The program focuses on education and safety, so they join the gym with a good knowledge of what they are doing," says Burdeu. "It's also helped many of them gain the confidence to participate in sport outside of school."

The program came about through a partnership the University established with the school after it began enrolling its first intake of Years 9 to 12 in 2011. Despite boasting outdoor netball and basketball courts, the school lacked a gym to conduct part of their physical education curriculum.

The school's staff saw the University's Fitness Centre as a possible solution. The partnership followed to provide the students with weekly group fitness classes and gym sessions supervised by VU exercise science students who have been trained as instructors.

The VU student instructors also benefit from the partnership because they get to hone their personal training skills, applying sports science theory to clients in a real-world, practical sport and exercise setting.

The school's Year 10 student wellbeing co-ordinator Travis Hand says the high school students benefit from the program on many levels.

"They've got more energy and are getting a lot more out of their studies," says Hand. "This is also a social activity for them. It provides a good opportunity for the students to do something outside of school with their friends."

"And it's not just about their physical health. We want to ensure a balance between exercise and studies, and this is the perfect place for it."

VU plans to build on the success of the Teen Gym program by extending its reach to other schools in Melbourne's western region.

For more information about the Teen Gym program, contact Timothy Burdeu on (03) 9919 5965. [30](#)

Did you know?

- Australia is today ranked as one of the fattest nations in the developed world. The prevalence of obesity in Australia has more than doubled in the past 20 years.
- Only six out of 10 children aged five to 14 participate in sport outside of school, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- 75 per cent of parents of overweight and obese children do not recognise their child as being unhealthy.
- Junk food makes up 30 per cent of the average diet for children aged 2–18.

- Victoria University has devoted significant resources to establishing 21st century learning spaces at many of its campuses.

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S CURRICULUM COMMISSION has been active for more than a year helping translate into practice the vision of the University's 2012–2016 Strategic Plan.

But the word 'curriculum' to members of the University's Curriculum and Innovation team means much more than course design, says Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Anne Jones, who heads the Commission.

"Our new Tertiary Curriculum Framework will underpin a range of improvements in quality across the University's teaching and learning, and greatly improve the student experience so that we truly equip our students to become confident, creative and contributing 21st century citizens," she says.

The framework will renew the University's tertiary qualifications over the coming four years so that VU graduates not only earn qualifications through a reinvigorated suite of innovative courses, but also acquire the capabilities and skills needed by 21st century citizens, such as complex problem-solving, critical thinking and inter-cultural understanding.

Jones says the Commission's work is developing in large part as a response to VU's unique students.

"Our students are not typical university students; they are both younger and older, and more educationally, culturally, linguistically and economically diverse than is the case for any other university in Australia," she says. "We must equip them to thrive in complex, unpredictable futures and to make an impact in their workplaces and communities."

Victoria University is also responding to the Federal Government's target to increase participation in higher education over the next generation by developing a range of vertically integrated, modular qualifications that will be purposely designed and managed together, rather than as single qualifications retrofitted into artificial pathways.

"The renewed curriculum is expected to assist many categories of learners such as early school leavers who may dip in and out of education or existing workers who prefer to accumulate short cycle qualifications toward a larger goal," says Jones.

The University's Diplomas-into-Degree programs in education, business, community services and information technology that have been piloted over the past two years are the first examples of VU's integrated courses. Its new Career Start Degrees – to be launched in 2014 for students who are initially unprepared for higher education – will be the next step.

"Through the University's new college structure, students will be able to progress through their program in a seamless fashion," says Jones. "We are highlighting the benefits of this continuum as a distinctive feature that defines Victoria University."

By putting the student experience at the centre of the University's curriculum reform, students' life experiences outside the classroom will also become part of the learning process. So too will greater opportunities for authentic practice-integrated learning and assessments that are characterised less by formal testing and more by negotiated portfolios of experiences and learning in collaboration with teachers, and sometimes employers.

"The Strategic Plan places great value on the link between learning and work, and on the skills that employers will be expecting in the 21st century," says Jones. "It is critical that our students' learning



INNOVATING CURRICULUM

is driven by inquiry and research rather than simply transmitted, and that we link it to their current and future workplaces."

Victoria University is preparing an institution-wide 'transitions pedagogy' approach to student support, especially at identified transition 'hotspots'. These hotspots include the move from work to study, diploma to degree, secondary school to university, early school leaver to vocational education, offshore to onshore, diploma to degree and undergraduate to postgraduate.

"We are already investing in student engagement in areas such as student retention and closing gaps in language, literacy and numeracy skills," says Jones. "In future we expect to be able to measure precisely how effective these strategies are through internal and external performance measures."

Victoria University's distinctive profile – with its many campuses spread across Melbourne's rapidly growing western region and in the CBD – has clear implications for the future delivery of courses to include richer and more engaging dimensions for learning.

The University is also developing an institution-wide approach to 'blended' learning – a mix of face-to-face and online delivery – and has devoted significant resources to establishing technology-rich learning spaces over the last few years at many of its campuses.



● Chair of VU's Curriculum Commission, Professor Anne Jones, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Students).

With the merging of its vocational and higher education areas, the University also plans new support and professional development systems for all staff, allowing for greater opportunities for cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary teaching and research across the whole of the organisation.

"The work of the Commission is occurring at a time of considerable change, both in the wider tertiary sector and within the University," Jones says. "Even though much work remains to be done, there is now a strong base on which to build, and much goodwill to undertake this work." ☺

SPARROW FLIES OVERLAND

IN 1954, THE SHADOW OF THE COLD WAR CREATED FERTILE SOIL IN AUSTRALIA FOR RADICAL THINKERS WHO CHALLENGED THE CULTURE OF THE HIGHLY CONSERVATIVE POST-WAR GOVERNMENT. THE JOURNAL OVERLAND IS A PRODUCT OF THIS ERA AND IT CONTINUES TO BE AS RELEVANT TODAY AS IT WAS MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY AGO.

JESSICA JURY

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL that inspires equal parts debate, discourse and creative arousal, *Overland* publishes narrative and poetry, as well as academe, opinion, exposé, and historical and political commentary. It gives a voice to established writers and thinkers alongside emerging writers of exceptional talent – many of whom may be marginalised or ignored by the mainstream media. Its formula of creative writing paired with political discussion makes *Overland* as refreshing and fortifying in 2012 as it was in the 1950s.

Dr Jeff Sparrow, the current editor of the literary and political journal describes it as “the most radical of Australia’s longstanding literary and cultural magazines”.

“*Overland* is just as relevant today because the relationship between writing and social change is so intrinsic,” says Sparrow. “Writers have a responsibility to question the current cultural climate and encourage social change. We feel it’s our duty to spark debate. We’d rather get an angry response than none at all.”

With subscriptions growing by around 10 per cent each year, the increasing appetite for its literary-political content is evident. New content is uploaded to the *Overland* website almost daily, keeping its readers busy between its quarterly editions (Issue 208, Spring 2012 is the latest edition).

From its beginnings as an ‘outsider’ communist pamphlet, *Overland* was founded by Stephen Murray-Smith – with the motto: temper democratic,

bias Australian – who remained editor until his death in 1988. The celebrated author, editor and activist received an Order of Australia (AM) in 1981.

Since then, *Overland*’s editorship has included some distinguished names in Australian literature, none more so than Sparrow.

The unassuming US-born and Melbourne-raised writer and social activist is internationally renowned in his own right, but is wary of accepting his place among his illustrious alumni, and as such doesn’t take his tenure lightly.

“You’re conscious that you’re in these footsteps,” he says after five years at the helm. “I feel like I need to do justice to such a significant piece of Australian culture.”

When prompted about his chosen profession, Sparrow is self-effacing. “Writing is kind of what I do I guess. It’s nice to talk about politics in my job every day.”

After writing several critically-acclaimed books, including *Radical Melbourne*, its follow-up *Radical Melbourne 2: the Enemy within* (co-authored with his sister Jill) and *Communism: A Love Story*, Sparrow earned his PhD in Creative Media in 2006 at RMIT University. Today, apart from his work with *Overland*, he continues to publish books and articles while guest lecturing at VU and supervising Creative and Professional Writing PhD students.

Victoria University supports *Overland* by providing rent-free offices and financial support for senior staff members. In turn, *Overland* offers VU students the opportunity to undertake work placements.


“VU has some of the same progressive values and culture as *Overland*,” he says. “The journal’s focus on social justice is a good fit with VU.”

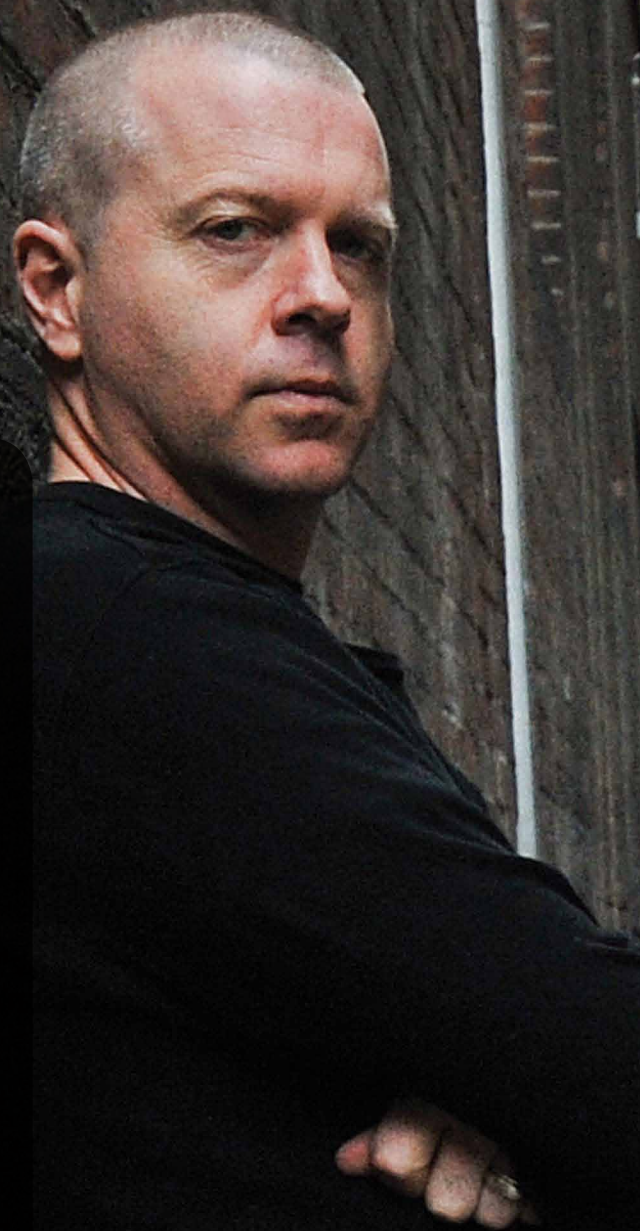
Overland is also supported by the Australia Council for the Arts and Arts Victoria.

Sparrow’s latest book, *Money Shot: A Journey into Porn and Censorship* explores the relationship between pornography and censorship laws. It is a revealing journey through often controversial subject matter, uncovering the ambiguous nature of Australia’s censorship laws and politicians’ desire to simultaneously appease both conservative and progressive groups.

“We need to discuss these issues more openly,” says Sparrow. “You can’t ban pornography now, it’s everywhere. But we need to be addressing topics like pornography and censorship in parliament, and even in sex education classrooms. We should speak to young people about asserting themselves. You can’t cover people’s eyes.”

Go to the New Books section on page 40 for more information on *Money Shot: A Journey into Porn and Censorship*, or visit scribepublications.com.au

Visit *Overland* at overland.org.au 



● Author, activist, lecturer and *Overland* editor Dr Jeff Sparrow.

NOTABLE NAMES

Some of the many contributors to *Overland* over the years include Peter Carey, Patrick White, Elizabeth Jolley, David Foster, Germaine Greer, Dorothy Hewett, David Williamson, Thomas Shapcott, Judith Wright, Rodney Hall, Gwen Harwood, Thea Astley, Alan Marshall, Xavier Herbert, Bruce Dawe, Frank Moorhouse, Manning Clark, Humphrey McQueen, Christina Stead, Geoffrey Dutton, Max Harris, Chris Wallace-Crabbe, Frank Hardy, Peter Porter, James McAuley, Jack Hibberd, Alex Buzo and Dorothy Porter.

A BIG FAT FIGHT

Overland’s Winter 2012 issue featured ‘A Big Fat Fight: the case for fat activism’ by VU lecturer Dr Jennifer Lee. The subject of a sold-out Melbourne Writers’ Festival session, the article also attracted an unprecedented number of comments on literary and cultural website ‘The Conversation’. Read the article at overland.org.au/issue-207/feature-jennifer-lee



IN PRAISE OF EXCELLENCE

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S ALUMNI COMMUNITY reside and work in more than 140 countries. In October 2012, the University honoured the success of a select group of its alumni community at its second annual Alumni Awards, which covered four categories: Distinguished; Honorary Lifetime Service; Young Achiever; and Outstanding Student.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

KEVIN QIANG LI, an alumnus now living in China, received VU's 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award for his contributions to China–Australia relations.

A graduate of VU's Master of Business Administration in 1996, Li has forged strong links between his homeland and Australia as President of the south China region of the Australian Chamber of Commerce. For more than 10 years, Li has actively represented Australian businesses and promoted bilateral business relations between Australia and this booming region of China. He is also president of the Australian China Alumni Association, an organisation open to China-based alumni of all Australian universities. Li is recognised as a strong leader in these organisations and regularly encourages members to join him in philanthropic work.

Li also possesses a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit with an involvement in many ventures. His company, Kunlun Advertising, is now the largest outdoor media operator in south China.

Prior to relocating to China, Li, who also holds a Bachelor of Medical Science from Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine, helped establish RMIT University's Chinese Medicine program, including its Bachelor of Applied Science (Acupuncture) and Bachelor of Human Biology.

HONORARY LIFETIME ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

THREE-TIME VICTORIA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE JOHN THOMPSON was recognised with an Honorary Lifetime Alumni Service Award for his professional work to improve the lives of Victorians.

Thompson, a graduate of VU's Bachelor of Arts, Graduate Diploma of Marketing and Master of Business is a long-time public sector employee. For seven years he worked at the Urban Land Corporation assisting the development of sustainable housing for Victorians of all ages. For the past

10 years he has been helping make Victoria's roads safer as senior manager of the Transport Accident Commission's road safety and marketing campaigns. His work in overseeing key road safety education campaigns has resulted in a significant decline in Victorian road fatalities.

Thompson also contributes to the volunteer organisation Global Road Safety Partnership, which helps develop local road safety programs in Vietnam and Thailand. He is an active contributor to VU's alumni community as a regular member of the Alumni Council and as a mentor to recent graduates in VU's Career Bridge program.

YOUNG ACHIEVER ALUMNI AWARD

GRADUATE LAWYER NUSSEN AINSWORTH and Chelsea Hatherall, general manager of the Footscray Community Arts Centre, each received a Young Achiever Award.

Ainsworth demonstrated significant early achievement in his legal career through his passion for technology and social media, and their implementation to the legal profession. He graduated from VU as a 2011 valedictorian with a Bachelor of Laws (First Class Honours). During his studies he was founding editor of *Dictum*, the Victoria Law School journal. He has a particular interest in mediation and is a member of the executive committee of the Law Institute's Alternative Dispute Resolution and Practice Support committee.

Hatherall, a Certificate IV in Business graduate in 2010 has been involved in many community

volunteer organisations, donating her time and skills to a range of charity organisations, including Amnesty International, Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, the Cancer Council, Victorian Flood Appeal and the Laverton Community Kitchen. She was named Hobson Bay Council's Young Citizen of the Year and Maribyrnong City Council's Emerging Community Leader in 2012. She also participated for a third year as an artist in an Art in Public Places program.

OUTSTANDING STUDENT ALUMNI AWARD

GARRY KUAN received the 2012 Outstanding Student Alumni Award. Kuan is a high-achieving VU student who is both a world-class musician and a sport psychologist. His PhD research, which looks at how music and imagery can improve athletic performance, was recently used by some of Australia's elite weightlifters and air-pistol shooters to prepare for their events at the London Olympics.

Earlier this year, Kuan was named Australia's International Student of the Year for 2012 by the Council of International Students – an organisation representing Australia's half-million international students – not only for his academic excellence, but also his contributions to the wider community. These contributions include his free weekly violin lessons at VU and fundraising activities for children's music therapy programs at refugee camps in Asia. Kuan was also recently selected as one of 20 international university students to join the City of Melbourne's new EDGE program for student leaders. Read more about Kuan on page 4.



● Distinguished VU Alumnus recipient Kevin Qiang Li, an MBA graduate who has made enormous contributions to Australia-China relations.

More than ever, education is in the news. Reports of teacher conditions, student outcomes and standardised testing are hot topics for public debate. *Connections* looks at Victoria University's role in empowering Australia's next generation of educators through its innovative programs, placements and educational research.

EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT

EDUCATION IS VIEWED TODAY as a way to achieve social justice as much as it is to improve the economy. Along with its role in boosting productivity and tackling skill shortages, the government wants to enhance the international reputation of Australia's education system by elevating national student performance in reading, science and mathematics to the top five in the world by 2025.

Victoria University is playing its role in the transformation by educating hundreds of new teachers each year in unique programs few other Australian universities offer, using innovative teaching methods and offering exceptional placement opportunities inside and outside classrooms.

VU's School of Education has a range of partners with local schools, community centres and industry, especially in Melbourne's north and west. Since 2011 the partnerships have focused on a state-government-funded program – the School Centres for Teaching Excellence (STCE) – that brings together a cluster of local primary and secondary schools with a partner university under one hub.

VU is the only university in the state to have two STCE partnerships – at Point Cook and Hume-Broadmeadows – where the University's pre-service teachers participate in year-long placements supported by teams of teacher-mentors. They also complete VU classes at the schools that pre-service teachers normally would do on campus via visiting VU lecturers. This allows them to immediately put theory into practise.

Associate Professor Bill Eckersley says pre-service teachers in VU's Bachelor of Education degree

receive 120 days of school and classroom experience during the four years of their course – well in excess of the minimum 80 days required by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

"Over the past five years we've seen rapid growth in demand for our Bachelor of Education program," he says. "Many young people see a career in teaching, particularly in Melbourne's north and west."

Previously, VU's pre-service teachers completed a two-to-four week block placement at a school once a year, and this is still the practise at most universities. VU's pre-service teachers now spend two days a week in one of the SCTE schools for the entire year, on top of their block placements. Eckersley says this enables them to build stronger relationships with students, parents and staff, and also boosts their employment prospects after graduation.

"Good pre-service teachers are our best form of advertising," says Eckersley. "School principals are in a much better position now to try before they buy."

While VU is fortunate to have partnerships with schools in Melbourne's rapidly growing northern and western suburbs where new schools are constantly being built, placement opportunities can still be scarce. Instead of Melbourne classrooms, some VU pre-service teachers do placements abroad to countries such as China, Malaysia and Timor L'este, or to remote areas of Australia (see Learning Outside Classrooms on page 27).

Rebecca Thierry, a second-year education student from Geelong, has been inspired by her placement with ethnically diverse children at Campbellfield Heights Primary School in Craigieburn. She now hopes to work in an Aboriginal community or as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher.

Did you know?

There are about 10,000 schools in Australia – around 70% government, 20% Catholic and 10% independent.

● Pre-service teachers Lezanne Miller and Rebecca Thierry with children from Campbellfield Heights Primary School.

Thierry chose Victoria University as it is the only university in the state and one of the few in Australia to offer a Prep-to-Year 12 program. This allowed her to acquire a strong grounding in teaching across all levels, even though she is interested mainly in secondary school teaching.

"To be an effective secondary school teacher, it is vital to be aware of how students learn early on," she says.

Her classmate, Lezanne Miller, a career-changer who has already tried her hand as a chef and in finance, is preparing for a career as a home economics teacher.

"Having four years of school experience is an opportunity that other pre-service teachers studying elsewhere miss out on," she says. "The placements gave me early confidence that I had made the right decision to return to school and follow my dream."

A new addition to Victoria University's suite of education courses is the Diploma of Education Studies, a blend of TAFE and higher education aimed at students who may not be quite ready to undertake a degree but still want to be a teacher. After completing the diploma, students can enrol in the second year of a Bachelor of Education with full credit and no time lost.

Matthew Van den Ham will be among the first set of students to complete the diploma at the end of 2012. While unsure whether he will move into the degree, the diploma allows him to work as a teacher's assistant or integration aide.

"The diploma confirmed my interest in working with children, but now I'm considering options besides classroom teaching, such as youth work," says Van den Ham. "I wouldn't have had that at another university." ☺



● Michael Victory teaches VU teachers taking the next step in their careers with a Master of Education qualification.

EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

WITH MORE AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS THAN EVER BEFORE UPGRADING THEIR QUALIFICATIONS WITH A MASTER DEGREE, VU IS OFFERING THEM A UNIQUE PROGRAM THAT BRINGS THE UNIVERSITY TO THEIR WORKPLACE.

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT

EVERY THURSDAY EVENING, a group of teachers in Melbourne's west are transformed into eager master degree students.

But instead of heading to a university campus, the teachers in Victoria University's part-time Master of Education program take over a school classroom in Melbourne's rapidly growing outer west region of Point Cook, where most of them work.

Course co-ordinator Dr Mary Weaven says the real value of the program is that students don't need to go to the university – the university comes to them. "We're applying theory to practice directly in the workplace," she says.

Launched in 2011, the 20 teachers currently enrolled in the program meet every week at Point Cook Secondary College to study one subject a semester with the goal of completing their degree over three or four years.

Participants range from early career teachers keen to develop their leadership skills to 30-year veterans of the profession who want to apply academic research

to their classes or deepen their knowledge of current teaching trends.

"As the knowledge of teaching grows, the demand for teachers to have knowledge grows," Weaven says. "Many teachers are looking for opportunities for lifelong learning."

The program comprises core subjects including curriculum theory and educational leadership, as well as electives such as mentoring.

Principals in the region are enthusiastic about the program as their teachers expand their knowledge and leadership skills, share information with colleagues, and conduct meaningful research at their schools.

Janitta Greed, 26, began teaching at Carranballac P-9 College in Point Cook nearly five years ago after doing placement rounds there as a second-year VU Bachelor of Education student. She loved her work placement there so much that she stayed in touch with the school and was hired immediately upon graduation.

Greed is now completing her master degree because she would ultimately like to be a principal.

"The program suits me perfectly because I can do it part time and integrate it into my career," she says.

Some participants, including Greed, choose to take on a minor thesis as part of their course, which can lead to a doctorate down the track. As a passionate Year 9 teacher, Greed plans to research the factors that allow middle school students to successfully make the transition to senior school. ∞

Did you know?

That all teachers in Finland – a country ranked among the world's leaders in school education – need to have a master degree?



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT

THE YEAR IS 1980 and the place, Clairemont High School, San Diego.

As America braces itself for the ongoing effects of racial desegregation in education, a young English teacher named Mary-Catherine Swanson develops an innovative program to help the largely black and Hispanic inner-city students who are bussed-in to her white suburban school.

Not content to simply offer remedial classes for the new students, Swanson sets up an innovative program that raises the students' expectations and offers them support. She enrolls them in the school's toughest classes, offers one-on-one coaching from student peers and teachers, and trains them in study skills and critical thinking.

All 32 students in the program – many of whom were not expected to even finish high school when they first arrived – graduated and went on to prestigious careers after completing university.

More than 30 years later, Swanson's program, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) has moved from that single high school to more than 5000 schools across the US. It has now served more than half a million students who are often from low socio-economic backgrounds or the first in their families to go to university.

Four years ago, it was piloted at a school in Wodonga, 300 kilometres north of Melbourne, and is now set to spread across Australia. With the assistance of \$1.4 million in federal funding, Victoria University is at the forefront of implementing AVID in Australian schools and conducting Australia-specific research on the results.

Clare Brown, associate director of VU's Victoria Institute of Education, Diversity and Lifelong

“ LIFE IS LARGELY A MATTER OF EXPECTATION. ”


– HORACE (65–8 BCE)

Learning says the program “is not a magic bullet for education, but there's strong evidence that AVID succeeds at building human capital.”

The AVID philosophy not only equips underperforming students with the academic, social and emotional skills to succeed at university, but also provides ongoing professional development in AVID strategies to teachers and school leaders.

The system starts at primary school to build aspiration and includes training in writing, reading, collaborative learning and critical thinking. Students learn specific AVID methods such as Cornell note-taking and Socratic questioning, which help them examine their attitudes, knowledge and logic. AVID students are also given opportunities to visit university campuses and sit in on lectures well before they graduate from high school. Pre-service teachers at nearby universities act as trained AVID tutors and mentor the younger school students about university life.

“Given the right support, students will rise to the challenge of meeting the highest standards,” Brown says. “AVID closes the achievement gap.”

In 2012, Victoria University Secondary College (a recent amalgam of Brimbank, Deer Park and Kealba Secondary Colleges) was the second school in Australia to implement AVID with the assistance of 16 VU pre-service teachers. 

AVID IN AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS are now closely observing the impact of AVID at pilot schools. Four secondary colleges from Melbourne's west – Kurunjang in Melton, Galvin Park in Werribee, Point Cook and Williamstown High – have committed to implementing AVID in 2013, supported by VU. More schools in Western Australia and the Northern Territory are expected to join. VU will host some 300 educators and researchers from across Australia and the US for the AVID Australia Summer Institute in November 2012.



LEARNING OUTSIDE CLASSROOMS

VU EDUCATION STUDENTS RECEIVE AUTHENTIC AND INNOVATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THAT INCLUDE WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN THE OUTBACK AND PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN MELBOURNE'S WEST. **ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT** REPORTS.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY EDUCATION LECTURER Lawry Mahon first visited the outback nearly 20 years ago as a keen amateur astronomer, eager to find elusive micro-meteorites.

But what Mahon discovered was much more down to earth. Sitting in the red dirt of a remote Indigenous community he listened to tribal elders tell stories dating back thousands of years, and he saw Aboriginal students reading books about white-skinned children, city neighbourhoods and pets named Spot.

"It wasn't rocket science to see there was a problem," says Mahon. "The books those children were using were no different than the ones my kids in Ascot Vale, Melbourne had."

On his return to Victoria University, Mahon developed a plan. In 1998, he recruited a few pre-service teachers to accompany him to a tiny community near Alice Springs. They helped local children develop and write their own books, at the same time the VU students experienced a placement opportunity like no other.

Today the success of the program, Story Writing in Remote Locations (SWIRL) is undeniable. About 20 third-year Bachelor of Education students are chosen each year for a six-week placement that takes them to remote Northern Territory communities to help Indigenous children create books from their own experiences and cultures. The children keep a copy of any book they create, and a copy is put in their school library.

Tracey Phillips, a SWIRL participant in 2012 says it was incredible to see how the children responded to writing and illustrating their own book.

"Their smiles were incredibly heart-warming when they saw the final result," she says. "The community was very welcoming and treated us like family."

The program is now co-sponsored by IBM, which provides computers to participating schools, as well as the Northern Territory government, which supplies some funding for the program. Universities in the US, Denmark and Canada have also been involved.


With the availability of new technologies, the children are now as likely to create an electronic book with moving graphics, video and sound as they are a handwritten and painted one. They are also encouraged to use their local languages, with parents assisting as translators.

Hundreds of Victoria University students now call themselves SWIRLERS, and for nearly all, it has been a life-changing experience, says Mahon.

"Even though it's challenging and the students usually sleep in a cleared out corner of a library or a classroom, they appreciate this as a once-in-lifetime opportunity," he says.

One of the unexpected outcomes is that many SWIRL participants go back as Northern Territory teachers once they graduate.

"The average stay of a teacher in a remote school in the Territory is about seven months, but SWIRL students stay an average of two years," he says.

"That makes a big difference because they can build up relationships and gain the confidence and support of the community." 



MOST AUSTRALIAN PARENTS send their children to kindergarten as an expected part of schooling. But a small percentage of young children do not take part in preschool, often because their parents can't afford its average \$1000-a-year cost. Added to financial barriers, parents of some kinder-missing kids carry bad memories of their own school experiences and do not place a high value on optional education.

Victoria University's free Kinda Kinder program targets these issues by making preschool accessible to children who would otherwise miss out.

The program is conducted by supervised first and second-year students from VU's Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary) course as a community-based work placement. And unlike most kindergartens, it often integrates parents' learning into the program.

Julie Arnold from the early literacy and primary education area of VU's School of Education says children who participate in quality preschool programs have a significant head start with intellectual development, socialisation skills and independence.

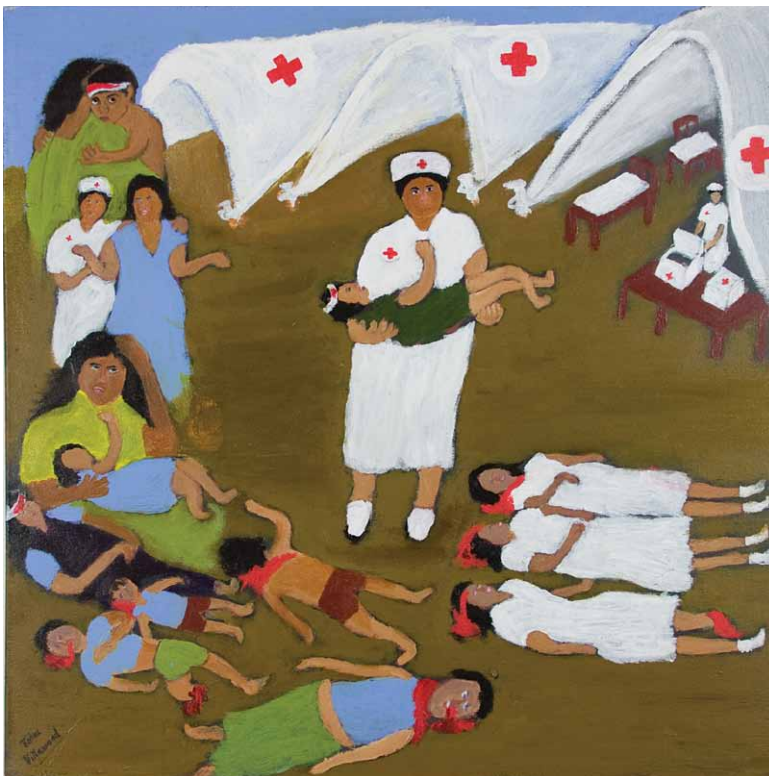
Arnold and her colleague Mary-Rose McLaren helped develop the program in 2002 after teachers at Sydenham-Hillside Primary School – one of the largest primary schools in Victoria – noticed about 20 per cent of their children were starting school with low level skills, particularly in literacy. Most had missed out on kindergarten.

Kinda Kinder was launched in a classroom at the school to provide a familiar and convenient setting for parents who often had older school-aged children. By encouraging parents, carers and grandparents to participate in the weekly program, organisers saw Kinda Kinder not only helped children, but also had the unintended result of assisting adults with their own learning, especially in literacy.

The program now operates at 30 schools and libraries across Melbourne's north and west with local government support.



● Kamaleshwaran Selladurai
A REFUGEE'S LIFE
Country of origin: Sri Lanka
Time in detention: 24 months



● (No name)
FIELD HOSPITAL
Country of origin: Sri Lanka
Time in detention: 36 months

LIVES IN LIMBO

KAMINI RAJARETHNAM

LIFE IN LIMBO GIVES VOICE TO THE ANGUISHED, the traumatised and the persecuted. It is a series of artworks by asylum seekers who wait in Australian detention centres for freedom and to begin their lives anew.

Depicting themes of exile, hope, trauma and endurance, the artworks were on show at VU's Level 17 Artspace at City Flinders Campus during October 2012 after showings at the Braemer Gallery in the Blue Mountains in NSW, and at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The artworks were produced by current and recent residents of the Villawood and Broadmeadows detention centres in Sydney and Melbourne. The artists are predominantly from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, Burma and Pakistan, and all have escaped some form of religious or political persecution.

Life in Limbo is the outcome of The Refugee Art Project, conceived by a small collective of academics and artists who share a concern for the plight of refugees to Australia and the asylum seekers who wait in Australian detention centres. Its aim is to empower refugees by giving them a voice to the wider community through art.

Led by Dr Safdar Ahmed (Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Sydney), the project organises art classes as a source of therapy for those detained at the two detention centres.

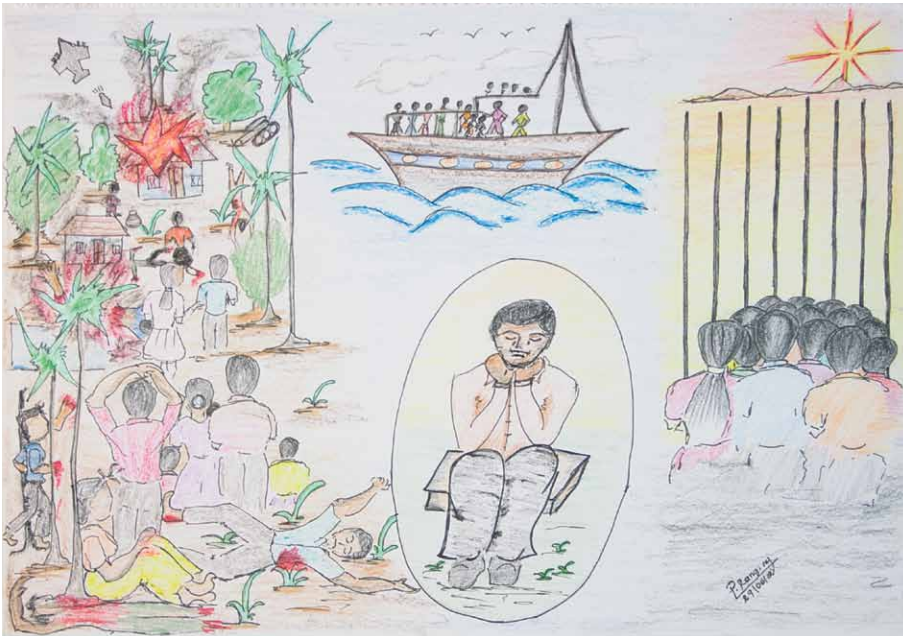
"This isn't for everyone, and they aren't always in the mood to learn," says Ahmed. "But at least it provides a source of important release for some."

"By showing the art of asylum seekers and refugees, we hope to raise greater public awareness about their suffering."

The Refugee Art Project is a not-for-profit organisation. All proceeds of sales of selected artworks goes to detained asylum seekers and refugees, which is often sent back to help support the families that many were forced to leave behind. ∞



● 'H*'
 WHAT IS THE QUESTION? DROWNING
 Country of origin: Afghanistan
 Time in detention: 25 months



● Ranjini
 A LIFE FULL OF GRIEF
 Country of origin: Sri Lanka
 Time in detention: 26 months



● Alwy Fadhel
 PSYCHOSIS
 Country of origin withheld
 Time in detention: 53 months



● Mahmoud Salameh
 THE WALL
 Country of origin: Palestine/Syria
 Time in detention: 17 months

*This artist withheld their name, substituting it with a single letter.



DRIVING JUSTICE

HAYLEY SWANSON HAS A NO-MERCY APPROACH ON THE V8 RACING CIRCUIT, AND IS SIMILARLY UNCOMPROMISING AS SHE DRIVES TOWARDS A FUTURE IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION, WRITES **JESSICA JURY**.

WOMEN BEHIND THE WHEEL

Although dominated by males – spectating and participating – motor sport has had many fascinating women behind the wheel.

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST

Born in Melbourne in 1905, Joan Richmond was Australia's first female professional racing driver, beginning her motoring career in 1926 driving a Citroen. In 1931, she placed fifth in the Australian Grand Prix (at Phillip Island). Following this success, she drove with four friends from Melbourne to Palermo in Sicily to compete in the Monte Carlo Rally. Over the next eight years she competed throughout Europe in many makes of car with many successes.

SPIRITED SPEEDSTER

Throughout the 1920s, Frenchwoman Violette Morris was a gifted athlete in many sports, often competing with men when no women's league was available. She was also a cycling champion, graduating to motorcycles and finally racing cars. Morris deviated from traditional behaviours – smoking heavily and swearing profusely. She was refused license renewal by the French Women's Athletic Federation amid complaints of her lesbian lifestyle and was therefore barred from participating in the 1928 Summer Olympics.

So strong was her commitment to motor racing that she had an elective double mastectomy so she would be more comfortable behind the wheel of the tight-fitting cars of the time.

SHE IS SMART, STRONG AND STUNNING. When Hayley Swanson steps out of her V8 ute in head-to-toe racing gear, you could mistake her for one of the boys. And when she takes off her helmet, you might think she's just a pretty face.

But this Victoria University law student is tackling stereotypes as aggressively as she takes the corners at Bathurst. At 24, the Albury-born model and race car driver already has a business degree and is now pursuing a Bachelor of Laws at VU's City Queen Campus in Melbourne's CBD.

Finding her way from horse riding to horse power, Swanson's love for racing was a natural progression.

"I'm a self-confessed adrenaline junkie and have always been very sport-oriented," says Swanson. "I enjoy jet skiing, water sports and horse riding, but I just love fast cars.

"Dad raced motorbikes so that's where I get the speed bug from. Four years ago he took me to the track and I tore it up in his Subaru WRX. I was hooked from then on."

With support from her parents, Swanson has raced cars since the age of 19, and this year began racing V8 utes. The only woman currently racing in the category, Swanson travels the country supporting V8 Supercars at national events such as the Clipsal 500, Gold Coast 600 and Bathurst 1000.

So dad is a petrol head too, but how does mum feel about the hobby?

"Mum does get a bit nervous, but she has faith in my abilities as a driver," says Swanson. "She was more worried when I was riding horses because a horse is completely unpredictable. You have more control over your car.

"You can never get too comfortable, but you can't get psyched out. When you're driving along Bathurst's Conrad Straight at 250km per hour, you need to have a cool head."

Swanson's exceptional ability to handle pressure was tested during an incident at this year's Tasmania Challenge when her steering wheel

came off mid-race. "I was more concerned when the video footage attracted thousands of hits on the racing website," she says. "That was embarrassing!"

As a woman taking part in a very 'blokey' sport, Swanson has encountered some discrimination, but she never lets it bother her.

"Sometimes people don't take you seriously, and perhaps treat you a little differently," she says. "But once you get out there it's every man and woman for themselves."


Notwithstanding her love for racing, Swanson says her law studies are her top priority. "Racing is my passion, but it's a hobby. My studies are my future."

Interested in the law from a young age, Swanson worked for a year after school in a law firm and undertook work experience at the Wodonga law courts. Her caring nature, in particular her love for animals, has translated into a passion for social justice.

"A huge goal of mine is to be able to give animals a voice and seek justice against those who mistreat or harm them," she says.

Along with her modelling – winning several competitions since 2008, and featuring in *Women's Health* and *Ralph* magazines a number of times, as well as various advertising campaigns – Swanson is also working part time for energy drink company Monster in administration and promotions while she studies.

Her study and extra-curricular commitments keep her extremely busy, but she knows with the bright future ahead of her, it's definitely going to be worth it.

"In the long term I'd like to be a barrister in a busy Melbourne law firm. I hope when I'm a lawyer I'm still racing. Actually, it'll be a good way to fund my racing career!" 

Read more inspirational stories about Victoria University's Bachelor of Laws students on page 15. Visit the VU website to find out more about VU's law courses at vu.edu.au/courses

INSPIRING VICTORY

VICTOR VICTOR HAD NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL AND COULD BARELY READ OR WRITE WHEN HE ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA NINE YEARS AGO. TODAY HIS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS CONTINUE TO GROW AS HE WORKS TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN MELBOURNE.

KAMINI RAJARETHNAM

WHILE MANY FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS are wondering how they are going to juggle their studies and maintain a social life for the next few years, Victoria University student Victor Victor is not only studying full time but has a diary bursting at the seams with community work that extends from advising government ministers to mentoring youth and teaching dance.

In 2012, Victor was named Young Victorian of the Year. Young Victorians are nominated for the award because of their outstanding community and public service; Victor was nominated for his work improving the lives of Melbourne's young migrants and refugees. Earlier in 2012, Victor was also awarded City of Greater Dandenong's Young Achiever award.

These achievements are inspirational, considering that just nine years ago Victor arrived in Australia as a 10-year-old refugee from Sudan with no English skills, nor any understanding of school education.

Victor's mother brought him and his three siblings to Australia so they would have the opportunity to receive a good education. University had once seemed an impossibility for Victor, but today the 20-year-old is a first-year liberal arts student planning to gain a PhD in psychology.

After arriving in Australia, his family settled in Dandenong in Melbourne's outer east. He spent the first six months at a school for newly arrived and international students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Later in high school, and without a strong role model, Victor soon fell in with the wrong crowd and started getting into trouble.

A defining moment in his life was a meeting he had during Year 9 with his mother, the school principal and the police. It changed his life.

"Almost getting expelled was a reality check," Victor says. "I started to think about why I was acting the way I was, and realised it was peer pressure." He began working as a peer support mentor at his school, helping Grade 6 primary school students transition into high school and develop problem-solving, goal-setting and leadership skills.

In his senior years at high school he was involved in several community projects, including volunteering at the New Hope Foundation, Wyndham City Council and the Rotary Club, as well as helping African students with their homework through the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning.

"My mother always told me that one hand can't clap on its own, and I finally understood what she meant," he says.

In June 2012 he co-founded the Sudanese Australian Youth Action Group to create and lead community change for young Sudanese and encourage positive alternatives to the negative stereotypes of young Africans held within the community.

"We are fed up with seeing negative images of African youth in the media and the bad reputation we have among Australians," says Victor. "We wanted to show people that there is another side to the story."

The group has developed several projects to help their community, including organising the African Career Expo in consultation with local government ministers. Held in October 2012, it provided African youth with information about education, training pathways and job networks.

Believing that music and dance are other forms of reaching out to young people, Victor also teaches hip hop and contemporary dance to young children at the same school where he first learned to speak English.

In October 2012, Victor unsuccessfully ran for the Paperbark Ward of the City of Greater Dandenong Council in the local government elections. "I want to be the new voice for the community and be the link between the young and older generations," he says.

If he had won the seat, he would have been the youngest ever member of the Greater Dandenong Council.

When Victor is not rubbing shoulders with ministers and the media, he dabbles in playwriting and poetry. His first play, *It's only racist when it's not funny!* held at St Martin's Youth Arts Centre in inner-city South Yarra, explored ideas about race, culture, religion and ethnic groups.

LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE

THE CENTRE FOR MULTICULTURAL YOUTH (CMY)

is a community-based organisation that helps young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to develop leadership skills and participate in their local community. It also offers training and development opportunities to agencies and volunteers wanting to know how to work more effectively with young people from diverse backgrounds.

CMY has metropolitan offices in Carlton, Dandenong, Broadmeadows and Sunshine. The Victorian Government has committed \$1.8 million over four years to establish two regional offices in Morwell and Ballarat.

For more information on the Centre for Multicultural Youth visit www.cmy.net.au

"I wanted to get the message across to not take everything to heart," he says. "Stop dwelling and move on with your life, don't focus on the negatives." Victor also works as a youth facilitator at the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

What sustains the passion of this young student to commit so much of his time to helping others? "I like knowing that I've made an impact on someone's life; making them smile, that keeps me motivated," he says.

He is equally passionate about where he sees himself in five or ten years' time. "My main goal is to become a psychologist, but as long as positive change can be made within the community, I will be there at the front of the line." ☺



● Western Bulldogs players at VU's Altitude Hotel.

LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

A LOW-OXYGEN 'ALTITUDE HOTEL' AT VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S FOOTSCRAY PARK CAMPUS IS ONE OF ONLY TWO FACILITIES IN AUSTRALIA THAT OFFER ATHLETES AND MEDICAL RESEARCHERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE EFFECTS OF SIMULATED HIGH ALTITUDE LIVING.

KAMINI RAJARETHNAM

IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO WIN A GOLD MEDAL at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, it might be a good idea to first head off to the high altitudes of Colorado or the Himalayas to reap the benefits of altitude training.

Or you could head to Victoria University's Footscray Park Campus and spend some time at its state-of-the-art Altitude Hotel.

Situated in the heart of VU's sport and learning precinct, the hotel is a low-oxygen (hypoxic) facility that simulates a high altitude environment by increasing the level of nitrogen in the air. This causes an increase in haemoglobin in the blood of the hotel's occupants. Haemoglobin is the protein that binds oxygen molecules to red blood cells. The more haemoglobin in the blood cells, the more efficient the cells will be at carrying oxygen around the body.

By lowering the oxygen level from the normal 20.9% to around 15.5% by pumping nitrogen throughout the hotel, the hotel's atmosphere simulates an altitude of around 3500 metres. Athletes have long known the enhancement that a higher red blood cell count can give to their performance in training and competition. While a simulated high altitude environment is often used by elite athletes preparing for competitions at high altitudes, it is mainly used by athletes when training for sea-level events because the potential benefits are even better.

VU's Altitude Hotel is one of only two such facilities in Australia, the other situated at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra. The so-called hotel – just don't expect room service – has only four bedrooms, each with bunk beds, a bathroom, kitchen and a lounge, and can house up to 16 people at a time. However, each room can be set to a different altitude so guests can choose to 'live' in Bolivia or Arizona, or whichever altitude that best suits their training or competing agenda.

Altitude training is commonly conducted in one of three ways; live high, train high; live low, train high; and live high, train low. Athletes often train or live in low oxygen environments so they can be on a level playing field with athletes who normally live at high altitudes.

Dr Robert Aughey, senior lecturer in exercise and sport physiology at the University's Institute for Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL), and a senior sports scientist at the Western Bulldogs Football Club, is an authority on altitude training and the physiology of Australian Rules football players.

According to Aughey, a 'live high, train low' program enables athletes to reap the benefits of high altitude living, while training outside the simulated environment at their usual intensity and frequency.

Using this technique, athletes live in the hotel for 12 to 14 hours a day for five to 10 days. At the same time they maintain their standard training regime in Melbourne's low altitude setting of around 40 metres above sea level.

"Altitude training typically leads to performance improvements of one to two per cent. This sounds small, but is quite a big change for an elite athlete," says Aughey. "The smallest worthwhile change in athletic performance is 0.3%, so a change of one to two per cent is really good."

Since VU's Altitude Hotel opened in 2011, researchers have conducted two major studies with more in the pipeline for 2013.

Mathew Inness, a PhD student at VU's School of Sport and Exercise Science, is investigating whether the technique of living high and training low improves team sport athlete performance as much as it does for individual events such as cycling, rowing, athletics and swimming. He is also looking at the effects of multiple exposures to altitude training over a period of time, particularly for Australian Rules football players.

Meanwhile, Aughey says it is still not known whether 'living low, training high' is better than 'living high, training low', so a comparative study between the two techniques will be undertaken by Inness under Aughey's supervision.

Athletes can 'train high' at VU in simulated high altitudes at its Environmental Exercise Laboratory, also located in the sport and learning precinct at Footscray Park Campus. Here, stationary bikes and a treadmill are available for up to 10 athletes at a time to acclimatise to a hot and high humid environment, or exercise in simulated sunlight, wind or low oxygen environments.



ALTITUDE

0–3500 METRES PLUS

HUMIDITY

20–90%

TEMPERATURE

+5° TO +40° CELSIUS

● Environmental exercise lab: acclimatizes up to 10 athletes at simulated altitude as well as high humidity and low oxygen.

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

THE 1968 OLYMPIC GAMES HELD IN MEXICO CITY, at an altitude of 2240m above sea level, were the first games staged at a high altitude. The high altitude proved advantageous for events requiring bursts of energy such as the high jump and sprint races because the air was thinner and therefore had less resistance than air at sea level. This allowed runners to run faster and jumpers to jump further. The same principle also applied to objects thrown such as a discus or javelin, which travelled further.

The number of world records set at Mexico City was indicative of the impact of the thinner air on performance.

- American athlete Bob Beamon jumped an astonishing 8.9 metres in the long jump, smashing the previous record by 55 centimetres.
- American track athlete Jim Hines became the first man to break the 10-second barrier in the 100-metre sprint.
- American track athlete Lee Evans became the first man to break 44-second barrier in the 400-metre sprint.

MOUNT EVEREST

8848M

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

3200M

MEXICO CITY

2240M

DENVER, COLORADO

1580M

MELBOURNE

63M

AMSTERDAM

0M

LAKE EYRE

15M

DEAD SEA

-424M

In another Altitude Hotel project, the first of its kind in the world, ISEAL research leader Professor David Bishop is investigating the impacts of hypoxia (low oxygen levels) on both muscle physiology and fitness levels. The project is studying the consequences on healthy subjects when they are subjected to reduced oxygen levels for extended periods.

“A greater understanding of adaptations to hypoxia is essential to better understand the basis of pathological conditions such as pulmonary diseases, which are characterised by a reduced availability of oxygen,” says Bishop.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a condition that leads to permanent low oxygen levels in the blood accompanied by aerobic fitness impairment.

As part of the study, six participants lived 24 hours a day in the Altitude Hotel for 19 days at a simulated altitude of 3200 metres. “The study of chronic hypoxia in healthy subjects is a novel experimental approach to understand the effects of hypoxia in

diseases where it is not clear if hypoxia, or other elements associated with the disease, is the cause of the patient’s disability,” says Bishop.

Bishop aims to find out if hypoxic living causes impairments at the muscle level. If so, it will help determine specific treatments, which will be groundbreaking in the field of medical research.

When the Altitude Hotel is not being used for research it is available for commercial use. Australian Football League clubs such as Port Adelaide and the Western Bulldogs have used it as part of their pre-season training. A room costs \$660 per night and athletes typically stay in the hotel for two to three weeks.

Aughey says there is still much to learn about the effects of low and high oxygen environments on the human body. “Right now it’s just a matter of getting funding to do more research,” he says. “There is certainly no lack of ideas.”

EDUCATION WITHOUT BORDERS

MORE THAN 13,000 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED IN VICTORIA UNIVERSITY COURSES ONSHORE AND AT VU'S OFFSHORE PARTNER INSTITUTES, MAKING VU ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING PROVIDERS OF TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION. **ANN MARIE ANGEBRANDT** REPORTS.

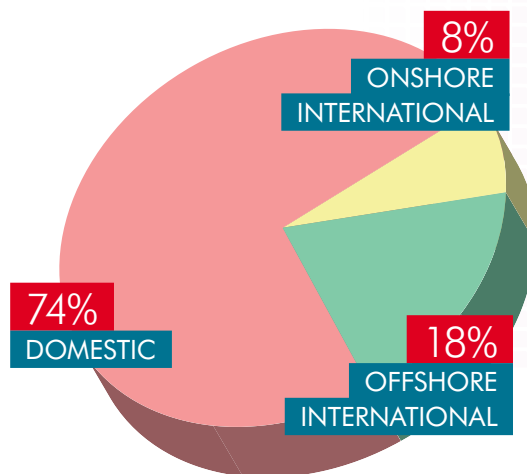
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR **IWONA MILISZEWSKA** first became aware of the effect cultural differences could make in the classroom nearly 20 years ago when she started teaching a VU offshore program in Hong Kong. As one of the University's first academics to teach a VU course overseas, she was puzzled why her Hong Kong students were not answering any of her questions during class, unlike her students studying the same course in Melbourne.

She even wrote down a false proposition to see if they would correct her. It was only at break-time when students made a beeline for her that she discovered they did not like to talk in front of each other, nor contradict a teacher.

The incident led Miliszewska to develop a model for testing the effectiveness of transnational education programs – courses operated by Australian universities but delivered overseas – using student experience as a key indicator. The work culminated in a PhD in the field of transnational teaching and learning, as well as citations from VU and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council for her exemplary contribution to transnational education research.

"As transnational education grows, it is critical to accommodate the experiences of participating transnational students," she says. "Students in these programs come from a range of backgrounds, experiences and needs."

Currently, VU has more than 9000 students studying offshore, including in China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Germany. The courses range from TAFE English language programs through to specialised masters courses, mainly in business and computer science. Students have the option of transferring to Melbourne for some of their course, and many do. In fact, about a third of the more than 4000 international students studying at VU's Melbourne campuses are transfer students from offshore sites.



● Victoria University student breakdown 2011.

Miliszewska says there are several reasons the demand for transnational education is rapidly growing for universities in major English-speaking countries such as Australia, Britain and the US. These include insufficient places in reputable degree-granting institutes at home, an expanding global marketplace for cross-border professionals, and as a way to enhance employment opportunities.

"A foreign qualification has a great allure and carries considerable weight in many countries," she says. "A testamur doesn't say where a student physically studied – only that they are a graduate of Victoria University in Australia."

Vice-Chancellor Peter Dawkins says transnational education is integral to VU's future growth.

"We hold VU graduation ceremonies at a number of international partner sites," he says. "These events are as much about the achievements of our offshore students as they are about maintaining strong international relationships and being a leading provider of transnational education." ∞

FREIBURG

KUWAIT

INDIA

- Ganpat University, Ahmedabad

KUWAIT

- Australian College of Kuwait

GERMANY

- Angell Business School, Freiburg

CHINA

- Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing
- Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing
- Liaoning University, Shenyang
- Shandong Jianzhu University, Jinan
- Henan University, Kaifeng
- Sichuan University, Chengdu
- Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
- Henan College of Finance and Taxation, Zhengzhou

AHMEDABAD

HO CHI MINH CITY

BEIJING

SHENYANG

JINAN

ZHENGZHOU

KAIFENG

CHENGDU

HONG KONG

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS DELIVERING VU OFFSHORE PROGRAMS

THE PHILIPPINES

HANOI

JOHOR BARU

KUALA LUMPUR
SINGAPORE

PHILIPPINES

- AMA Computer University, The Philippines

MALAYSIA

- Sunway University College, Johor Baru
- Sunway University College, Kuala Lumpur

SINGAPORE

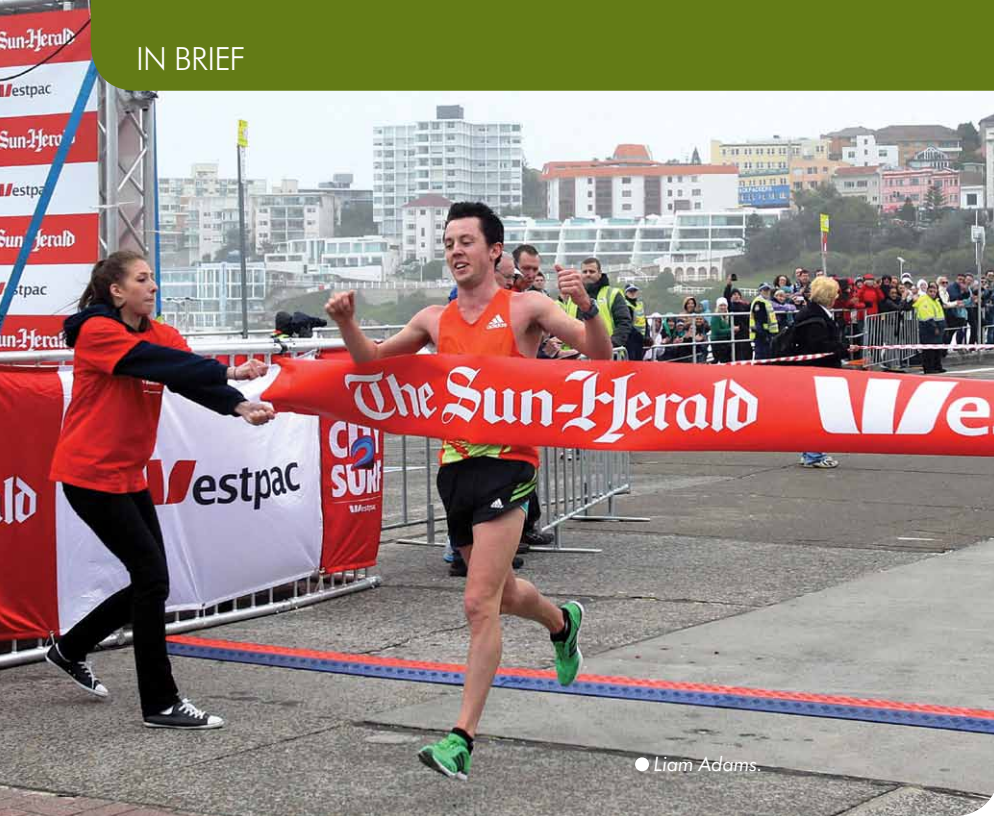
- Lathan Hall Academy

VIETNAM

- Hanoi University, Hanoi
- University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY,
MELBOURNE

Note: map represents sites where most VU offshore programs are taught; not all partner institutions are represented



● Liam Adams.

■ BACK TO BACK

VU STUDENT LIAM ADAMS is the first Australian in two decades to win back-to-back Sydney City2Surf races.

Adams, 25, outraced a field of 85,000 in August 2012 to win with a time of 41 minutes 31 seconds, 20 seconds short of his winning time in 2011.

The 14-kilometre City2Surf is the world's 'largest' race – with more competitors than the New York and London marathons combined. Competitors set out from Hyde Park in the centre of Sydney and race via Heartbreak Hill to Bondi Beach.

Adams, a five-time Australian cross-country champion, began the race as favourite. He is the first Australian to win the race back-to-back since record holder Steve Moneghetti in the early 1990s.

Adams established an early break on the field, but feared he had made a tactical mistake by going out too hard from Hyde Park before reaching the notorious Heartbreak Hill. But he held the lead throughout the race, crossing the line 51 seconds ahead of the second placegetter.

A Bachelor of Exercise Science and Human Movement student at VU's Footscray Park Campus, Adams is working on the VUnit community events program and helping develop the University's athletics club. ∞

■ V4U AWARD

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S VOLUNTEER FOR YOU (V4U) program was awarded 'Best Event' at the Australian Association of Campus Activities (AACA) Campus Link Conference held in Adelaide in October 2012.

Organised by VU's Student Life team, V4U is an all-inclusive volunteer event where students and staff spend a whole day giving back to the greater Footscray community.

The Student Life team was up against all universities, TAFEs and other education institutions in Australia.

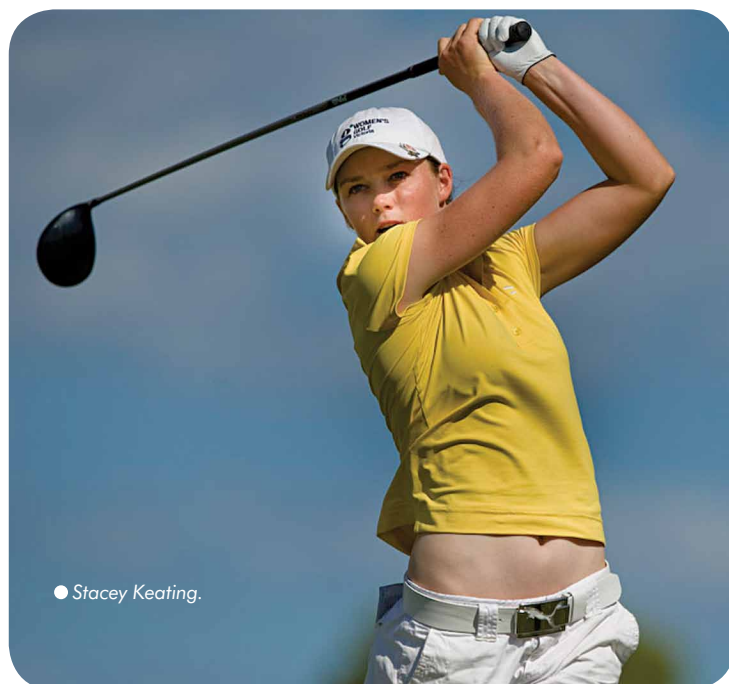
"Many other unis and TAFEs are far better off than us, with more resources and funding," said Student Life Officer, Cristyn Jenvey. "We demonstrated what dedication and innovation can do."

The projects undertaken ranged from working with children at the Western English Language School; rejuvenating a courtyard at an aged care facility; providing maintenance at scout halls and neighbourhood houses; and working with the local food bank giving out food to the homeless. Volunteers were transported in mini buses to their various projects across the western suburbs of Melbourne.

"This event creates an opportunity for the University to engage with the community and form connections with organisations, and encourages us to continue to build these links," said Jenvey.

It is the second year in a row that Victoria University has won the award for Best Event, last year it was awarded for Step Up Day. ∞

● Volunteers at the Maribyrnong Community Centre.



● Stacey Keating.

■ GOLFING VICTORY FOR VU ALUMNUS

Rising golf star Stacey Keating is taking international ladies golf by storm. In just her second professional season, the VU alumna captured the Spanish Open in September 2012 and went on to win the French Open by one stroke two weeks later.

The 26-year-old finished sixth on the Ladies European Tour money list with the equivalent of just over AU\$190,000 for the season.

Completely hooked on the game since she began playing and scored a hole-in-one at age 12, Keating won her first nationally-recognised tournament in 2006, the Victorian Women's Open Amateur Championship. She went on to win the Queensland Strokeplay Championship, Irish Stroke Play, Pleasington Putter tournament and one of the biggest amateur events in the world, the Canadian Amateur.

Twice named Victoria University's Female Athlete of the Year, Keating was inducted into VU's Sporting Hall of Fame in 2010.

Keating graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science in 2008 which she credits for her intricate understanding of the game.

"VU was the only university that offered subjects in what I was interested in – golf golf golf! It helped me to learn all about the science of the sport I love."

Keating now spends most of her time in Europe but enjoys coming home to spend time with her family, who are farmers in the country town of Cressy in western Victoria. ∞

VICTORY FOR VU AT KIRBY MOOT

A VICTORIA UNIVERSITY TEAM OF LAW STUDENTS beat 21 other teams from 12 universities to win the second annual Hon. Michael Kirby Contract Law Moot competition held in October 2012.

The three-day competition took place at Victoria Law School at the City Queen Campus, where the final was judged by Michael Kirby himself.

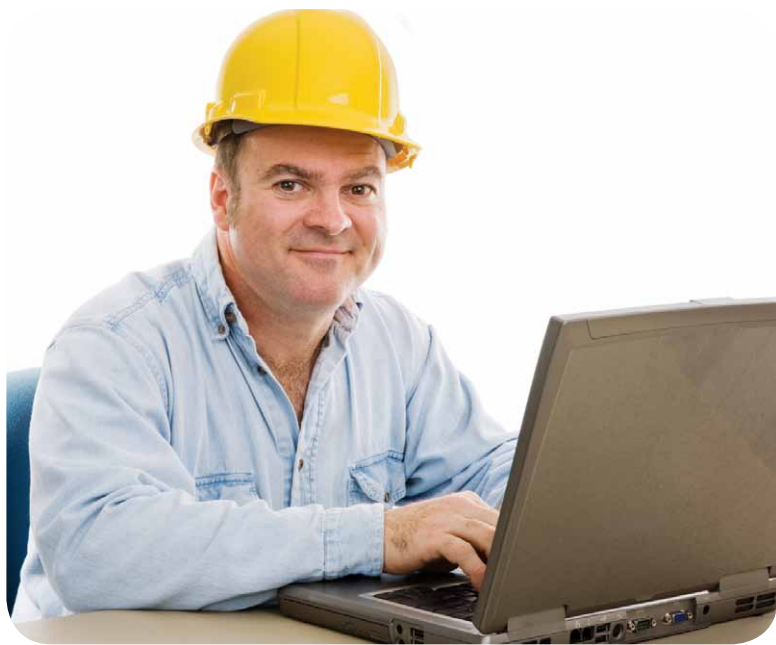
The moot simulated dispute resolution proceedings for a contractual law dispute where students drafted written appellate submissions and presented legal arguments.

The winning team members were Mitchell Latham and Robert Forrester as speakers, and Hubert Algje and Stephen Tamburro as the instructing solicitors.

The Kirby Moot is sponsored by the Leo Cussen Centre for Law, LexisNexis (publishers of the Australasian Mooting Manual, and Oxford University Press (Australia & New Zealand)).



● Aspiring lawyers argue their case in a mock court session.



ENABLING TRADIES

An interdisciplinary Victoria University Faculty of Business and Law research team has been awarded a grant to develop a unique information and communications technology (ICT) program for Victoria's tradespeople.

Associate Professor Stephen Burgess (School of Management and Information Systems), Dr Rafael Paguio (School of Accounting and Finance) and Dr Carolyn Woodley (Victoria Law School) were awarded the grant by the Telematics Trust for their project, Enabled Tradie.

The Telematics Trust grants are highly competitive and attract applications from leading educational institutes, government, business and not-for-profit organisations for projects that

explore innovative ways of using ICT for educational purposes.

Enabled Tradie will develop an educational program that combines face-to-face, online and work-based teaching approaches to build ICT awareness among tradespeople and encourage ICT usage. A pilot project will mentor a group of 12 tradespeople, supporting them in the adoption of appropriate ICT tools to help them achieve business process efficiency, market effectiveness and work-life balance.

The project will draw on VU's expertise in the use of face-to-face as well as online learning technologies. Another distinctive feature is the use of business students to provide dedicated and customised mentoring support.

PLUMB REWARDS

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS won the George Stone Pre-apprenticeships Award at the Master Plumbers Association's Gold Medal Training Awards in July.

The George Stone Award is designed to encourage pre-apprentice students to continue their plumbing training. Winners David Hassell and Jacob Yamin are now undertaking apprenticeships at Banjo's Plumbing and GJ Bradding Heating & Cooling respectively.

After a successful career in warehousing and logistics, Hassell made a life-changing decision to switch professions. At 29 he became a mature-aged pre-apprentice.

"I was looking for a career change that would offer versatility, a challenge and an opportunity to be self-employed," says Hassell.

Jacob Yamin is following a family tradition.

"There are three generations of plumbers in my family," says Yamin. "I believe there will always be opportunities as long as you are prepared to work hard."

VU offers pre-apprenticeships in Bricklaying, Carpentry, Engineering – Fabrication, Engineering – Machining, Joinery/Shopfitting/Stairbuilding, Plumbing and Signage.



● Plumbing teacher Martin Turner with Jacob Yamin and David Hassell.



Money Shot - A Journey into Porn and Censorship

By Jeff Sparrow

Print version published by Penguin Books
Softcover, 320 pages, \$29.95
Kindle version published by Scribe Publications
262 pages, \$15

In a time of fervour and moral panic, when old divisions between Right and Left are breaking down, *Money Shot* probes the contradictions of our relationship to sex and censorship, erotica and vice. By turns moving, enlightening and terrifically funny, it shows a new side to the debate about censorship — whatever your views.

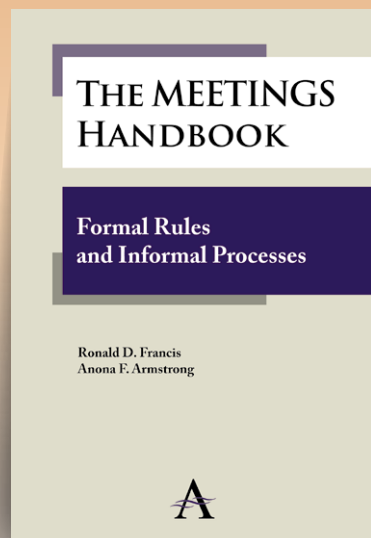
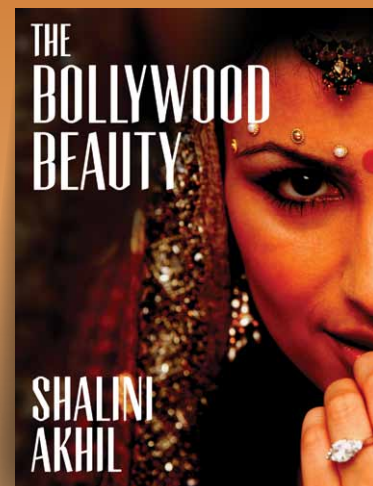
A SELECTION OF NEW BOOK RELEASES BY AUTHORS IN THE VU COMMUNITY.

The Bollywood Beauty
The culture-clash showdown between the bold and the dutiful

By Shalini Akhil

Print version published by Pan Macmillan Australia
Softcover, 322 pages
eBook published by Momentum, \$4.99

Cousins Kesh and Rupa come from completely different worlds. Kesh considers herself “Not Really Indian”, while Rupa is a “Bollywood Beauty”. As their worlds collide they hurtle toward answering one essential question – are we ever truly what we seem? In this delicious and highly spiced novel, Akhil dishes up tears, laughter, music and food.

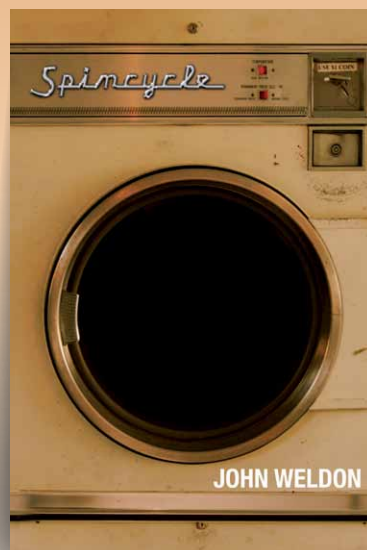


The Meetings Handbook: Formal Rules and Informal Processes

By Anona Armstrong and Ronald D. Francis

Anthem Press
Hardcover, 184 pages, \$99

This book shows that meetings really can be efficient and valuable. It introduces formal procedures that guide civilised debate as well as detailing meeting structures and offering practical skills. It includes several templates that can be used to guide the conduct and documenting of meetings.

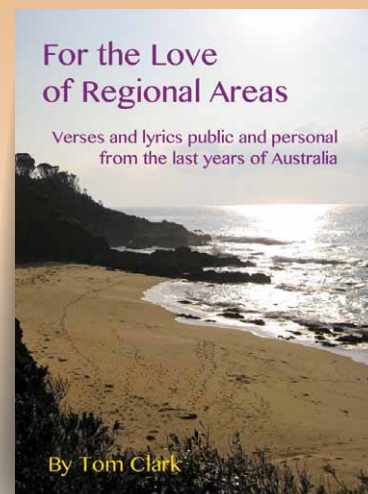


Spincycle

By John Weldon

Vulgar Press
Softcover, 188 pages, \$27.95

Spincycle is the story of a 30-something slacker caught between manhood and mousedom. Does he have what it takes to be a man, or would his time be better spent investing in cheese and avoiding cats? Weldon's writing examines masculinity, fatherhood and contemporary culture. It's the dark humorous tale of one man's battle to be just that: a man.

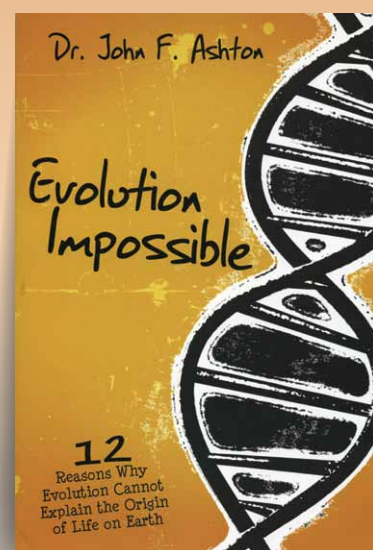


For the Love of Regional Areas – Verses and lyrics public and personal from the last years of Australia

By Tom Clark

Smashwords.com
eBook, 7528 words, \$0.99

Clark's collection of poetry explores the nature of what most Australians would lose if forced to leave their country. The book suggests that non-Indigenous Australians are guests in Australia and imagines a moment when they're forced to leave. The poems are set after they have departed, their boats fanning out around the globe in search of asylum.



Evolution Impossible: 12 Reasons why Evolution Cannot Explain the Origins of Life on Earth

By John F. Ashton

Master Books
eBook, 208 pages, \$6.80

Has science got it wrong after all? Are the fundamental theories about evolution and the big bang – the very cornerstones of biology and physics respectively – inherently wrong? Ashton explores these concepts from an alternative perspective, criticising unscientific approaches and advocating alternative views.



TALKING POINT

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THERE HAS BEEN MUCH PROGRESS at Victoria University since April 2012 when I presented The VU Agenda, a roadmap accelerating the implementation of our strategic plan to 2016. The VU Agenda focuses on four broad areas of University reform: organisational, curriculum, workforce, and campus and infrastructure. Its aim is to build our reputation for excellence and a distinctive curriculum; improve efficiency; return the University to a financially sustainable path; focus resources on our core mission of learning and teaching; and become an integrated, collaborative and great university of the 21st Century.

The VU Agenda is an ambitious change plan, but it is the right time to implement it. The internal and external pressures we now face require bold and courageous action and now is the time to respond to ensure that we are a unified, dynamic and agile organisation.

In contrast to the 20th Century when tertiary education was designed only for a small elite, there is a growing recognition that in the 21st Century the majority of people in advanced countries will need to obtain a tertiary education. Victoria University plans to be an international leader in providing access to an excellent tertiary education for a large and very diverse population, and gain a reputation for greatness that differs from the traditional view of a great university. Our plans for greatness involve access and engagement as well as excellence, and will focus on a 21st Century set of students developing 21st Century skills.

One of the first recommendations arising from the work of our Curriculum Commission regarding The VU Agenda was to develop a new college structure for Victoria University, which will take effect in January 2013. Within some of the colleges, Victoria University will establish two new types of bachelor degrees starting in 2014: a small set of Career Start Bachelor Degrees and a larger number of restricted specialist Professional Bachelor Degrees. Victoria University's Career Start Bachelor Degrees will be designed for students who may have previously aimed to enrol in vocational education and are less well prepared for conventional higher education. We anticipate offering four or five of these degrees, and they will probably include a Bachelor of Business, a Bachelor of Technology and a Bachelor of Community Services.

The Career Start Bachelor Degrees are intended to increase participation in higher education – consistent with the Australian Government's policy. Students will be accepted on the basis of their potential to complete a degree even if they need additional learning support, especially in the early stages of their studies. Transitions pedagogy resources will be prioritised to support these students so that they can become successful learners. We also envisage providing an intensively taught first year that benefits from the combined expertise of our TAFE and higher education workforces. The availability of multiple entry and exit points will be particularly important in these qualifications.

Alongside this small suite of Career Start Bachelor Degrees and our existing Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science will be a larger suite of Professional Bachelor Degrees and Professional Master Degrees. They are intended to be a development of many of the University's existing degrees, and will be aimed at supporting more specific career pathways.

This suite of degrees will include the areas of teaching, nursing, paramedicine, osteopathy, biomedical science, engineering, accounting, finance, logistics, enterprise resource planning, tourism and hospitality, sport science and exercise physiology. Students will be required to show evidence of higher levels of prior achievement for entry into these degrees and students who perform well in the Career Start Bachelor Degrees will be able to transfer into them.

I am excited about the opportunities we have in front of us, challenging though they are, and I have great confidence in the processes we are undertaking. There is a broad-based commitment to The VU Agenda among staff and within the University community as we move to a recognised single vision of Victoria University's future.

PROFESSOR PETER DAWKINS
VICE-CHANCELLOR 

Read more about Victoria University's new colleges and distinctive specialisations in this edition of Connections on pages 16–17, and about the work of Victoria University's Curriculum Commission on page 21.

ENROLLED STUDENTS

TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	48,200
Higher education	26,244
TAFE	21,956

COURSE ENROLMENTS

TOTAL COURSE ENROLMENTS	63,128
Higher education undergraduate	21,890
Higher education postgraduate	5014
TAFE	36,224
Apprenticeships and traineeships	2843
International total	13,489
International offshore	8890
International onshore	4599
VETiS	3016

AWARDS PRESENTED

TOTAL AWARDS	16,037
Higher education	5421
TAFE	10,616
Doctorates	79
Masters by research	6
Honorary degrees	1

VU-FUNDED EQUITY SCHOLARSHIPS

TOTAL	400
Value	\$428,000

STAFF

TOTAL	2760
Academics	680
TAFE teaching	550
Senior management	24
General	1506

OUR EIGHT COLLEGES

- College of Arts
- College of Business
- College of Education
- College of Engineering and Science
- College of Health and Biomedicine
- College of Law and Justice
- College of Sport and Exercise Science
- Trades College

CAMPUSES AND SITES

- City Flinders ● City King ● Melton
- City Queen (site) ● St Albans ● Sunshine
- Footscray Nicholson ● Footscray Park ● Werribee

ENQUIRIES

General enquiries +61 3 9919 4000
International student enquiries +61 3 9919 1164
international@vu.edu.au
Alumni relations +61 3 9919 1017
alumni@vu.edu.au vu.edu.au/alumni

Note: Above awards, scholarships and staff figures represent 2011

