Long-term life studies: the detail’s in the data

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Life-changing research

At the University of Melbourne many such studies are currently underway, some much smaller, some larger scale. They are exploiting the life patterns of boys as they become men, two cohorts of school leavers from differing generations, and a range of twin studies using what Professor John Hopper, also from the Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics, has previously described as “exquisite examples of relatives”, observations of whom can tell us much. And there are many more. It’s tantalizing to consider what revelations may come to light as the studies of these Australian lives unfold.

Just like the study of lives, the study of deaths also can reveal much. Researchers are at the point of being able to use contemporary computing power to crunch the numbers so big that only a modern supercomputer can tell us – and future generations – a lot about living well.

Katherine Smith
Editor
Life lessons: a longitudinal study

Lisa Zilberpriver talks to Melbourne Graduate School of Education’s Professor Johanna Wyn about her long-term research project, Life Patterns.

Professor Johanna Wyn transcends time and space. Not personally, that is, but by mapping the entire lives of participants in her research project, Life Patterns, at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, with colleagues Hernan Cuervo, Graeme Smith, Jessica Crofts, and with Dan Woodman in the School of Social and Political Science.

The project has followed two cohorts of participants since they left high school. The first stage commenced in 1991, with a group of young people – born around 1973 – who were just completing their secondary education. Fifteen years later, a second group of participants – born around 1989 – was recruited at the same life-stage. Their decisions and actions have been tracked since then and examined in their own right and comparatively.

Voice asked Professor Wyn how studies like Life Patterns are executed, and what kind of information they offer.

VOICE: How do you go about recruiting people to this kind of research? What changes if they choose their minds about wanting to participate at some point?

JW: We recruited at schools, TAFE and other places of education. Participants are reminded every time we send them a survey that their involvement is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time.

VOICE: What is the most valuable aspect of this kind of information to society as a whole? In what fields is it most important?

JW: Many studies, while valuable, are a snapshot of a social phenomenon at a single moment in time. Our Life Patterns study has the advantage of looking over several years; the decisions, actions, choices and aspirations of two generations over different aspects of their lives.

For example, we can compare and contrast participants’ goals when they left secondary school to what really happened later in life. The Life Patterns research program looks at education, employment, health, and family issues. It makes connections between different spheres of life and how they impact or influence each other rather than looking at each sphere as its own separate and individual world. We look at young people – not as students or workers or siblings or daughters – but as students and workers and family members.

VOICE: How lasting is the research impact of longitudinal cohort studies?

JW: This is an ongoing longitudinal study that has the advantage of following people in real time to understand young people’s and young adult’s choices and actions over the years.

VOICE: How do participants feel about their involvement – what kind of experiences do they report?

JW: In 2004 we were thinking of ending the study of the first cohort. We continued with the study however, when we were overwhelm- ingly exhorted by many of these participants to continue. We try to make our participants feel valued and make every effort to communicate our results to them. They confirmed that the Life Patterns surveys represented an opportunity for them to reflect on how their lives were going and where they wanted to go in the future. Many said that receiving regular updates on the findings was a unique chance to compare themselves to others, and to understand their entire generation.


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Access to deaths data to benefit researchers and patients

Annie Rahilly looks at a new scientific collaboration using data from thousands of patients to progress medical research.

There are always great challenges for medical researchers but additional access to data is now offering a deeper insight into causes of diseases that will hopefully translate to new treatments, faster.

A partnership between the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, BioGrid Australia and the University of Melbourne is set to deepen understanding about patterns of disease and injury, and the effectiveness of treatments and prevention efforts and campaigns.

Valuable data held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) can now be released to researchers while satisfying privacy, ethical, legal and data security requirements and is advancing medical research.

The initiative is providing medical researchers with easier access to valuable data about deaths in Australia, enabling them to understand more about how, when and why Australians die.

Underpinning the new approach is a privacy-protecting mechanism for matching data called GRHANITETM that has been developed by the University of Melbourne Rural Health Academic Centre. The system uses advanced encryption and data analysis techniques to allow researchers – with appropriate controls – to link data between sources of information.

Researchers are already putting the new system to good use in a study investigating the link between hospital-based and population databases to learn more about the risk of death in people newly diagnosed with epilepsy.

The study is the first phase of a larger project planned to investigate the risk and contributors to mortality amongst several specific groups of patients. It involves the University of Melbourne's Department of Medicine at The Royal Melbourne Hospital and has been led by Dr Tahir Hakami as part of his PhD under the direction of Professor Terence O'Brien.

Epilepsy has been identified as one of the top 20 causes of avoidable mortality in Victoria and is one of the five leading causes of death in young adults in Victoria. Up to 10 per cent of the Australian population will experience a seizure and approximately 3 per cent have epilepsy at some time in life, making epilepsy-related mortality a major public health problem.

Despite evidence of this serious problem, there is a lack of quality data about the risk of mortality in epilepsy and the factors that contribute to this risk. This means individuals living with epilepsy and treating clinicians do not have the basic information required to address the problem.

The initial study has drawn on records of 713 adult patients who attended the Royal Melbourne Hospital’s First Seizure Clinic to address fundamental gaps in knowledge. This dataset was linked through BioGrid with National Death Index records in order to measure mortality after new-onset epilepsy.

As a result, researchers were able to identify those patients who had died, and the cause of death. Death rates for the new-onset epilepsy group were then compared to death rates in the Victorian population, using Australian Bureau of Statistics population data for the corresponding time periods and taking into account differences in age and sex distribution.

According to collaborator Dr Anne McIntosh from the Melbourne Brain Centre at the Royal Melbourne and Austin Hospitals, one of the fundamental issues is that “epilepsy” is not a single entity. The type and characteristics of the seizure condition varies between individuals, and it is likely that the risk of mortality differs according to these characteristics.

Professor Terence O’Brien says the linkages result in high quality data that allow researchers to measure patient outcomes, a crucial first step in the investigation and identification of risk factors.

“What we now know is that there is increased mortality amongst a group of individuals who were diagnosed with epilepsy and highlights the importance of investigating mortality in specific patient groups. This information will inform health care planning to reduce the incidence of mortality after a diagnosis of epilepsy,” he says.

“Efficient access to information from the National Death Index has made a major difference to the investigation, and will continue to do so.”

www.neuroscience.unimelb.edu.au/content/institute
**Research revelations about life after adolescence**

Liz Banks-Anderson and Katherine Smith find out how cohort studies—or studies of lives over often lengthy periods—can reveal risk factors for disease, and inform health planning.

**FEATURE**

In 1964 Granada Television in the UK followed a group of British children from various walks of life through their lives, reporting on their development, and the societal changes that shape it, every seven years. Directed by Michael Apted, it became known as the Up Series. Memorably, the first episode of 7-Up shows little Neil, with his strong suburban Liverpool accent, explaining the wetness of an English countryside in winter, and his ambition to drive a motorbus with a loudspeaker to take visitors to the country when he is an adult. In 2005 he appeared in 49-Up, having apparently come through the other side of pain—the depression and despair he recounts in 28-Up, a personality disorder he reveals at 35.

While such a long-term filmic study of lives was and is unusual, researchers in health and the social sciences use a similar scientific format as a means of investigating a wide range of health and sociological issues.

Ten to Men's study coordinator Dr Dianne Currier says the findings of the study will be largely on samples taken and interviews or questionnaires, genetic advances are now making a huge impact.

“One of the potentially important advances in risk factors is the increasing availability of genetic data,” she says. “Current costs for measuring the DNA of cohort participants are only a small fraction of the costs of even 10 years ago. “Cohort studies of genetic risk factors for many diseases have the potential to identify means of putting people into high and low risks of disease which can then be used to target prevention to those at most risk. One of the potentially important advances in disease outcomes is the sub-classification of disease based on pathology subtypes. This has enormous potential to identify risk factors that might not be possible if all sub-types of a disease (each with their own risk factors) are naively lumped together.”

Cancer epidemiologist Professor Dallas English from the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health works on two cohort studies—the Melbourne Collaborative Cohort Study with Professor Graham Giles from the Cancer Council of Victoria and Ten to Men (see break out).

“We have examined a range of health outcomes including cancers, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes with respect to alcohol consumption, diet, weight, obesity and genetics,” he says.

Professor English, also Director of the Centre for Molecular, Environmental, Genetic and Analytic Epidemiology and cancer epidemiologist, also points to the British Doctors Study, a cohort study from the early 1950s, which demonstrated clearly for the first time that smokers were more likely to develop lung cancer.

The advantage of a cohort study, Professor English says, is that they can identify factors that increase or decrease the risk of disease and injury, for many different types of disease.

“In a cohort study, one generally begins by identifying a ‘cohort’ of people who are healthy and then following them over time to see which ones develop the disease of interest.”

“One great value of cohort studies is that they allow us to study many diseases simultaneously. For example, a single study can show how smoking is related to several types of cancer and to various types of cardiovascular disease,” he says.

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www.tentomien.org.au
Moving women to the frontline of military history

In popular culture, the personification of the Anzac legend is the young, fearless soldier facing relentless resistance and wholesale injury and death at Gallipoli. Recent Australian scholarship, however, looks behind the line, to position women at the very centre of the First World War. By Gabriele Murphy.

**VIEWPOINT**

It’s hardly surprising that particularly in this, the 100th year since World War I hostilities began, and less than one before Australia commemorates the Gallipoli centenary, the Anzac legend is personified as a young male soldier bravely and honourably defending his country and ensuring its future freedom.

But equally, in the official WWI centenary commemoration held at the Gallipoli dawn service last month on Anzac Day, and in several media commentaries before and after, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s address to grieving mothers of Anzac soldiers killed at Gallipoli was given prominence.

“You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears,” Atatürk’s first president and commander of the Turkish troops at Gallipoli wrote in 1934, the inscription of which appears on the Kemal Atatürk Memorial in ANZAC Parade, Canberra.

“Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace.”

Joy Damousi, Professor of History at the University of Melbourne, has – through several monographs, articles and book chapters – researched the short and long-term impact of the two world wars, highlighting in particular the challenge of mourning the categories of grief, loss, sacrifice, trauma and identity within the context of war.

“In my research I have highlighted the way in which the experience and expression of grief, loss and trauma is shaped by particular historical circumstances,” Professor Damousi says. “During the Great War the unprecedented numbers of dead soldiers meant elaborate mourning rituals were necessarily modified.

“Twice as many men died in action or of their wounds in the First World War as were killed in all the major wars between 1790 and 1914. The unprecedented scale of the trauma of loss and sorrow left an enduring legacy on those who remained to absorb the impact of individual and national tragedy.”

In the chapter titled ‘ Mourning Practices’ which she contributed to third volume of The Cambridge History of the First World War published in February this year, Professor Damousi points that it was women who assumed the burden of the mourning work in many communities, not least because they made up the bulk of the survivors.

“This focus on mourning has positioned women at the very centre of the history of the First World War,” says Professor Damousi. “It was women who assumed the burden of the mourning work in many communities and were responsible for adopting ritual practices to the challenge of mourning the war dead.”

As such, according to Professor Damousi, there was a belief that mothers across all nations had a particular and a special part to play in mourning their dead sons. “The enduring loss of those who continued to live in the shadow cast by war has allowed women, and mothers in particular, to find a place in the history of the First World War, which has traditionally prioritised men’s experience.”

Professor Damousi is due to present her most recent research into gender and mourning at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, to be held in Toronto in May where she will outline new directions of scholarship on war and mourning. “This includes an examination of different contexts of war and mourning beyond widows and mothers,” says Professor Damousi.

“In Britain, the estimation is that by 1918, every household and most other countries had lost a relative or friend. This circle of mourners – which might include siblings, aunts, cousins, neighbours on the home front and nurses who mourned on the battle front – remains unexamined.”

Much of the historical scholarship to date has examined national contexts of mourning and gender and, while in Professor Damousi’s estimation this should continue, she considers that there are fruitful lines of transnational inquiry which could provide further layering and complexity and lead to capturing the diversity of mourning across cultures.

“Survivors grieve for their dead in complex and varied ways across cultures, nations and religions,” says Professor Damousi. “The shifting sands of how and where they sought refuge, and the way they mourned, reflects individuals and communities in trauma and turmoil and cannot be captured with glib generalisations.”

“It is to the web of complex cultural shifts and range of individual and collective reactions that our attention needs now to turn.”

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In George Călinescu’s ‘Youth Mourning’ [detail] (1916, oil on canvas) a naked woman, personifying lost youth, kneels grief stricken before the wooden cross of a grave against the backdrop of a WWI battlefield. (Imperial War Museum, ART4663.)
Beautiful gore: grotesque images from the University’s print collection

The University’s Baillieu Library has launched its new, refurbished exhibition space with a stunning collection of works from its print collection. By Katherine Smith.

Wreewolves, cursed children and killer bears are among the monstrous creations on display in a debut exhibition for the new Noel Shaw Gallery in the University of Melbourne’s Baillieu Library.

Radicals, Slayers and Villains, curated by Kerianne Stone, draws on works from the University’s print collection, which, according to Herald Chair of Fine Arts Professor Jaynie Anderson, is one of the largest Old Master print collections in Australia, only somewhat smaller than those at the National Gallery of Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria, “but comparable in rarity and quality of impressions to print holdings in these national collections.”

It is, Professor Anderson says, also one of the few print collections in Australia to be found in a university collection, where it informs the teaching of art history in an ongoing dialogue.

Although caring for these works is the daily grind for Ms Stone, Curator of Prints at the University, she acknowledges the often “macabre, violent, grotesque, shocking or horrifying” nature of the works she looks after, despite their very great beauty as objects, with warm hues of paper and ink, and complex build up of texture through etching or engraving.

“The flayings, stabbings and beheadings appeal to our fascination with human brutality, but we also experience a sense of wonder at these fabulous works of art that ignite our imagination and stimulate our curiosity,” she says.

Ms Stone says many of the artists featured are personal favourites, including Goya, Rembrandt, Durer, Hogarth, Goya and de Bruyn among many others – have had a huge influence on the development of western art.

The complete collection comprises over 8000 individual prints plus rare print albums, books, paintings and a small number of drawings, and came into being with a gift of more than 15,000 prints from Dr John Orde Poynton in 1959. 

A medical pathologist who joined the British Army and was incarcerated in Changi in 1942, Dr Poynton eventually came to Australia to recover from his war injuries, and brought with him the collection of prints gathered by his father Dr Frederic John Poynton, and his own collection of rare books. All of these items in turn formed a very prestigious and generous gift to the University of Melbourne.

“Both father and son clearly shared a deep interest in the history of printing, and printed materials in general, and John Orde Poynton proceeded to donate more than 15,000 remarkable volume to the library over a number of years,” Ms Stone says.

Radicals, Slayers and Villains, supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation, the Besen Family Foundation and Museums Australia, is a gorgeous exhibition with which the Baillieu Library has relaunched its exhibition space.

The much larger, more secure and contemporary gallery space is named for Noel Shaw, a former student who supported the University Library during her lifetime and through a generous bequest.

University Librarian Philip Kent says Mrs Shaw is an inspiration to all. Having enrolled as a postgraduate student at Melbourne during the Second World War and completing a Diploma of Social Studies, Mrs Shaw studied further and qualified with in-depth studies in psychology between 1947 and 1949. She maintained ongoing contact with the University after moving to live in Sydney.

Mr Kent says it was especially pleasing that the University could recognize Mrs Shaw’s generosity in the presence of her sister Dr Margaret Henderson, family members and friends.

“Dr Henderson is a leader and pioneer in establishing the place of women in medicine and was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Medical Science last year,” Mr Kent says. “Through the gift of Mrs Shaw we now have a purpose-built gallery to showcase the treasures of our very special library. We want to expand this work to create a new home of our special collections.”

The exhibition is on display until 3 August, with a program of public lectures to explore themes presented in the exhibition, after which it will tour regional Victoria to Hamilton, Ballarat and LaTrobe Regional Galleries. A detailed catalogue with short essays by experts in the field is also available for sale in the University’s Co-op Bookshop.

www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/special

REVIEW

Kate Auty. Photo: Peter Casamento

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
The ICC and the pursuit of global justice

Professor Tim McCormack is Professor of Law at the Melbourne Law School and the Special Adviser on International Humanitarian Law to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. He gave a lecture recently at the University of Melbourne’s International House on the International Criminal Court’s progress on fulfilling its lofty aims. Following is an edited extract.

PUBLICLY SPEAKING

I’ve been looking forward to tonight, and I want to start off, if I can, with a quote from the former secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. On the occasion on 18 July 1998 at the ceremony for opening for signature of the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, what UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said is this:

“In the prospect of an International Criminal Court lies the promise of universal justice. That is the simple and the soaring hope of this vision. We are close to its realisation. We will do our part to see it through till the end. We ask you to do yours in our struggle to ensure that no ruler, no state, no junta and no army anywhere can abuse human rights with impunity. Only then will the innocence of distant wars and conflict levelled against them, those two trials stand for – and for all the (often substantive) criticisms there were plenty of them.

We’ve had international criminal courts and tribunals before. In the aftermath of World War II, the Nuremberg and Tokyo War Crimes Trials – and for all the (often substantive) criticisms levelled against them, those two trials stand for major achievements, precedents in the international community’s attempt to deal with those responsible for egregious atrocities.

We aren’t talking anymore about an acceptable standard of establishing a tribunal by the winners of a war to be imposed on the losers, but they paved a way, and in their path, although it took four and a half decades, came the ICTY – the tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the ICTR – for Rwanda, the Extraordinary Criminal Chambers for Cambodia, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, all of them ad hoc tribunals set up to deal with specific conflict situations. The International Criminal Court is an attempt to advance beyond that model – to create a permanent court with at least theoretically the jurisdiction to deal with alleged crimes under the Rome Statute wherever they occur in the world.

I think the single most compelling argument from my perspective of why the international community needs a court like this, is because the period of 45 years from the end of the Tokyo Trial in 1948 through until the establishment of the Yugoslav Tribunal in 1993 is characterised by a litany of impunity in the face of atrocity. How many dictators and despots were there in that period that should have been held to account for the acts that they perpetrated so often on their own civilian populations? Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Nicolai Ceausescu, Augusto Pinochet – just to be geographically fair – but Amin, Pol Pot, Nicolai Ceausescu, Augusto Pinochet – just to be geographically fair – but there were plenty of them.

So, over the last 10 years it’s important to note that leaders around the world are on notice now, that there is an International Criminal Court that may exercise jurisdiction over them, and this, for some leaders is a very, very real issue.

The second major achievement is that many countries have transformed their domestic criminal law as a consequence of the International Criminal Court being established, and Australia is certainly one of those. There has been, in this country a bloodless, fortunately, revolution of our domestic criminal law, at least when it comes to the implementation of International Criminal Law. Before we became a State Party to the Rome Statute our implementing legislation to make various international crimes be acknowledged as crimes in Australian Domestic Criminal Law was patchy. We had some legislation in relation to war crimes.

We had some legislation into some crimes against humanity, torture and hostage-taking specifically, but there were all sorts of gaps in relation to genocide, and other crimes against humanity. Certainly, in relation to to war crimes in the context of a non-international armed conflict, there was nothing in the legislation at all. Now that’s radically changed, and it has changed as a consequence of the implementation of the Rome Statute into Australian Domestic Law, which has resulted in a new division – Division 268 of our Commonwealth Criminal Code Act, which includes almost 100 new crimes, all based on Rome Statute crimes.

What’s happened in Australia has been repeated in many other places around the world, and that I think is a significant development. There are also many countries that are taking alleged war crimes or other international crimes much more seriously at the domestic level.

You could say that the system is better than anything that preceded it, which was no permanent court at all, and that it’s in an evolutionary process because it’s certainly an advance over anything that’s gone before. But it’s not what we need as an international community or what we should desire, and those of us who claim to be committed to the goal of global justice still have heaps of work to do. I’m prepared to continue to support the work of the court in the hope that it can become more effective, but not without conceding the limitations to its jurisdiction.

Listen to the lecture on Radio National’s Big Ideas site:

http://www.abc.net.au/wn/national/programs/bigideas/2014-04-10/5375570
Painting the town red

From basketballs to chopsticks, the whole world is ‘Red’ Hong Yi’s canvas, writes David Scott

We’re often told as children that we shouldn’t play with our food. But take a quick look through Hong Yi’s online portfolio and you get the impression she never listened to her parents. Alongside portraits of Myanmar politician Aung San Suu Kyi (made out of dried carnations) and singer Adele (made out of melted candles) is her ‘31 Days of Food Creativity’, a collection of colourful images on white plates, made of everything from rice to radishes. It’s a collection that caught the world’s attention and compelled many to ask: who is this artist, better known as ‘Red’, who uses everyday objects to make her designs?

“I’ve always loved art and design, but I never thought I’d really be able to turn it into a career,” says Red, the Malaysian-born, Shanghai resident whose works have been seen in media from Esquire to CNN. “Of all the career options out there, the safest and most stable one seemed to be architecture, so I chose that path.”

It was a path that took her through the Faculty of Architecture at Melbourne and onto China as part of the Australian firm HASSELL, where her first forays into art – besides some doodling of Big Bird and Snuffy in her early kindergarten books – came during her spare time over the weekend. “Architecture school in Melbourne taught me that there are many directions, possibilities and techniques out there. And given the nature of the course, it also taught me how to manage my time well!”

While still with HASSELL, Red took a six month sabbatical to get her art and design career started, leading to the setup of her own studio in January last year. “I started out being my own videographer, manager, financial planner … it was hectic and there was so much to learn! But this year I started building up my team, and I now have a small group of people working for me in Shanghai.”

HASSELL has continued to be involved and supportive of her work, even funding some of her projects. The first project she uploaded to YouTube in 2012 – a portrait of Chinese basketball icon Yao Ming, made using a painted basketball – has turned out to be the catalyst for a whole range of interesting artistic collaborations. Most recently that’s included crafting a three-dimensional portrait of kung-fu movie legend Jackie Chan – all out of chopsticks – for his 60th birthday, as well as being commissioned by Hewlett-Packard to do a TV commercial featuring her work.

She was also invited to speak at the EG Conference in California these past two years, an invite that Red reflected was an honour, given she had the chance to speak to a crowd of established, successful artists such as The Simpsons producer Matt Groening, author Amy Tan, multi-Grammy award winner Linda Rondstadt and Mythbusters co-host Adam Savage. “I’m just extremely grateful that I’m able to share my work with so many people. Sometimes I wonder if all this is really happening to me still.”

“It has always been a dream to be able to make a living creating art. It’s been surreal having people from all over the world – and even people like Jackie Chan! – tell me they like my work.”

“I feel lucky and I feel blessed.”

For more photos and info about Red visit: http://www.redhongyi.com
Watch a video about Red’s chopstick portrait of movie icon Jackie Chan: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez-N3nb4_zjU

Partnersing the Italian Masters

The University of Melbourne is the National Gallery of Victoria’s official Learning Partner for the Winter Exhibitions show of Italian Masters, due to open later this week.

The University will also conduct a Melbourne Masterclass series at the gallery, hosted through the Faculty of Arts, featuring academic expertise within the faculty and across other disciplines. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Glyn Davis, will present the first masterclass.

The holdings of Italian art in the Museo del Prado, Madrid are unique and unrivalled in museums outside Italy.

Coming to Melbourne for the first time, this exhibition is drawn from the Museum’s magnificent collection of over 70 paintings and 30 drawings presenting a rich selection of works spanning 300 years of Italian art, from the early sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. This is the largest number of Italian works the Museo del Prado has ever loaned to one exhibition, which is organised by Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid in association with the National Gallery of Victoria and Art Exhibitions Australia.


“Biologically Inspired Engineering” 2014 Graeme Clark Oration

The Oration will be delivered by renowned cell biologist and bioengineer, Dr Donald Ingber M.D., Ph.D., Founding Director of the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University.

Dr Ingber imagines a future where new cancer treatments become available in a few short years not decades, where animal testing is no longer necessary because organs and a whole body are now tested on microchips, and where targeted tumour cells are individually destroyed without the need for surgery.

Time: 6.15 pm
Date: Thursday, 5 June
Venue: Melbourne Convention Centre
1 Convention Center Place, South Wharf, Vic, 3006
Register at: graemeclarkoration.org.au
Admission is free. Bookings are essential. Seating is limited.
A way forward: New technologies improve refugee health

Bringing newly arrived refugees, medical specialists, GPs and new technologies together is reaping health rewards. By Liz Banks-Anderson.

A new electronic patient records system is improving the health of recently arrived refugees and facilitating collaboration between general practitioners in regional areas and metropolitan specialists.

Developed by staff at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Infectious Disease Service at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the electronic record system is used by general practitioners and specialists to improve immigrant healthcare through collaboration with technology, as part of a Refugee Clinical Hub.

Victorian Infectious Disease Service physician Professor Benjamin Cowie and gold coast refugee that arrive from developing countries can present with non-infectious, chronic conditions such as Hepatitis B and parasite infection that require diagnosis and management.

At present, the Hub is dealing with recently arrived refugees from Afghanistan, and there have been waves of refugees in recent times from Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Burma,” Professor Biggs says.

Language is a key barrier to managing illness among new arrivals, as is ensuring messages are communicating clearly between refugee patients and their healthcare providers.

“The main problem we were trying to fix in developing the new system was that recently arrived refugees can have multiple medical issues that require treatment from GPs and specialists — and that can take months or years. To get best patient outcomes you need a coordinated system and we didn’t have that.”

“This is a tremendous way to build refugee primary care capacity and is a way to promote refugee health care in general practice,” Professor Biggs says.

The technologies being developed by the research team allow for a more integrated approach to patient care in a system that still relies on paper-based records where, in complex cases, papers can go missing, and test results can be duplicated, making it difficult for specialists to get a full picture of the patient, based on their record.

Professor Biggs says the electronic records system allows sharing of patient information between GPs and specialists to get a holistic picture of their patient.

“The clinical hub became a concept of a hospital-based refugee health system and a general practice management system that were integrated, with which we’ve ended up,” she says.

The main aims of the project were to improve medical record systems at a hospital level, and improve the ability to make a comprehensive healthcare plan at the general practice level. Practitioners involved also hope to incorporate tele-health to support specialists in rural and remote areas.

Professor Biggs says the system offers insight into the future of healthcare we want to see, where there is better integration with the general practice and hospital systems in rural and metropolitan areas.

Dr Thomas Schulz, from the Victorian Infectious Diseases Service, explains the process of telehealth connection: “We have the patient sitting with their GP in rural or regional Victoria, and linked via a videoconference to a specialist sitting at Royal Melbourne.”

“In a trial setting we have used telehealth to access interpreters via video conference, which helps to communicate information to refugee patients,” Dr Schulz says.

Dr Schulz believes the telehealth system has many benefits, by allowing patients to see their doctor rather than just talking on the phone.

“Patient perception of the video conferences were favourable. We did a formal trial of the patient’s perceptions of telehealth for accessing an interpreter. Compared to a telephone interpreter they much preferred it. As a comparison to the videoconference without the picture, it is much preferred by patients and doctors,” he says.

In addition to integrating refugee health care, the system is valuable in that it presents an upskilling opportunity for general practitioners in rural areas to work and train with specialists they may not otherwise have access to.

The new records system can also be used for any chronic disease translation, explains Professor Biggs.

“The system we’ve built is incredibly flexible and could be similarly configured for any chronic or acute disease where specialists and general practitioners need to interact and share information and work with hospitals.”

Reflecting on the process, Dr Schulz and Professor Biggs both agree it has been rewarding to work towards trying to improve care for a group of patients with complex needs.

“It is nice to face a new challenge and to improve care for a particularly vulnerable patient group who have many complex issues, including the financial and social issues of getting to a clinic, which are often as pressing for the patient as our issues of managing their disease state. Helping to address those issues is challenging and satisfying,” Dr Schulz says.

The project is a collaboration between the Department of State Development Business and Innovation, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, The University of Melbourne, the Royal Children’s Hospital, Monash Health, Barwon Health, Arthritis, Precedence Health Care, the Windermere Foundation and the Department of Health.

For more information on the Refugee Clinical Hub and all partners visit: www.video.visualdomain.com.au/266/16/teckc/368/43/320/001

Climate action researcher Don Henry joins Melbourne

Highly regarded environmentalist Don Henry has been appointed as a Public Policy Fellow at the University of Melbourne, where he will undertake research into climate change politics and the role of public activism.

Mr Henry’s research will look at the last decade of environment policy making and public engagement in Australia and the Asia Pacific region and the recent tremendous growth in Australian rooftop solar panels represents the equivalent of shutting down a large coal power station and taking away all the pollution that this created.

“I’m looking to research how public action and collaborations across society can shape and influence political leaders and innovative policy making.

Viral hepatitis now leads Australian preventable deaths

Deaths from viral Hepatitis B and C and have surpassed HIV/AIDS in many countries, including Australia and in Western Europe, according to an analysis of the 2010 Global Burden of Disease study.

The analysis was conducted by Benjamin Cowie and Jennifer MacLachlan from the University of Melbourne and Melbourne Health, and was presented at the International Liver Congress in London earlier this month.

“Liberian cancer is the fastest increasing cause of cancer deaths in Australia, increasing each year by 5 per cent, so by more than seventy people each year. In 2014 there was an estimated number of deaths of around 1,500 from liver cancer. The predominant cause is chronic viral Hepatitis,” Dr Cowie says.

Dr Cowie said additional resources were needed to prevent and treat Hepatitis B and C in order to address these imbalances in major preventable causes of death.

“The Commonwealth Government has recently committed to funding initiatives to improve access to testing and treatment for people from priority populations living with hepatitis B in Australia, which is a great step forward,” he said.

“The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) estimated around 1.3 million people lost their lives to viral hepatitis since 1990, which is comparable to the respective burdens of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.”

The GBD 2010 is the most recent version of a study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It is the largest ever systematic effort to describe the global distribution and causes of a wide array of major diseases, injuries and health risk factors. The GBD 2010 has collated estimates of 291 diseases and injuries and 1,160 conditions that followed to identify the causes of human death worldwide.

Getting boards on board

An investigation led by the University of Melbourne shows that positive patient experience is as key a part of high quality healthcare and goes beyond the responsibility of frontline medical and nursing staff. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare has identified Partnership with consumers as one of the top issues that needs to be addressed by boards to improve the quality of health service provision in Australia.

The investigation found safeguards to improve patient experiences was not the sole responsibility of doctors and nurses but is a core governance responsibility for hospital leaders, including the board.

Dr Marie Bismark, from the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health said evidence was now about the link between effective partnerships with healthcare consumers and high quality health care.

“We are seeing a real change in attitudes in the health sector. Patients are becoming more engaged with their own healthcare decisions and more willing to question the way in which services are provided,” she said.

Dr Bismark found that while some health service boards in Victoria were embracing the change others were more reluctant to deviate from traditional models of care.

The study was published in the inaugural issue of the Patient Experience Journal.
Two for one — Melbourne’s innovation economy gets a double dose

Investing in Victoria’s knowledge economy through innovation and science means attracting and retaining internationally recognised researchers in their field. Since May 2004, VESKI seed-funded by the Victorian Government, has been identifying and bringing talented researchers back to the state with the support of host organisations such as the University of Melbourne. VESKI chief executive officer, Julia Page, says it’s too much of a gamble to wait for these leading researchers and scientists to return to Victoria by chance, so VESKI offers a drawcard to encourage researchers and their families back. “In less than 10 years, we have been able to help 20 leading researchers move their research to Victoria, and more than half of those have a connection to the University of Melbourne,” Ms Page says.

Among the University’s alumni to return are Dr Mark Dawson, an innovation fellow who made the move in 2014, and his wife Dr Sarah-Jane Dawson. Both Dawsions studied at the University of Melbourne and are now back in Victoria as clinician-researchers setting up laboratories at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Dr Dawson’s VESKI innovation fellowship, which is worth more than $450,000 over three years, will allow him to build on his initial studies, and translate important basic science discoveries into innovative and targeted therapies for acute myeloid leukaemia. The other Dr Dawson, a leading researcher and medical oncologist in her own right, will be focused on breast cancer research.

Dr Mark Dawson, who is focused on the fascinating research into cancer epigenetics, says the move will enable the couple to balance competing demands of childcare with career, and more than double the benefits back to Victoria. “My wife has traversed an almost identical path to mine, though she works in the area of breast cancer,” Dr Dawson says. “Our labs are co-located and our offices are shared. When we were trying to work out how we would manage our careers back here in Melbourne, we decided that we needed to work more closely together.”

Another innovation fellow announced this year is Professor Kenneth Crozier, who is returning in July to focus on advancing the frontiers of imaging through optical micro and nanostructures at the University of Melbourne. He completed his undergraduate degrees in Electrical Engineering and Physics. Another research duo brought back to be part of Victoria’s science and innovation communities is Professor Cameron Simmons and his wife Dr Sarah Dunstan, who both returned to Melbourne in 2012. Professor Simmons joined the Nossal Institute for Global Health at the University of Melbourne after 10 years in Vietnam with Oxford University. Professor Simmons has since moved into the new Peter Doherty Institute and is creating a set of diagnostic and prognostic tools to determine which dengue cases are going to go ‘downhill’ quickly and slide into dengue shock syndrome, one of the most common causes of death in children with the disease.

No one could doubt that this global tropical disease specialist is motivated. Professor Simmons is also extremely well regarded and connected, both here and abroad. Professor Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust, nominated Professor Simmons for the 2013 WRED Smart List of ‘fresh-thinking people with transformative ideas who are going to make an impact on the future’. Dr Sarah Dunstan was a senior scientist at the University of Melbourne and are now back in Victoria as clinician-researchers setting up laboratories at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Dr Dawson’s VESKI innovation fellowship, which is worth more than $450,000 over three years, will allow him to build on his initial studies, and translate important basic science discoveries into innovative and targeted therapies for acute myeloid leukaemia. The other Dr Dawson, a leading researcher and medical oncologist in her own right, will be focused on breast cancer research.

Professor Simmons will continue his global dengue collaborations back at the University of Melbourne, while his wife Dr Dunstan continues to use genomics to understand host-pathogen interactions of a number of infectious diseases including tuberculosis, malaria and enteric fever. Without these VESKI innovation fellowships Victoria would not be the beneficiary of such highly skilled and international recognised researchers.

Among the many University of Melbourne alumni that have returned, eight have brought their research to laboratories within the University itself including the inaugural VESKI innovation fellow and President-elect of the Australian Academy of Science, Professor Andrew Holmes. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Jim McCluskey says: “The UOM celebrates a unique partnership with VESKI. By working closely with them to bring back some exceptional people, we have been able to engage in additional high-quality research that benefits not only the University but all of Victoria. We congratulate VESKI on its 10th anniversary and look forward to working together to bring back new ideas and talent.”

www-veski.org.au

Online support for domestic violence to be trialled

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www-veski.org.au

Online support for domestic violence to be trialled

I mproving rates of poor disclosure by victims of domestic violence is the focus of a new online web-based project led by the University of Melbourne. i-DECIDE is being developed by Professor Kelso Hegarty from the Department of General Practice at the University of Melbourne from intervention work with general practitioners in Australia and based on a US pilot of a safety decision aid. The innovative online project offers users security through self-directed survey questions. It provides a safe, private, secure forum for women to assess their relationship, weigh up their priorities, and plan for a safer future for themselves and their children.

“In light of the recent Victorian deaths in the context of family violence, innovative solutions including the use of technology are needed to promote safety of women and children,” Professor Hegarty says. Professor Hegarty has previously led the largest domestic violence screening and counselling intervention trial in general practice in the world. The study, published in The Lancet last year, found that trained family doctors enquired more about the safety of the women and their children and that depression outcomes were better for women invited to attend the general practitioner counselling.

Professor Hegarty found that poor disclosure to GPs by abused women and women’s preferences have led to the development of this non-face-to-face method of responding to women who are afraid of their partners. “This is a highly innovative project, which will significantly advance the knowl- edge base in two areas: first, improving resources for women experiencing family violence; and secondly, in the field of deliv- ering social interventions via the web,” she says.

“Our work will be of immediate benefit to Australian women and will also generate new knowledge.

“Abused women’s decisions for their families and themselves are not straightforward and may change over time. The safety process takes time, resources, and involves women’s consideration of complex individual and community factors.

“One challenge is to help women become more aware of abuse within their relationships, gain the self-confidence necessary to take action, and develop a personalised safety plan that recognises and considers priorities during critical decision making,” she says.

www.mdh.unimelb.edu.au
The chemistry of curiosity

Andi Horvath explores the winding career path of University of Melbourne Head of Chemistry Professor Frances Separovic.

How does a person transform from lab technician and instrument washer, to research physicist with an Arts degree and then become Head of a Chemistry Department? The answer is the ‘spirit of curiosity’ and it describes University of Melbourne’s Professor Frances Separovic to a tee. She admits “I didn’t choose a career in science; I stumbled into it,” but she believes that shows the way success usually follows the pursuit of one’s passion.

Professor Separovic is one of those researchers who is a true explorer; her uncharted territory was the world of membrane models. Membranes are the thin lipid bags that hold together every living cell; they are also the surfaces where the chemistry of life happens. But for her they were fascinating physical and mathematical conundrums.

“I just wanted to know how membranes work. The application of the research is why you get funded but it’s not really what drives me,” she says.

Recalling her first job, Professor Separovic says she started working as a lab technician at a CSIRO microbiology lab.

“I used to count colonies all day, and do the washing up. I got very good at it and would finish my work by lunchtime. So I would go up and down the corridor asking people if I could help them. After they discovered I was good at maths, they suggested I help the new guy in good research. He was working on modelling lipid membranes, trying to find out why they leak in things like soggy tomatoes.

“He had this new machine called a nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometer that analyzed samples providing information at the level of the atom. We started getting curious about the basics and wanted to know how the lipids packed together in a membrane. At the time there was an argument among scientists in the field on how small you could make an enclosed membrane model, a tiny lipid bubble known as a vesicle. We just did some experiment matched and that you can calculate predictive power of a theory. I remember the first time I did this. It made me feel both powerful and awestruck at the same time. I was working on an ancient computer, I think it was a PDP 11; it did the work of a modern pocket calculator but took up a whole room. I put together all the physical interactions that were responsible for my experimental signals, then I crunched the numbers. I got a set of messy looking lines and it looked exactly like the lines of my experimental data. I was so delighted the theory and experiment matched and that you can calculate how things happen at the level of the atom. It was wonderful. So how does a number loving physicist end up in a chemistry faculty?”

“I saw this ad for a ‘solid-state NMR spectroscopy person’ in the University of Melbourne Chemistry department. They had people working on polymers and other materials but needed a physical chemist with solid-state NMR experience to work out structures. And that was me!”

After an impressive number of grants received, over 130 papers published and successful organisation of over 25 conferences, in 2005 she became the first woman appointed to a professorship in chemistry in Victoria. Then in 2012, for her work in biophysical chemistry, she was the first woman elected to the Australian Academy of Science in the field of chemistry.

She still goes up and down the corridor asking people if she can help but this time its about the packers. So I decided I wanted to study maths and physics, however you couldn’t get a Bachelor of Science degree then without studying chemistry. But maths and physics were all I was interested in, so I ended up with a Bachelor of Arts double major in maths and physics — both of which could be taken in an Arts degree then. At this stage I was a single parent, still working at CSIRO and thought I was more likely to get a job as a physicist than a mathematician (although in retrospect that’s not quite true), so I embarked on a part-time PhD in Physics at UNSW, which I finally finished in 1992.”

Recalling a pivotal moment in her research, Professor Separovic says: “I came to love the predictive power of a theory. I remember the first time I did this. It made me feel both powerful and awestruck at the same time. I was working on an ancient computer, I think it was a PDP 11; it did the work of a modern pocket calculator but took up a whole room. I put together all the physical interactions that were responsible for my experimental signals, then I crunched the numbers. I got a set of messy looking lines and it looked exactly like the lines of my experimental data. I was so delighted the theory and experiment matched and that you can calculate how things happen at the level of the atom. It was wonderful. So how does a number loving physicist end up in a chemistry faculty?”

Seemingly innocent: How childhood diarrhea can trigger diabetes

Virologist Associate Professor Barbara Coulson explains how a common childhood infection could hasten the onset of type 1 diabetes. Presented by Dr Dyani Lewis.

Associate Professor Barbara Coulson is Principal Research Fellow at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity at the University of Melbourne.

It pays to obey: Complying and over-complying with financial regulations

Political economist Professor Andrew Walter talks about approaches to financial regulation in the long aftermath to the Global Financial Crisis, and what happens when banks over-comply with the new rules. Presented by Lynne Haultain.

Andrew Walter is a political economist and Professor of International Relations in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne.

What’s not to “Like”: Social media and its impact on the political process

Political scientist Professor Victoria Farrar-Myers discusses the increasing, evolving impact of social media on political processes and communications, and details research into whether social media subverts democracy and increases hyper-partisanship. Presented by Peter Clarke.

Victoria Farrar-Myers is Professor in Political Science and Distinguished Teaching Professor with the University of Texas-Arlington, and is the 2013/14 Fulbright Flinders University Distinguished Chair in Australian Political Science.
25 years of giving

Joe Fennessy investigates the extraordinary philanthropic career of Dr Bill Holsworth.

The scale is remarkable. Over the course of the past 25 years, Dr Bill Holsworth has personally funded over 500 university students across Australia – including over 160 from the University of Melbourne – to undertake wildlife research projects. Despite having had such widespread influence, one of the University’s most consistent donors is also one of its most humble – and he isn’t done yet.

Few can lay claim to providing the levels of support demonstrated by Dr Holsworth. For the past 25 years he has channelled his passion for the environment, conservation and ecology into the Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment (HWRE) – a truly unique philanthropic fund delivering direct financial grants to an unprecedented number of student researchers.

Dr Holsworth – a renowned ecologist, mammalologist and wildlife biologist – established the endowment fund in 1989. As a former university student and academic, he was all too aware of the number of quality projects and students missing out on funding.

“The shortage of funds for conservation research often meant very good students moving to their second choice areas of study,” he says. “By providing funds for research I hoped that the best students would pursue their career choice and become leaders in the biological conservation field.”

Since that time, 164 students from the University of Melbourne have been awarded grants totaling $1.4 million. Across eligible universities, the number of students to benefit from the fund exceeds 500 – students whose research might have otherwise struggled to attract funding.

Such vast numbers, clinically noted in Dr Holsworth’s handwritten records, demonstrate the extraordinary influence he has had on the lives of postgraduate students and research in Australia. Yet he remains incredibly humble, personally mulling over each individual grant application and conducting every assessment himself.

“Looking after graduate students has been the focus of my career,” he says. “I’m just doing what I’ve always done.”

While Dr Holsworth might be reluctant to sing his own praises, the many students to benefit from his philanthropy understand just how important his contributions have been.

Andrew Katsis recently completed his Masters degree having received funding from Dr Holsworth in 2012 and 2013. He says the support was “absolutely essential” to his research.

“In my field of animal behaviour and evolution, there’s often no immediate benefit to humans, so it can be difficult to convince funding bodies that your research is worthwhile,” Mr Katsis says.

“I think it’s fantastic that donors like the Holsworths can see the value in simply striving to understand the natural world, so we can appreciate its fragile complexity and protect it.”

For Dr Holsworth, hearing from HWRE recipients such as Mr Katsis is something he finds particularly rewarding.

“One of the things I find very satisfying is to know that the students are very dedicated to doing what they’re doing,” he says. “They’re good students, they’re working hard and they’re very committed.

Ensuring these students are equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills and expertise to prosecute the case for sustainable environmental practices is also a key motivator for Dr Holsworth.

“When I retired from university teaching I wanted to continue training the next generation of ecologists and promoting conservation,” he says.

“Students undertaking research in these areas are extremely important in setting up an informed understanding of the environment.

“From that standpoint, they’re the ones who will really understand what the environment is doing and the consequences of certain policy decisions.”

It is this rationale that helps to shape Dr Holsworth’s underlying philosophy for establishing the HWRE.

“We live on the earth for a short time and should leave the world a better place. If we don’t manage it properly we’ve got a big problem for the human race,” he says.

“Education, research and leadership are vital if we, and subsequent generations, are not to repeat past mistakes.”

It is a message that Dr Holsworth hopes will resonate with a greater audience as he expands the HWRE to all Australian universities in 2014.

“I’ve started fairly small and continue to have built up the funds each year has proven very beneficial,” he says.

“I was able to start the HWRE early in my retirement, and now I hope to see it grow into a major Australia research grant source for the benefit of outstanding students for generations to come.”

www.campaign.unimelb.edu.au

www.science.unimelb.edu.au

Secret lives, forgotten stories: highlights from Heritage Victoria’s Archaeological Collection

Until 12 October 2014

Free admission

Free tickets:
Wed 21 May 1–1.30pm, Sat 24 May 2–3pm,
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Check the website for details

The Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

Swanston Street (between Faraday & Elgin streets) Parkville VIC

Free admission
Looking at another side of globalisation

Maya Borom reviews a new book by University of Melbourne alumnus Doug Hendrie on the often overlooked benefits of globalisation.

A chance encounter with an Ethiopian owner of a hip-hop shop in Footscray led Doug Hendrie on an adventure across the world in a bid to try to find out how people make their own meaning in cultures and societies. He documents his findings in his new book, Amalgamations: How Globalisation is Good, published by Hardie Grant.

Mr Hendrie travelled to the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea and Ghana in the hope of uncovering how globalisation works at the coalface.

He essentially wanted to know how people's lives were affected by globalisation and what impact (long lasting or otherwise) it had, and continued to have, on local cultures.

An interesting example of this is the seemingly easy absorption of the American gaming phenomenon StarCraft and its enthusiastic uptake among South Korea's large gaming community.

The real-time strategy game has become embedded in societal norms of behaviour so much so that Korea's largest companies sponsor gamers full time in competitive gaming leagues. Talking with gamers, Mr Hendrie was able to explore Korean notions of individuality, sexual identity and even patriotism - and justapose these against his own cultural upbringing.

Travelling a path less travelled, Hendrie also turns his attentions towards Ghana's film industry, and its love for Christianity-meets-pre-European demonology flicks.

The writer's innate ability to meet the right people at the right time enables him to get behind the veil of usual tourist visit and witness, at a grassroots level, the effects that globalisation has on culture.

Interpersed with historical facts about each country he visits, the book is an interesting insight into what Mr Hendrie refers to as 'cultural hybridity', where host cultures modify and transform transplanted cultural practices and turn them into something that has meaning and impact domestically.

www.alumni.unimelb.edu.au

MUP Publications

This month’s featured MUP publication is Prisoner X by Rafael Epstein.

About Prisoner X

Prisoner X is the “true story behind the intriguing but ultimately tragic story of Ben Zygier: son, soldier, spy, who apparently hanged himself in Ayalon prison. Just 34 years old, he was discovered slumped in a small bathroom, separated from his cell by a transparent door.

He was the son of a prominent Jewish-Arab lawyer and president of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, the son of a man once tipped to become Australia’s first Jewish prime minister.

Discovered slumped in a small bathroom, separated from his cell by a transparent door.

Did he work for Mossad? Was he also working for ASIO? Was he involved in the supply of false passports? Was he a whistle-blower or double agent, or simply a young man way out of his depth?

In Prisoner X Rafael Epstein uncovers the intriguing story of a young Australian swept up in international intelligence. About the author

Rafael Epstein has won two Walkley Awards for his investigative reporting at ABC Radio. He has worked in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Timor, Indonesia, Europe and the Middle East covering national elections in the UK and Australia, East Timor’s vote for independence in 1999, the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, the 2005 London bombings, and the arrest of Australia’s most feared intelligence agencies, it is not easy to kill yourself. But Ben Zygier managed to do just that.  His death of a mysterious cause was confirmed by police.

Mr Hendrie’s book is excellent in every way. It’s informative, readable and enjoyable. The events are told in a way that keeps the reader engaged and interested in the story. It’s a book that should be read by anyone interested in globalisation and its impact on our world. Will it change your perspective? I think it will. Will it change your mind? I don’t know.

Congratulations to Lois Knox who was the first Voice reader to correctly identify that images of Simpson and his donkey have appeared on the $5 commemorative coin issued in 1995, and $100 note issued in 1996.

WIN!
Victoria’s post-contact history in objects on show

PREVIEW

Archaeological artefacts from eight of Victoria’s oldest post-contact historic sites are being showcased – most of them for the first time – at the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne.

The exhibition includes more than 70 archaeological artefacts from Heritage Victoria’s collection, including 200-year-old objects from the failed convict settlement at Sorrento, a pistol from the site of the Eureka Rebellion, and burlar boxes from the mass grave at Pentridge Prison where Ned Kelly was re-buried.

The collection traces Victoria’s settlement and growth from convict times, through the years of the whaling industry and the Goldrush, up to the birth of ‘Marvelous Melbourne’.

The artefacts also tell the stories of forgotten Victorians – people such as the Chinese in the goldfields and impoverished workers in early Melbourne, who have not left their mark on traditional histories, but whose lives are reflected in the trinkets and treasures that are left behind.

The exhibition, called Secret Lives, Forgotten Stories, is co-curated by Dr Andrew Jamieson from the Classics and Archaeology Program at the University of Melbourne and Jeremy Smith, Senior Archaeologist at Heritage Victoria.

Dr Jamieson says that since amendments to the 1995 Victoria Heritage Act, over 900 archaeological sites have been investigated allowing professional management of precious artefacts in the Heritage Victoria conservation centre.

A champagne or wine bottle dating from 1795, which was found only 40 years ago by a local scuba diver and recently handed in to Heritage Victoria, and a 1697 coin found in the homestead ruin near Heidelberg – planted in the foundations possibly as a good luck charm, are among the artefacts.

“Stories from Victoria’s history are brought to life through these artefacts,” Dr Jamieson says, “but the stories about the archaeological digs that discovered them are also fascinating, and because most of the objects have been recovered in the last 20 years, represent the coming of age of Victorian archaeology.”

“Never before has it been possible to see the state’s history so richly presented through the lens of archaeology. "Excavations in Victoria over the past 20 years have uncovered significant archaeological remains and relics. Many of the artefacts in the exhibition have never been displayed publicly before.

“For the first time it is now possible to see the evolving story of Victoria’s 19th Century settlement and development reflected in its archaeology,” Dr Jamieson says.

The exhibition highlights the history of archaeology in the state, revealing the discoveries of archaeologists and the contributions they have made to our understanding of Victoria’s past.

The collection also has a maritime theme, featuring artefacts recovered from two important shipwrecks, the Cheviot and the SS City of Launceston.

“The exhibition represents a very exciting and important opportunity to collaborate with Heritage Victoria (and the Heritage Council) in telling the story of the settlement and growth of Victoria through these unique objects,” Dr Jamieson says.

www.art.museum.unimelb.edu.au

New writing from Tony Birch

Laura Soderlind reviews Dr Tony Birch’s latest collection of short stories, The Promise. Dr Birch researches and teaches creative writing in the University of Melbourne’s School of Culture and Communication.

REVIEW

Tony Birch’s latest work is spoken in a vernacular of casual dispossession and strung out on the bones of a country dealing with serious inequality.

The Promise presents a vision of Australia that is both recognizably familiar as well as overwhelmingly foreign.

Though in urban settings at times, the stories are bound by an aesthetic of Australiana deeply rooted in the landscape of swimming holes, cattle dogs on sprawling farms and ramshackle country houses with a shotgun under a floorboard.

The titular short story ‘The Promise’ is set in a starkly morose and desolate geography. Dr Birch narrates: ‘The biggest business in town was grog. Always had been. Closely followed by the church, and after that, since the government crackdown, came drug-and-alcohol counselling.’

The story is about an alcoholic man from an Indigenous community, whose wife has recently left him, taking their children. He forges a document saying he’s committed to sobriety and drives drunk to visit his wife, hoping to manipulate her to return to him.

When she refuses, he burns down their family home and blusters suicidally along a highway.

This is one of the themes that bind many of the stories. Dr Birch presents a series of dispossessing, disenfranchised men who are criminals, who stalk women, are poor fathers and who crumble when women refuse to support them through their dysfunction.

Dr Birch's narratives present these characters with their weaknesses so close to the surface that they're inked with a sort of tender hopelessness. Dr Birch’s authorial tendency is of striking compassion and mercy.

This is, however, not the kind of bleak collection of stories that is without gratification. Dr Birch gives voice to characters often unheard. There is a triumph in the pages which shred glamour in favour of honesty.

This unearthing and fleshing of these characters reads as a kind of literary activism. Dr Birch’s latest collection of short stories, The Promise, is without gratification. Dr Birch gives voice to characters often unheard. There is a triumph in the pages which shred glamour in favour of honesty.

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The Promise is published by UQP.
Why can’t I run with wild cows?

Andi Horvath finds out exactly why our ancestors thought it would be a good idea to domesticate animals.

O ur ancient ancestors once ran with wolves to cooperatively hunt for meat, like wild cows. Over time some wild wolves were domesticated to become today’s Kelpies, Pugs and everything in-between. We still have wild wishes but what ever happened to the wild cow? There must have been a point in history when we stopped chasing them and tried our hand at fencing in the herd. But what happened to the wild versions of cows? Is there a difference between beef and dairy cattle?

Professor Michael Goddard, an expert in cattle genetics, explains the past, present and future of cows.

The archaeological and genetic evidence suggests there are two independent domestications of cattle,” Professor Goddard says. “One in the Middle East and one in the Indus Valley, the latter of whom used the local wild cattle or Aurochs.

“The local wild cattle in the Middle East were already different to those in India and so the domestic cattle derived from them are also rather different. The cattle domesticated in the Middle East became Bos Taurus and spread to Europe, Africa and northern Asia, while the cattle domesticated in India became Bos Indicus or zebu cattle, which spread through much of Asia. Both sub-species were imported to Australia after European settlement.

“So the wild ancestor of domestic cattle, both beef and dairy, was the ‘Auroch’, which can be seen depicted in early paintings preserved in caves, such as the famous collection of animal paintings in Lascaux, France.

“The early domestication event that occurred in the Taurus Mountains of the Middle East was about 10,500 years ago, and carried out by Neolithic cultures, eventually leading to the Bos Taurus. The genes that are present in today’s cattle come directly from those wild ancestors.

“Yet it is a case with cows, the domestication of cattle had some mutual benefits for animal and human alike: cows were provided with protection from other predators and given a constant supply of food, while humans were guaranteed a supply of meat, milk, hide, bones, transport and items for trade. Those cows were especially useful at pulling a plough, and even fertilizer in the form of manure was a great resource for communities.

“The Aurochs became extinct most possibly from loss of habitat. The last one was reported to have lived in a Polish forest in the 16th century, whereas domestic cattle bred in captivity lived in human environments, and were therefore not affected by the loss of wild habitat. While there are no extant wild cows as such, there are some distant relatives of wild cows and Aurochs such as Bos and yaks.

Professor Goddard explains that until recent times cows were kept for multiple purposes and selected first for tameness and the ability to live in herds unlike domestication.

“Only recently have farmers selected specialised lines of beef and dairy cattle. Farmers in Brazil, for example, such as the Guanches, selected for milk production, while those in Japan selected for beef production.”

Reflecting on his research and the projected future of beef and dairy cattle, Professor Goddard says: “I work with a team of research-ers at the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industry and our main aim is to help farmers breed more profitable cattle.

“In 2001 we published a paper describing a method for using information from DNA markers to help select better cattle. This method is now used worldwide in dairy cattle and in other species of livestock, poultry and some crops. However, it is not as successful in beef cattle as in dairy cattle and we are working to improve it in dairy, beef and sheep.

“As the world’s population grows the demand for food, including meat and milk, increases. Also as people in developing countries become a little richer they increase their consumption of milk and meat. This will continue to happen as economic development proceeds throughout the poorer countries of the world and we therefore expect demand for milk and meat from Australia to continue to increase.

“The price relatively poor people can pay will not be high, however, so the challenge for Australia is to produce milk and meat very efficiently and sell it to the rest of the world without causing environmental damage within Australia.”

“The price relatively poor people can pay will not be high, however, so the challenge for Australia is to produce milk and meat very efficiently and sell it to the rest of the world without causing environmental damage within Australia.”

With the help of dogs, early humans could gather cattle because they had a natural herding instinct but its wild cows were probably not so docile by nature.

So maybe running with wild cows or modern day bulls is not such a good idea. Let’s leave it to game young men who participate in that annual New Year’s race in Berwick, Victoria.

www.land-environment.unimelb.edu.au

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www.medias.unimelb.edu.au

www.globalhealth.web.emory.edu/what/student_programs/case_competitions

Our future health in good hands

Tomorrow’s future medical and health leaders had a chance to broaden their intellectual horizons by participating in the Emory Global Health Case Competition in the United States recently. By Zoe Nikakis.

A group of PhD and Masters students from across the University has become the first Australian team to compete at the Emory Global Health Case Competition.

The annual competition, at Emory University in Atlanta, in the US, gives student teams the opportunity to work together to promote awareness of, and develop innovative solutions for, 21st century global health issues.

Health case competitions see student teams spend a set period—often a week—working together on solving a major global health problem set by the officials, and then they present their solution to judging panels.

The week-long 2014 competition brought multi-disciplinary teams together from 24 universities to develop reorganisational strategies for the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure it met the emerging health challenges of the 21st century.

The University team joined students from US universities including Yale, Duke, Cornell and Johns Hopkins, as well as two teams from Canada and one from Sweden.

The University’s team included Team Leader and Rhodes Scholar-Elect Kristjan Jovanoski, Irish medical doctor and PhD student Eamonn Fahy, Melanie Lowe, who is studying for her PhD as part of the Race, Health and Livelihoods research program at the McCaughey Victorian Health Centre for Community Wellbeing, Marnie Marin, who is undertaking a Master of Public and International Law at the Melbourne Law School, Danielle Ingle, who is undertaking her PhD in bacterial genomics, and Chris Taylor, who is completing a Master of Biotechnology at the Graduate School of Science.

Mr Jovanoski says the team’s suggested solution saw the WHO’s new vision as “taking the lead for tomorrow”, and focused on it becoming an agenda-setter and facilitator of global health, rather than trying to implement on-the-ground reforms directly.

“The central WHO office would set the global health agenda while its regional and national offices would facilitate its realisation by working together with local governments and NGOs,” he says.

“WHO’s funding system would also be reformed so it could get more flexible funding as well as additional funding sources not tied to its member state contributions.

“Finally, there would be a raft of reforms to improve accountability and transparency in WHO and thus boost stakeholder and donor confidence.”

Team member Chris Taylor says the team’s time at Emory was incredibly busy. “Needless to say, it was fairly intense,” he says.

“The competition’s interdisciplinary nature of the teams there were often some diverse and conflicting views. The nights (and arguments) could get entertaining.”

The competition’s judges played the roles of members of a taskforce of global health leaders from NGOs, government agencies, and business that reviewed and evaluated their proposals.

The eventual winners, from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, won a US$6,000 first-place prize along with the Participator Choice Award.

Mr Jovanoski says he thinks it’s incredibly important the University offers opportunities to participate in these kinds of extra-curricular activities.

“A fulfilling university experience consists of so much more than just meeting course requirements satisfactorily,” he says.

“Through this experience, I was able to experience a world outside of my discipline which I would never have met otherwise, and broaden my horizons.”

Mr Jovanoski says the experience has left the entire team better prepared for life outside and after university, as they have developed significant additional skills, which will be valuable in the workplace or academia, no matter where they work in the diverse world of global health.

“I now appreciate the international and multidisciplinary nature of tomorrow’s challenges, especially in the field of global health,” he says.

“We got to meet like-minded students and global health experts from some of the best universities around the world, something that is often not possible in our day-to-day lives back in Melbourne.”

“While the international experience in Atlanta was incredible and unforgettable in its own right, our intensive preparation in the months leading up to it made that we learnt how to work together effectively as a team and about ourselves as individuals.”

“By having this wonderful opportunity at home and abroad, we have been able to bring it back to our peers as well.”

www.mds.unimelb.edu.au

www.globalhealth.web.emory.edu/what/student_programs/case_competitions

Reproduction of Lascaux cave images of the earliest cows (photography in the caves is not permitted). Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

www.land-environment.unimelb.edu.au
Vets working and networking in Nepal

Dr Sarah Hall never imagined she would become a vet, so how did she find herself in Nepal, on the forefront of animal disease management? Clemmie Wetherall reports.

Animal disease management is a specialist area becoming increasingly important in the 21st Century. Globalisation has brought the world closer together, making travel, communication and trade between nations and countries easier and faster – but it has also increased the risk of disease travelling rapidly across continents.

Australia has been free of foot-and-mouth disease for over 100 years, but local governments and farmers around the country have been vigilant in preparing for an outbreak. Dr Sarah Hall, a Masters of Veterinary Public Health (Emergency Disease Management) student at the University of Melbourne, has recently returned from foot-and-mouth control training in Nepal.

She says there is a constant threat of an outbreak in Australia but preparedness training is the key.

“Every day there is a risk of foot-and-mouth disease coming into the country, you simply have to bring home a ham sandwich, or accidentally step in some cow droppings in a country like Nepal or India and then catch a plane back to Australia”,

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious virus that affects cloven-hooved animals such as cattle and sheep. While not often fatal it is debilitating and it has the potential to quickly cause widespread illness.

“Foot-and-mouth disease is the biggest, most economically damaging threat to Australia’s livestock industries,” Dr Hall says.

“Our quarantine system is highly effective but even a small outbreak in Australia could have devastating consequences to our communities in lost production, trade and tourism; we could even face global trade restrictions.

Dr Hall was nominated for a place and supported in her travel by the Faculty of Veterinary Science.

“Twenty vets from Australia took part in the training program, visiting communities in Nepal with active foot-and-mouth outbreaks. Dr Hall says they worked in epidemiological and clinical teams, took samples and used the local reference laboratories and ‘pensile tests’ to confirm the disease.

“We also asked farmers questions about livestock movements to understand how the disease spreads in Nepal.

“The idea was, if there was an outbreak in Australia the vets involved in the program would be our front-line response team, with real experience in identifying foot-and-mouth disease, in implementing biosecurity strategies and in conducting initial disease investigations.”

As well as preparing Australian vets for the management of an outbreak, Dr Hall says the trip was also an incredible networking opportunity.

“My current boss was one of the private practice vets invited to go to Nepal. We got talking about our careers and to get to know each other quite well and after returning to Australia he offered me a job.

“Dr Hall moved to Bendigo to work in a mixed practice clinic after finishing her veterinary science degree at the University of Melbourne in 2009.

“While I enjoyed my job I started to realise my real passion was in trying to solve the mystery of disease outbreaks.

“As the local vet you are first on the scene when a local farmer calls saying he has five dead cows.

“The farmer is worried about his livelihood and his animals’ welfare so it’s rewarding to play Sherlock Holmes and get to figure out the cause of the disease. That was what gave me that kick, that thrill, and doing vaccinations all day and removing grass-seeds from cats and dogs just wasn’t for me in the long-term.

“I was interested in epidemiology and emergency animal disease so I looked at the courses available and the Master’s degree at the Faculty of Veterinary Science fitted my interest and had the flexibility I needed to be able to continue working.”

Dr Hall says she never imagined she would become a vet, let alone find herself in advanced training in Nepal; a cancelled work experience placement in Year 10 was the twist of fate that led her to pursue a career as a veterinarian.

“The Royal Children’s Hospital cancelled on me because they had oversubscribed, so my careers counselor suggested that if I wanted to be a doctor I should go to a vet clinic because I’d get to see surgery.

“So I ended up at an equine practice for work experience with Dr Charlie El-Hage, who is now a lecturer in Veterinary Clinical Studies with the Faculty.

“I remember being a quiet little Year 10 student trying not to get in the way when Charlie took me under his wing. He told me all about the best vet schools in the world and by the end of the week I was convinced I was going to be a vet even though I’d walked in upset I couldn’t get into the Royal Children’s Hospital.”

Dr Hall now follows in Dr El-Hage’s foot-steps, having recently taken up a position with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries as a District Veterinary Officer in Geelong.

Mid-year intake into the Master of Veterinary Public Health (Emergency Animal Disease) closes 30 May 2014.

www.vet.unimelb.edu.au/mvph/
Melbourne v Monash kicks off varsity sport

It was a tightly fought contest in the inaugural Melbourne-Monash Varsity Challenge, as David Scott found out.

SPORT

‘Sport was the real winner’ is usually a glib line trotted out by pundits and fans alike after a particularly harrowing result, though perhaps in this case the statement is justified, as the dust settles after the first Melbourne-Monash Varsity Challenge.

While Monash will go down in history as the inaugural winners of the event, the two-day sporting feast held across both the Parkville and Clayton campuses proved to be a success for athletes and spectators alike, laying a solid foundation for future varsity challenges.

Unlike their American counterparts, Australian universities don’t often have the opportunity to test themselves on the sporting arena against their peers, with only the Australian University Games (AUG) bringing together a significant gathering of athletes once a year.

MU Sport Development Manager Rod Warnecke says it was the 2013 iteration of the AUG that kick-started the Melbourne-Monash Varsity idea.

“We played against each other in so many of the gold medal matches – we finished first and second overall – so it seemed only fitting of the inaugural winners of the event, the two-day varsity contest.”

Mr Warnecke says the event fills a gap that existing competitions don’t provide.

“We have an outstanding club structure at Melbourne, where our students, alumni and other members of the University community can participate on a seasonal basis. But in terms of playing against other Victorian universities such as Monash, RMIT or LaTrobe, it is very much dependent on occasion, and grade and the sport being played.

“And our success with the Australian Boat Race with the University of Sydney has shown there is significant appetite for these sorts of rivalry-based events.”

The final scoreboard certainly favoured the hosts on each day. Melbourne won three of four events on day 1, claiming victories in Women’s Soccer, Men’s Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee and, for the overall title, Women’s Basketball. The competition sports were decided by previous AUG performance, where both universities were well matched.

And if the team at MU Sport have its way, inter-university competition outside of the AUG will continue to grow.

“We’re already looking forward to a revenge match up with Monash in the Varsity Challenge next year, and in the meantime we’ll continue to explore opportunities to expand the number of marquee sporting events we co-host with our traditional sporting rivals,” Mr Warnecke says.

More information about the challenge can be found at www.sport.unimelb.edu.au/varsitychallenge.
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MONDAY 12 MAY
6PM
Understanding Modil’s India with Swapna Dasgupta. by Mr Swapna Dasgupta (political columnist), Australia India Institute Lecture
Bookings: www.ai.unimelb.edu.au/events
Enquiries: ai@unimelb.edu.au, 8344 7058
LECTURE THEATRE Q8, LAW BUILDING, 185 PELHAM ST, CARLTON

THURSDAY 15 MAY
6.30PM
Hidden Costs: Gender and the Economic-Social Capital Trade-off in Negotiation. by Professor Maria Oskhah (Melbourne Business School). Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences Lecture
Bookings: http://tinyurl.com/4a9laims
Enquiries: 03 8344 6349
THEATRE A, ELISABETH MURDOCH BUILDING, PARKVILLE

WEDNESDAY 21 MAY
6PM
The End of Protest: How free market capitalism learned to control dissent. by Professor Asadur Roberts (Sulphur University). Melbourne Social Equity Institute Lecture
Bookings: http://tinyurl.com/4a9laims
Enquiries: gayricia@unimelb.edu.au, 8344 6458
THEATRE 4, OLD ARTS BUILDING

THURSDAY 22 MAY
5.30PM
Achieving our National Goals in Indigenous Affairs. by Fred Chaney AO. Centre for Ethical Leadership Lecture
Bookings: www.byobooking.com/39047
Enquiries: uto@unimelb.edu.au, 8344 1498
THE CHAPEL, ORMOND COLLEGE, 49 COLLEGE CRESCENT, PARKVILLE

TUESDAY 10 JUNE
6PM
Place Matters – A Journey to a Just and Fairer Society. by Professor Emeritus Ian Willmott (University of Melbourne). Engineering Lecture
Enquiries: events@eng.unimelb.edu.au, 9345 4868
A1 THEATRE, FIRST FLOOR, OLD ENGINEERING BUILDING

The University has used its best endeavours to ensure that material contained in this listing was correct at the time of release. We recommend users of this listing check the information provided with the relevant faculty or department.

EXHIBITIONS

Ian Potter Museum of Art – The University of Melbourne
Swanston Street, Parkville
Gallery hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am–5pm; Saturday and Sunday 12–5pm. Closed Monday.
Free admission
Enquiries: 03 8344 0327
art.museum.unimelb.edu.au

- Secret lives, forgotten stories: highlights from Heritage Victoria’s Archaeological Collection until 12 October
- Secret lives, forgotten stories: highlights from Heritage Victoria’s Archaeological Collection traces Victoria’s settlement and growth from coastal times, through the years of the whaling industry and the Goldrush, up to the birth of Marvellous Melbourne. Presented in partnership with Heritage Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure.

- Floor talks

Wednesday 21 May 11–1.30pm
Sarah Myers, Director, ArchLink on ‘Needlework and child’s play’ Cohen Place Saturday 24 May 2–3pm
Jeremy Smith, Presumed Not: the discovery of the lost Pentridge burials’
Wednesday 4 June 1–1.30pm
David Reynor, Senior Archaeologist, Heritage Victoria, on Bendigo Chinese brick kiln site
Wednesday 18 June 1–1.30pm
Susanna Collins and Anne-Louise Muir will highlight selected stories of objects in the exhibition

- The Piranesi effect

Bringing together a range of Piranesi prints, objects from the University’s Classics & Archaeology Collection, and works by contemporary artists.
Curated by guest curator, Jenny Long, The Piranesi effect is the companion exhibition to the State Library of Victoria’s Rome: Piranesi’s Vision, a joint project of the University Library and the State Library of Victoria, on until 6 July.

- Floor talk

Wednesday 14 May 1–1.30pm
Jenny Long with artist Mira Gojak

- Stephen Bush: Steenhuffel

A Vizard Foundation Contemporary Artist Project until 6 July
Steenhuffel brings together works produced over a period of more than thirty years by the internationally recognised Australian painter Stephen Bush.

- Floor talk

Wednesday 28 May 1–1.30pm
Sammita Corrie, Curator, Michael Buxton Collection

- The world is not a foreign land

An Ian Potter Museum of Art and NETS Victoria touring exhibition until 6 July
The world is not a foreign land brings together work by Timothy Cook, Djambya Maravili, Ngarra, Rusty Peters, Freda Warlapinsi and Napysapypa Yunupingu. Crossing three geographically and culturally distinct regions—the Tjawi Islands, the Kimberley and North-eastern Arnhem Land—each artist presents sometimes strikingly different perspectives on what constitutes Indigenous contemporary art. This exhibition has also been supported by the Copyright Agency Ltd Cultural Fund.

Margaret Lawrence Gallery
40 Dodds Street
Southbank, Melbourne
Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 12pm – 5pm

- Assembly: Contemporary ceramics

9 – 31 May
Sarah Crowest, Richard Gripp, Katie Lee, Andrew McQuater, Sanne Mestrom, Stephen Ralphy and Jake Walker.
Curator: Kay Abude
Events for Future Students

If you’re interested in studying at Australia’s Number 1 university¹, join us at one of our events developed specifically for future students.

Course events
Come on campus and receive detailed information about the courses you’re interested in at Melbourne:

- **15 May**  Focus on Biomedicine
- **21 May**  Focus on Arts
- **27 May**  Focus on Commerce
- **28 May**  Focus on Environments
- **3 June**  Focus on Science
- **4 June**  Focus on Agriculture

Regional events
Join us for our Meet Melbourne series at a regional location near you:

- **21 May**  Frankston
- **21 May**  Shepparton
- **22 May**  Albury
- **28 May**  Hamilton
- **29 May**  Warrnambool

futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/events

¹Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2012-2013