The games people play

What board and online gaming culture reveals about social interaction

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New Chancellor’s Scholars welcomed

Fifty of Victoria’s highest achieving VCE students have accepted offers for scholarships to study at the University of Melbourne next year under the Chancellor’s Scholars Program.

The Melbourne National Scholarships offered as part of the program provides students with a HECS-exempt Commonwealth Supported Place in one of the University’s undergraduate degrees and a $5000 annual allowance for the duration of their degrees.

Recipients receive a guarantee of entry into the graduate course of their choice. Scholars from interstate also receive a HECS-exempt place as well as an annual allowance of $10,000 over the duration of their degrees.

Congratulations to the new scholars, Vice-Chancellor Professor Glyn Davis says the University would provide these successful young achievers with a world-class education.

Ivanhoe Girls Grammar School graduate Leticia Peart with her parents.

WIN!

To win a copy of The Wit of Whitlam email your answer to the following question by Monday 19 January to:
voice-competition@lists.unimelb.edu.au

Q: Who did Gough Whitlam describe as “this grizzling Quisling”?

Congratulations to Sarah Harper of Carnegie who was the first Voice reader to correctly identify that NBC’s Today Show was the first, and is the longest running morning news broadcast.

MUP Publications

This month’s featured MUP publication is The Wit of Whitlam, edited by James Carleton.

About The Wit of Whitlam

Self-proclaimed international treasure Gough Whitlam never shied from witty one-liners, colourful language or devastating put downs.

He said his wife Margaret was his ‘best appointment’, called Malcolm Fraser ‘Kerr’s cur’ after the dismissal and when Sir Winston Tumble came out in parliament ‘I am a country member’, Gough interjected, ‘I remember’.

When it was suggested he was funny, Gough responded: ‘Funny! Funny? Witty, yes. Epigrammatic perhaps, but not funny. You make me sound like a clown’.

James Carleton, Radio National presenter and founder of the university club ‘The Dewy-Eyed Whitlamites’ presents a keepsake of Goughisms that prove the great man’s words: ‘I never said I was immortal, merely eternal’.

About the author

James Carleton is a reporter and alternate presenter of Radio National’s Breakfast program.

Specialising in national and international politics, especially the Middle East, he has reported for 7:30 and written for the Sydney Morning Herald.

As the father of three young boys James is well experienced with conflict situations. In 1990 he founded the Sydney University club ‘The Dewy-Eyed Whitlamites’.

www.mup.com.au
New research into wayfinding has made some surprising revelations about how people take directions and use landmarks, with potential applications in emergency services calls, among other things. By Annie Rahilly.

People talk about places every day. Talking about where you are, where we should meet, or how to find the way to this meeting place is essential for orientation and wayfinding. Talking about place, or reading sketches in this regard, may appear so simple from the outside, but actually it is fascinating what people reveal about their spatial knowledge and achieve with this communication.

And of course, it would be nice if our go-everywhere, do-anything, smart phones could make sense of such talk as well.

Consider the operators in emergency call centres. They have to interpret verbal place descriptions in order to dispatch an emergency team. Often in the emotion of the moment, accuracy is forgotten and words fail.

But what if a system could support call centre operators by identifying location references and accurate details about their local configuration? Not such an improbable notion if we think of the near future when we will only talk to our otherwise automatically driving cars in order to agree on destinations or routes.

Spatial information science and geomatics expert Stephan Winter from the Department of Infrastructure Engineering at the University of Melbourne specialises in human spatial cognition and communication.

His passion is in developing intelligent spatial machines and he is pioneering new ways of modelling environments, including mobility solutions and crowd-sourced data and knowledge acquisition. The everywhere phone can be used to store human knowledge about the environment, which reflects the way people have experienced, what they look like, feel like – or how they are spoken about. Collecting this knowledge is still a challenge for the future.

At the end of this research project Professor Winter can extract some of this human knowledge from place descriptions.

“We detect references to locations and spatial relationships between these locations which we fill into databases. Cussonia Court (on the University’s Parkville campus) for example, is next to the ‘Old Quad’. We can compare and guess whether two place descriptions refer to the same place, and if so, whether they are compatible or contradict each other.”

People learn which places are often referred to as ad hoc ride sharing, and on demand. Professor Winter is looking for better intelligent human-computer interaction.

While maps tell us much, they do not replace first-hand knowledge of a location.

When in a familiar environment, we use the “map in the mind.”

If we take the University of Melbourne grounds as an example, the mind map is formed by the experience of the campus: sandstone buildings from the 19th century, a clock tower, tall yellow-brick buildings from the 70s, individual experiences, a few lecture theatres and the library where long evenings have been spent over books. Can any of this information be found on a map?

“The world is still by and large un-mapped when it comes to relating to how places are experienced, what they look like, feel like – or how they are spoken about. Collecting this knowledge is still a challenge for the future, one that we might call the search for deep maps,” Professor Winter says.

“And one key source for this knowledge is, of course, human place descriptions. In a research project at the University, we set ourselves the goal to tap into this human knowledge and enrich our spatial databases, working towards these deep maps. We envision databases that store human knowledge about the environment, which reflects the way people have experienced and memorised them, rather than imposing an administrative view,” he says.

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People learn which places are often referred to, and have more prominence than others.

We learn names of things that are not stored on a map. We even detect when events are used to describe locations.

People may say: “I am at the Grand Final” instead of “I am in the Melbourne Cricket Ground”. Once detected, these event names can be stored as synonyms for particular places in the place database.

Such descriptions can be shared for collaborative and safe evacuations by our emergency services. It is a process of gaining knowledge by intelligent guesswork.

The relativity of wayfinding

Maps are dynamic documents, and as our technologies expand and challenge us, we respond in imaginative ways, Professor Winter says.

“Maps are dynamic documents, and as our technologies expand and challenge us, we respond in imaginative ways,” Professor Winter says.
It’s cooler being green

Andi Horvath finds out how city-dwellers can stay cooler over summer by planting as many trees as possible.

... thermal images show a stark contrast in temperatures between streets with trees and those devoid of trees.

We used to say ‘It’s so hot you could fry an egg on the footpath’. Actually we still say it, but with an air of worry about the threat of bushfires and concerns for elderly neighbours, pets and animals. Australia has seen a trend of extreme weather events and hotter temperatures, and as a result heat stress is now a serious health problem for Australians.

Recent research examined our urban environments through thermal photography showing many ‘hot spots’ in our cities and suburbs that get very hot and stay hotter for longer than the neighbouring countryside. The thermal images also show a stark contrast in temperatures between streets with trees and those devoid of trees.

Researcher Nick Williams from the University of Melbourne’s Department of Resource Management and Geography explains that during the day buildings and streets absorb solar radiation and release the heat at night, keeping urban areas warmer than the surrounding countryside.

“But this effect can be tempered with a range of effective urban green designs. This includes strategic use of more trees, green roofs and green facades,” Dr Williams says.

As an example of a typical urban environment Dr Williams and his research collaborators at Melbourne and Monash universities studied the City of Port Phillip. The research identified ‘hot spots’ and formulated guidelines that address the problems with a variety of green infrastructure solutions. The framework addresses factors like street geometry, soil and water availability, practical maintenance issues and community behaviour.

“This research has allowed the formulation of guidelines for better urban green infrastructure that can reduce urban air and surface temperatures,” he says.

“The City of Geelong has adopted the framework and we are hoping other Australian councils and shires will follow suit.”

Greening and cooling our cities is a community health issue, making us more comfortable, reducing the risk of heat stress while also reducing our overall energy costs.

Stay cool this summer with as many shades of green as you can.

A different way of knowing the world

Every year, the University’s Murrup Barak Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development invites the wider community to gather at the Spot Theatre to hear the Narrm Oration.

‘Narrm’ refers to the country around Port Phillip Bay in Woi Wurring, the language of the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

Delivered annually since 2009, the Narrm Oration is a major initiative of the Murrup Barak-Rio Tinto partnership. Now in its sixth year, the Narrm Oration profiles leading international Indigenous thinkers to provide their perspective and, in so doing, enriches our vision of the future for Indigenous Australia.

This year, Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith (right), from two tribes or iwi in New Zealand – Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou – and Pro-Vice Chancellor Maori at the University of Waikato in Hamilton New Zealand, delivered the sixth Narrm Oration on ‘Indigenous knowledges and how they help us think about the future’.

Watch the 2014 Narrm Oration at http://youtu.be/h8FeUtCh-PU
The way we play is changing, and gaming technologies – digital and traditional – are developing and intersecting at an incredible pace. Where are these gaming technologies going, and how are they changing our social interactions for the better? Zoe Nikakis talks to two early-career researchers to find out.

Some of us may think video gaming is for teenagers in search of light entertainment, but for the past 20 years, video games have been important drivers of ever more powerful computing technologies, the R&D efforts behind those technologies, and willingness to adopt them.

Early-Career Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne Marcus Carter is part of a team looking at the ways technology is developing, and the ways in which we will use those technologies in the future.

“We can look at games as examples of where future technologies can take us,” Mr Carter says.

“Old computers used a command-line interface, where people would type a command into the computer and press enter to make something happen.”

Then Xerox invented the graphical user interface we use today, which, coupled with a mouse and a keyboard, allows users to click on things to move them around.

“I'm exploring the next step: what we call ‘natural’ user interfaces, which work without a keyboard or mouse, but rather with a gesture, touch, the voice or eye tracking.”

Mr Carter is a research fellow at Melbourne’s Microsoft Research Centre for Social Natural User Interfaces (Social NUI), and says they’ve invested in this research because they believe, as the inventors of the graphical interface did, that natural user interfaces will give rise to the next inventors of the graphical interface did, that natural user interfaces will give rise to the next. Mr Carter says this technology could also dramatically change people’s work and home life in social situations where groups sit around tables.

“The table is where we go for a social interaction at home – the dining table and the coffee table are at the heart of the domestic environment – as are conference tables at work where collaboration happens.”

“The social potential of these interactions is limited because we’re arranged around a laptop screen which deflects attention, or we’re facing a screen on a wall, which interrupts natural social interaction around the table.”

The technology is getting in the way, he says, in much the same way current interfaces can interrupt a gamer's flow.

“If we can make computers that respond to voice and gesture, that know what we’re doing because they’re tracking our gaze, this will create potential for technology around the table that enhances rather than detracts from the social potential of the experience,” he says.

Mr Carter is examining these ideas by looking at board games, which in the past 10 years have grown and diversified in terms of game development and player numbers.

“People think of it as something niche in decline, but in reality it’s in its renaissance,” he says.

“I strongly believe there is a huge potential for natural user interfaces around the table. We can look at board games, and see how NUIs make it a social experience, with props and dice and cards, and how the rules and the fiction behind the game are relevant, and all create a positive social experience.”

PhD Candidate Melissa Rogerson from the Department of Computing and Information Systems is also looking at games to explore complex social interactions.

She says there’s increasingly overlap in how people are using board games, and digital platforms and games, and is examining, in her PhD, the future of technology and the social interactions they effect.

“I’m looking at the experience of play, and how people experience it differently,” she says.

Ms Rogerson brings a wealth of professional and personal experience to her PhD, as a former co-designer of expansions for games, combined with 10 years working in usability and interaction design in computers.

“We know people play board games because they’re social, and overtly social because they’re sitting there, touching things, and being together. We hear anecdotally people are looking to get away from their screens, which is one of the things I’ll investigate.”

“I’ve been looking at how board game players are being affected by digital games – for example, digital games have achievements, and that is now transferring to board games, and how digitising a game can change how it’s played in the real world.”

These games, Ms Rogerson says, are also agents of positive social change, such as has been seen with the popular game Pandemic. This game is based on the premise four diseases have broken out worldwide, each threatening to wipe out a region. Players then work together to cure the diseases before game-losing conditions are reached. Players have been throwing ‘Pandemic Parties’ and using the social interaction and game play to raise money to combat real-world diseases.

“Broadly speaking, there are two big schools of board game design: the European version, which is about building things, being the first to achieve something, negotiating and trading with people, and the American version, which are usually hostile games, focused on eliminating other players and being the last one left,” she says.

“I like that diversity.”

Ms Rogerson says learning to play co-operative games, working together to solve something, is a really important skill, and is one of particular relevance given the upsurge in the numbers of people playing.

“Sometimes your role might be to help other people do what they do really well. It’s not ‘all about me’ in such games,” she says.

“I cannot get over how much more popular tabletop games have become in the past 10 years, and hope they’re changing the way we socialise for the better.”
Major Buxton art donation to Melbourne

Property developer and passionate art collector Michael Buxton has donated his collection of contemporary Australian art to the University. His $26 million gift includes funding for a new museum at Southbank. By Rebecca Scott.

In one of the most significant acts of arts philanthropy to an Australian university, property developer and passionate art collector Michael Buxton has donated his private contemporary Australian art collection to the University of Melbourne. The Michael Buxton Collection features more than 300 works by 53 of the country’s most significant Australian contemporary artists, including Howard Arkley, Ricky Swallow, Tracey Moffat, Patricia Piccinini, Emily Floyd and Bill Henson.

The Collection will be housed and showcased in a new purpose-built museum – the Michael Buxton Centre of Contemporary Art, (MBCOCA) on the University’s Southbank Campus, home of the Faculty of Victorian College of the Arts & Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, on the corner of Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street. The new museum is expected to open in 2017. The donation will include the Collection as well as funds towards the construction and endowment of the museum and its operation over a 20-year term. The gift is also the biggest donation for Melbourne’s Ian Potter Museum of Art whose Director, Kelly Gellaty, says the collection, which has been established with curatorial rigour, will enable the establishment of an extraordinary museum.

“The museum will showcase exhibitions that embrace experimentation and explore some of the major concerns of the 21st Century. “Through the activities of the Potter’s Academic Programs unit – unique within Australia – the museum will facilitate object-based learning for undergraduate and graduate students from the University’s diverse faculties and different campuses,” he says.

Acknowledging the wonderful partnership that has been developed with Michael Buxton, Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Glyn Davis says the museum will give the people of Melbourne unprecedented access to Australia’s finest contemporary art.

“We believe the impact of this gift will be profound, enhancing the Southbank Precinct’s position as the heart of Melbourne’s cultural life. “The Campaign is the University’s largest-ever fundraising initiative, aiming to raise $500 million by the end of 2017 to advance the University’s teaching and learning, research and engagement aims.

The report is aimed at regulators, to help them in the formation of strategies designed to educate the regulated community, detect incidences of the activity, and enhance enforcement. It identifies five categories of phoenixing – legitimate, where the intention is to save the business and not to defraud creditors; problematic, where no laws were broken but the repeated attempts to save the business are detrimental to the economy; illegal ‘type 1’ where the intention to avoid debts is formed only as the company starts to fail; illegal ‘type 2’, where the business was set up to be ‘phoenixed’ as a means of avoiding debts; and finally complex illegal, which involves other forms of phoenixing such as the use of false invoices, false identities, fictitious transactions, money laundering, or visa breaches and misuse of migrant labour.

The issues raised in the report demonstrate the need for further study to minimise the harmful consequences of problematic and illegal forms of phoenixing activity. The research team is currently investigating the different risks associated with quantifying the costs of phoenixing activity, how often it occurs, the level of enforcement by regulators, and the best ways to stop this type of activity.

Authors of this report are: Helen Anderson, Ann O’Connell, Ian Ramsay, and Hannah Withers (Melbourne Law School) and Michelle Welsh (Monash University).


Phoenix activity in the spotlight

Melbourne Law School’s Professor Ian Ramsay explains a complex illegal business practice known as phoenixing.

Researchers from Melbourne Law School and Monash University have been investigating phoenix activity – which has been in the media frequently since 2009 when Treasury estimated that it cost the Australian Taxation Office $600 million per year in unremitted taxes. In 2012, PriceWaterhouseCoopers assessed its cost to the economy at up to $3 billion a year.

What is phoenixing? It centres on the idea of a new company arising from the ashes of its failed predecessor, with the same owners running the same business but minus the debts of the old company. Phoenixing can also occur in a corporate group structure, where the business of a failing subsidiary is transferred to an existing related company in the group.

The trouble with regulating this sort of behaviour is that it can be legal as well as illegal. This makes detecting the illegal form, which typically involves a breach of directors’ duties, problematic for regulators.

Legal phoenix activity covers situations where the previous controllers start up another similar company to rescue a struggling company’s business. What separates illegal and legal phoenix activity is that in the illegal scenario the owners intend to exploit the corporate form to escape paying the debts of the failed company. Proving this intention is not easy.

Illegal forms of phoenixing activity have been linked to certain industries, in particular, the building and construction industry and ‘personal services’ businesses that don’t need to own assets. Illegal phoenixing leaves behind a trail of victims including government through lost tax revenues, unsecured trade creditors, employees owed wages, annual and long service leave, redundancy and superannuation, and the public at large. Competitors can also be priced out of the market.

The research team’s new report Defining and Profiling Phoenixing Activity defines, profiles and categorises phoenixing activity, considers existing legislative responses, provides case examples and raises important policy questions.
In December, world cancer leaders from UN agencies, ministries of health and finance, research institutes, international cancer organisations and private sector organisations gathered in Melbourne to make an economic case for investment in cancer prevention. By Elizabeth Brumby.

Investing in cancer control saves lives and makes financial sense

In January, world cancer leaders from UN agencies, ministries of health and finance, research institutes, international cancer organisations and private sector organisations gathered in Melbourne to make an economic case for investment in cancer prevention. By Elizabeth Brumby.

What goes on in the mind of a lizard?

Andi Horvath speaks with Viviana Cadena to find out why lizards do what lizards do.

Very now and again we wonder what our companion cats, dogs, birds and reptiles are thinking as we watch our family pets interact in amusing ways with the world. While we love to interpret their antics, we wonder whether it’s the evolution of any biologists and their scientific insights that give it perspective.

Lizards like bearded dragons make great pets as they are quite ‘relaxed’ in the company of humans and not as skittish as other species of lizards. They sometimes bow their heads, appear to waved their arms, but change colour depending on their surroundings and also their activity. They are a little bit like a mood ring.

Viviana Cadena is a research fellow who works in the Devi Stuart-Fox laboratory at the University of Melbourne’s Department of Zoology.

“Bearded dragons change colour for three main functions,” she says, “namely to communicate with each other, to regulate their body temperature, and to camouflage themselves to avoid being spotted by predators like eagles. Their colour ranges from light colours to dark tones, and we have also noticed a colour change according to the daily cycle. They start the day off darker and get lighter as they get active.”

“Although moving in and out of the sun helps them regulate body temperature they also use colour change to help fine-tune their temperature, using lighter colours to absorb more heat when it’s cool. This fine-tuning of temperature control means they don’t have to spend energy regulating their temperature behaviourally and they can save that energy for other activities like looking for a mate or defending their territory.”

“Male bearded dragons communicate to other males who intrude on their territory by flaring their beards which turn black, as does the chest. They also do this when courting a female.

They often stand quite high to show off the body and bob the head as a sign of dominance. It’s quite an elaborate display, the female will usually wave their arms as a way of saying ‘Okay I’m your girl.’”

Ms Cadena says her research has applications not only in animal care, conservation genetics and ecology, but is also of interest to engineers in the design of new fabrics and materials that could change colour.

Psychologists often refer to our human brain as having a reptilian section that is related to basic instincts of survival and safety. These include, eat, don’t get eaten, hide or attack if required, attract mates, scare off competitors if required, and mate. But what must our lizard pets think of us humans?

“Lizards have learnt I am the source of live crickets and it might be time to eat,” Ms Cadena says.

Australia has some of the best cancer outcomes in the world, ranking in the top four globally among a number of benchmarks, including survival rates. However, Professor Aranda notes that even within Australia, significant variations in survival rates still occur among Aboriginal communities, low socio-economic status groups, and those living in remote and rural areas. She says more needs to be done to ensure disadvantaged groups have the same access to services and positive outcomes from cancer care and treatment.

“We need to do more to ensure our health system does not deliver cancer services that vary because of who you are and where you live,” Professor Aranda says.

Above all, Professor Aranda says she hopes the 2014 World Cancer Leaders’ Summit helped to build momentum among decision-makers around the world to ensure there was a clear and compelling message around the case for investment in early detection via comprehensive screening programs, and improvements in treatment and care.

“All of these strategies were discussed within the context of the economic benefits they would bring to governments. For example, implementing widespread HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccination programs in low-income countries would significantly reduce the economic costs for governments around the world. In 2010, cervical cancer was estimated to cost the global economy around US$2.7 billion. “There are 500,000 cases of cervical cancer annually, and 250,000 deaths, and yet this is a fully preventable disease. Australia vaccinates girls for HPV and only has around 1000 new cases of cervical cancer a year,” Professor Aranda says.

“The opposite is true in Africa and South America, where access to the vaccine is poor because of costs, but this is where the greatest burden of disease lies. Investment in the prevention and early detection of cervical cancer is economically sensible to reduce the burden of disease in low-income countries, rather than facing the expense of treatment and the loss of productive life, which would have overall, a much greater cost.”
Healthier kids: Insights from twin research

Twin researchers gathered in Melbourne during December to share ways in which research with twins can advance science. By Lynette Walker.

Twins and researchers gathered for a recent Australian-first conference, Healthier kids: Insights from twin research, hosted by the University of Melbourne and Murdoch Children’s Research Institute.

According to Professor John Hopper from the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health and Director of the Australian Twin Registry, the conference highlighted the vital contribution of twin research at the most formative time of life – from conception to birth and into adolescence.

“We believe that twins should be involved in all areas of child health research because of the unique insight they provide into the environmental and genetic factors that, in combination, make us all the individuals we are,” he explained.

Over 200 researchers and twins attended the keynote address by visiting American researcher, Dr Nancy Segal, who spoke about her life-long work with twins raised apart and what they teach us about being human.

“At the ATR we find that twins and their families are as passionate about research as the researchers themselves and deserve to have their opinions heard,” Professor Hopper said.

“To this end, we ran very constructive sessions that brought twins and researchers together to discuss how best to combine our efforts to deliver the most beneficial research.”

Twins interested in joining the research, visit www.twins.org.au

Tiriki Onus wins new Hutchinson Indigenous Fellowship for possum skin cloak project

Singer and performance artist Tiriki Onus has been awarded the inaugural Hutchinson Indigenous Fellowship. By Katherine Smith.

Tiriki Onus will work on a project that takes as its starting point the traditional role of the Koori possum skin cloak, placing it in a contemporary context with a focus on identity and narratives to create a new body of work.

Mr Onus said for the Koori people in south-east Australia there was no more significant and defining work of art than the possum skin cloak.

“It was given to you at birth, and as you grew, it also grew,” he wrote in his Fellowship application. “More panels would be added as required, all the time incising your clan design and stories into the skin of the cloak with a scribe. When you died, you were wrapped in your cloak and buried.”

But he says over the past 10 generations so much of the knowledge about the cultural role of the possum skins has been scattered, devalued and replaced with a growing sense of displacement and alienation for many Aboriginal Australians.

“I constantly find myself asking the questions: ‘What are the multiple narratives that inform my identity as a 21st century Yorta Yorta man; what technologies and oral histories remain that I can draw upon in a quest for a greater understanding of my own identity as an artist; how can those technologies, narratives and cultural markers be employed for the betterment of the wider community?’

“Over the course of the next year, I plan to investigate the motivations, emotions and pressures felt by many of those in my past, draw on their stories to inform my own practice and create a new body of work that, like a ceremony, draws together the stories of many for strength. This increased knowledge, skill and experience will inform the creation of new works of theatre, poetry, song and visual art, of which a possum skin cloak will be the central tangible element.”

Deborah Cheetham AO, Head of the VCA’s Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts says that the initiation in my honour.

Tiriki Onus is a Yorta Yorta man, the son of celebrated artist and Indigenous activist Lin Onus, who championed Indigenous art in Victoria. Also active in opera and performance art, Tiriki Onus will work on a project that takes as its starting point the traditional role of the Koori possum skin cloak.

He is a very worthy recipient who exemplifies the qualities, skills and thinking of emerging Indigenous artists in Victoria today. I very much look forward to his contribution to the establishment of the HIF, and to his project outcomes.

“I am also deeply grateful to my co-trustees for naming this important Indigenous education initiative in my honour.”

www.campaign.unimelb.edu.au
www.vca.mcm.unimelb.edu.au/wilin

www.twins.org.au
Enacting literature: Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*

The latest gathering of the Faculty of Arts’ Ten Great Books Series turned its gaze towards Toni Morrison’s classic text, *Beloved*.

**TEN GREAT BOOKS**

*Beloved* grapples with the grand magnitude of history and the intimate legacy of the American Civil War. The novel has in its sight the radical cruelty of slavery and racism as it unfolds, recedes and swallows casualties following the American Civil War.

Yet this story is placed in the tight frames of a home, a family in crisis and the personal ache of grief. Dr Clara Tuite, from the University of Melbourne, says this superb historical novel is widely regarded as one of the greatest novels of the 20th Century.

“If there’s one thing that makes Beloved great – laying my cards on the table – it is the way this novel enacts literature as a form of life. It doesn’t just represent life. It enacts it.”

Beloved is about a slave, Sethe, who escaped from slavery in 1856, running away with her children in tow, arriving to settle in Ohio.

When threatened with being recaptured and sent back to the plantation that enslaved her, Sethe kills her two-year-old daughter to save her from the prospect of a life with no freedom.

This is the moral heart and question of the novel. The problem from which all other strands and stories bleed out. In terrible, inhumane situations, how do ethical standards change? What, in other circumstances is cruel and callous, could in fact be kindness?

Morrison’s ethical questions resound through contemporary American race relations, and arcs back through all histories of inequalities.

“Beloved is an exemplary model of fiction as a form of public participation,” says Dr Tuite. “A revelation of the enormous political and social agency literature can have in shaping conversations about the past.”

“It has had a profound impact on the national conversation in contemporary America, about the unhealed wounds of slavery, the unfinished business of emancipation and the ongoing effects of institutional racism.”

Dr Tuite suggests that via *Beloved* Morrison questions and challenges what we count as history.

The book’s dedication reads: “Sixty million and more”. This homage, though not in the novel itself, breathes throughout the work. It leaves sticky fingerprints on each page and character fleshed by Morrison.

The number of casualties, disputed by some historians, has an enormity that puts it out of the scope of recognition. It is too big a figure to recognise individual faces and names. Most of this sixty million lie invisibly in the unmarked graves of history.

Against this rigid historical statistic, a footnote to the text, Morrison has created a work of fiction, so transparently and overtly fictional that it crosses into the genre of magical realism. *Beloved* is complete with a ghost who makes mischief and meddles and serves to paint an alternate vision of history.

Beloved makes the statement that history is haunted. It has ghosts and skeletons who have not been given the platform or a blank page to testify. The project of *Beloved* is somewhat to testify on behalf of these silenced characters who receive no chapters or biographies in non-fiction or historical texts.

In ventriloquising their stories and exposing some of the silences left by traditional history, the novel suggests that fiction has a key role in giving a holistic vision of history.

www.arts.unimelb.edu.au

Digging in to learning

Andi Horvath and Ros Gall celebrate with the first cohort of graduates from Dookie’s Diploma in General Studies.

**LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Michael Manderson took easily to university life at the University of Melbourne Dookie campus, stating to anyone who would listen “Urs is nothing like school, I’m loving it”. He is now hopeful of gaining a place in studying a Bachelor of Science, although Commerce was a close second choice at the main campus in Parkville. But rewind a couple of years ago when university study was not an option for him. Michael was disappointed to say the least with his year 12 results, his university study was not an option for him. Michael was hopeful of gaining a place in studying a Bachelor of Science,”

Students like Mr Manderson often have aspirations to attend university but they are often hesitant to move away from home, they may lack confidence in their abilities to cope away from their family and friends or struggle with costs associated with the relocation and course fees.

There is also uncertainty as to what university entails, wondering is it really for them anyway? Yet they have academic abilities and more importantly a desire to succeed.

The Diploma in General Studies is a part of the Regional Gateways program based in the Hume Region that allows students to try several disciplines before deciding on further study. The program is a collaboration between the University of Melbourne, GDF TAFE and Wodonga TAFE.

The supportive environment, flexible course options and personalised learning opportunities are vehicles for students to be the best they can be.

In Mr Manderson’s case a $5000 scholarship was influential in him deciding to live at Dookie Campus accommodation. This was only an hour away from home and a manageable step towards independence and something that he now values as part of his overall development throughout the year.

The diploma course is a one-year pathways course into university for students like Michael who didn’t quite achieve the VCE results they were aiming for. It’s also suitable for Mature Age students with work experience or VET students wanting to articulate to Higher Education.

Mr Manderson was able to apply himself to his studies, became committed to achieving high marks and his confidence in the future was rekindled. He was awarded Class Dux of 2014 and plans to move to Melbourne to study Science in 2015.

Michael Manderson and Ros Gall on graduation day.

www.land-environment.unimelb.edu.au
Ben Hibbs explains how researchers will be able to revolutionise drug delivery by looking at it at the nanoscale.

Calling the shots on and off the water

The development of medicine throughout the 20th century has led to asounding outcomes around the world. Today, people are healthier, longer living and less likely to die of cancer or infectious diseases. Vaccines, antibiotics and other advances in healthcare have all contributed to better health for us all. Yet, even today, many diseases and cancers are untreatable and treatments simply don’t exist or appropriate drugs produce side effects too severe to be useful.

But what if doctors could tailor drugs to specific targets? What if they could treat only the cancer cells, or deliver a vaccine directly to immune cells, without affecting any other cells along the way? By delivering a drug directly to the cells of choice, side effects caused by interactions with other cells could be minimized and the efficacy of the drug increased.

Professor Frank Caruso leads a research group at the University of Melbourne which is taking steps along the path toward targeted drug delivery by engineering nanoparticles.

Using cutting-edge assembly strategies, we can engineer nanoparticles to carefully control their size, shape and other structural properties,” Professor Caruso says. “This allows us to tailor the encapsulation and release of therapeutics.”

Yet developing smart drug carriers, with the ability to avoid healthy cells and target only diseased or cancerous cells directly, requires a detailed understanding of cellular processes at the molecular level.

Cutting-edge science requires cutting-edge instrumentation. Professor Caruso and his team are using advanced super-resolution microscopy techniques to investigate the interactions between cells and engineered nanoparticles at the nanoscale.

“For decades, conventional microscopes have been limited by a perceived limit, the Abbe diffraction limit. We couldn’t resolve particles smaller than 250 nanometres. Now, using super-resolution, we can break that limit and achieve a maximum resolution of 20 nanometres,” he says. “That’s the width of only 10 DNA molecules laid side by side.”

For reference, bacteria are generally one to two microns in size – that’s 1000 to 2000 nanometres. While other imaging techniques such as electron microscopy can have even higher possible resolutions, the processing involved can damage delicate samples and are suitable only for a narrow range of applications.

Excitingly, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2014 was awarded for the development of super-resolution microscopy. One of the microscopes used by Professor Caruso’s group, the Nikon N-STORM system, relies on technologies developed by the group. The microscopes used by Professor Caruso’s group, the Nikon N-STORM system, relies on technologies developed by the group.

“Particles smaller than 100 nanometres in diameter play a vital role for improved drug delivery, since larger particles are more easily trapped in body organs or removed by the immune system,” he says.

“This allows us to gain entirely new levels of information regarding the cellular machineries,” she says.

Professor Caruso’s group is just one of many accessing the super-resolution microscopes. Access is provided through the Materials Characterisation and Fabrication Platform (MCFP) at the University of Melbourne and the facility is open to all researchers, be they from academic institutes or industry. Dr Yan is also the academic leader for the Advanced Fluorescence Imaging node of the MCFP.

“We provide access to not only the super-resolution microscopes, but also a wide range of other fluorescence-based instruments, such as conventional microscopes and flow cytometers. With our instruments, we can look at either a single cell in super-resolution or at thousands of cells at a time to get an idea of the overview of a cellular population.”

Professor Caruso’s group is excited by the future of microscopy and the benefits it brings to his research. “Super-resolution microscopy offers new and exciting opportunities to study the interactions between engineered particles and cells,” he says. “Cutting edge instrumentation is critical in developing the next generation of drug and vaccine carriers.”

In a beautiful spring day in Sydney’s Darling Harbour, a large gathering of alums and friends come to learn what the team-mates and friends of Sarah Banting have known for a long time. Sarah Banting is a leader among the leaders and the embodiment of all that the University’s Elite Athlete Program.

The University of Melbourne women’s eight crew had just brought home their fifth consecutive Australian Boat Race (ABR) title in as many years. Crews from Melbourne and the University of Sydney, along with alumni, family and supporters were enjoying a post-race brunch while the morning’s racing was diagnosed through a panel discussion. It’s fair to say that these discussions were facilitated by the University of Melbourne women’s eight crew who had just brought home their fifth consecutive Australian Boat Race (ABR) title in as many years.

“Crews from Melbourne and the University of Sydney, along with alumni, family and supporters were enjoying a post-race brunch while the morning’s racing was diagnosed through a panel discussion.”

The response was met with a rapture of cheers from her crew-mates and the audience.

Dr Yan Yan is an Australian Research Council Federation Fellow with the group, researching the biological interactions between cells and nanoparticles, who says that with resolution of the OMX down to 100 nanometres, scientists can start to explore how to visualise individual nanoparticles and how they interact with live cells.

“This allows us to gain entirely new levels of information regarding the cellular machineries,” she says.

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Professor Caruso is excited by the future of microscopy and the benefits it brings to his research. “Super-resolution microscopy offers new and exciting opportunities to study the interactions between engineered particles and cells,” he says. “Cutting edge instrumentation is critical in developing the next generation of drug and vaccine carriers.”

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Bushfire greenhouse gas emissions – from mild to wild

Researchers have conducted the first-ever experiments to prove that fuel reduction burning prior to wildfire decreases both the intensity of wildfire and reduces the amount of carbon and greenhouse gas emitted to the atmosphere. Nerissa Hannink reports.

A study in Australia’s eucalypt forests has revealed that levels of carbon and greenhouse gases released in wildfire could be reduced by fuel reduction burning, or planned burns conducted prior to the bushfire season in high risk forests.

Funded by the Bushfire CRC, the work was led by researchers at the University of Melbourne and is published in the International Journal of Wildland Fire and the Forest Ecology and Management journal.

The results will inform land management decisions as well as government policy regarding planned burning, and enable more accurate estimations of the contribution that bushfires make to Australia’s National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

In a recent episode of Up Close, the University research podcast, Dr Robin Canniford, Co-Director of the University’s Cluster for Organisation, Society and Markets talked about his research into surfing culture and how people assemble romantic experiences of nature. Following is an extract, edited by Monique Edwards.

**S**urfing culture, and the data that surrounds it, such as diary entries and artworks, has been under the research spotlight, as Melbourne researcher Robin Canniford endeavours to get a closer look into surfers’ relationship with nature.

“Surfing for me was an easy choice because I’ve been a surfer since I was a teenager growing up in the south-west of England, surrounded by the chilly North Atlantic ocean. It was always very attractive to me,” Dr Canniford says.

“The perspective I took to this research was to embed myself long-term (eight years so far) and quite deeply among the people who are engaged in nature consumption activities, and also to participate in them myself.”

Dr Canniford says nature takes on a spiritual form for some people who feel they may have lost touch with religion or “the sacred”.

“Being in nature is perhaps one way to re-achieve that link without having to resort to religion or organised religion,” he says.

“Whether it be surfing, climbing, white water rafting, hang gliding, for that sense of challenge and for a little bit of a sense of uncontrollability, losing ourselves in a place which can’t be exactly controlled on a daily basis.”

“Sometimes these sublime experiences can be so awe-inspiring that they lead almost to a nature worship, to an experience we might call magical. I think the investigations into how people consume nature – be they surfers or climbers – often we find forms of new age spirituality emerging among those consumption practices.”

Throughout the podcast, Dr Canniford discusses the various ways in which the corporate world uses nature through branding, the idea of primitivism as a consumable product, and the conflict between the forces of nature and the human desire to control nature.

“At a very concrete level, nature just doesn’t do what we want it to do. That is a foundational principle in ideas of magic, the sublime and, indeed, the primitive,” he says.

“Nature just sometimes doesn’t obey what we want it to do and forces us to react spontaneously and redevelop those lost virtues of adaptability and, perhaps, even spirituality. Nature constantly reminds us that we’re not in charge.”

Dr Canniford says how we consume nature will determine the preservation of nature.

“I think that the necessity to consume nature is always there. What are the ways that we can try to improve how we consume nature? A concept I’m working on is this idea of redress.

“This is to say that we can continue to use natural geographies and environments, but the way that we use those geographies has to change, both in the technologies that we develop and bring there, and in the stories that we tell ourselves.”

Dr Canniford says it’s important for people to recognise that nature and culture are deeply connected.

“That story of pristine nature, as not contaminated by culture, underpins so many economies, be they tourism economies or the ability to advertise four-wheel drives effectively. People want to tell themselves the story of leaving culture and becoming more primitive, at one with nature.”

“I think that’s actually very damaging to the natural environments that we seek to support. It’s only through recognising the hybridity and, perhaps, undoing these false stories, that we can begin to move forward.”

Volleyballers defend national title

Rod Warnecke reports on a hard-fought battle for gold by the Melbourne University Blues women’s volleyball team late last year.

The Melbourne University Blues women’s team won back-to-back Australian Volleyball League titles with a come-from-behind win over the combined University of Sydney/University of Technology Sydney team (UTS-SU) at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre in December.

Reigning national champions the University Blues went into the final as favourites having finished the home and away season atop the ladder. They also defeated the Queensland Pirates comfortably in Saturday’s semi-final (three sets to one). But the grand-final would prove to be a different story.

Having lost the first two sets, the Uni Blues were staring down the barrel of a straight sets loss in the biggest game of the year before digging deep to mount a miraculous comeback.

After clearing away to a four point lead early in the first set off the back of some great serving from first year walk-on and Yale graduate Hayley Wessels, the team lost their way to drop the set 25:27. The second set went from bad to worse with UTS-SU’s defensive game shutting down the Melbourne attack. The gold medal game was in jeopardy when UTS-SU won the second set 25:18.

The fifth and deciding set to 15 would be a different story.

“If they can grit their teeth and get on board with the third set, they’ll grow in confidence and it’s game on.”

And that’s just what the Uni Blues did. The third set ebbed and flowed with each team taking its turn to lead by a point or two. But the Uni-Blues would prove to be a different story.

Having lost the first two sets, the Uni Blues were down 1-2 in the first set, but some strong service and a great serve from Hannah Martin and Rebecca Walter started to pierce the UTS-SU front line. As the large crowd of Australian Schools Championship spectators began to find their voice, Melbourne pinned the set, 25:23. Game on.

The fourth set was another nail-biter with UTS-SU getting to within a couple of points of winning the set and winning the gold. With Uni Blues coach Shannon Winkie pulling some line-up changes and calling some strategic time-outs, the fourth set again went Melbourne’s way, 26:24. Two sets all.

The fifth and deciding set to 15 would be a different story.

Point for point, the two teams slugged it out. Perhaps the momentum of having won the past two sets? Perhaps it was the past experience of having won the title the previous year? Perhaps it was their belief they had in each other? Whatever it was, it worked and the Melbourne University Blues prevailed, 15-13. The Uni Blues were Australian Volleyball League champions again.

Photo: Rod Warnecke.
The leadership challenges for Victoria in 2015

Experts in economics, management, health and education explore the pressing changes that will face the recently elected Andrews Labor government in 2015. These views were first published in full form on the Election Watch Victoria website.

THE ECONOMY

The new Victorian government faces significant constraints to its budget with a weak economy and budget promises. At the same time, new policy initiatives are required to provide an attractive environment for business investment, more jobs, and contraction of Melbourne’s reputation as “the most liveable city” to reside.

Victorian economic growth at 1.7 per cent over the past year is half the national average, and unemployment at 6.8 per cent of the workforce (with as many again wanting to work more hours) could rise even higher.

The incoming government has promised not to introduce new taxes or raise existing taxes, to maintain a budget surplus and the state’s AAA credit rating, though there are real risks of revenue costs with the write-off of the East West tunnel project.

A combination of promised extra outlays on the residential, disability support scheme, Gonski reforms to education and infrastructure investments, together with changes in demography and healthcare technology, imply increased outlays.

The constraints on available funds and additional expenditure commitments will require the government in its budgets to explicitly and transparently assess spending priorities, and to implement new technology and management practices to get better value per dollar of government expenditure.

While the details of this piece of legislation has yet to be confirmed, it will enable the implementation of a number of core policy promises made during the campaign, including the establishment of:

- A number of new industry advisory bodies, including Infrastructure Victoria, Projects Victoria, and the Premier’s Jobs and Investment Panel, to advise on priority infrastructure investments.
- A $500 million fund to invest in new projects and support job creation in growth sectors.
- A $200 million Future Industries Fund to support the accelerated growth of priority sectors, which include medical technology and pharmaceuticals, new energy technologies, food and fibres, transport, defence and construction technologies, education and professional services.
- A $200 million Regional Jobs Fund.
- A $100 million fund to provide payroll tax relief for businesses employing the long-unemployed, workers who have been retrenched, or young workers currently unemployed.
- The Back to Work policy will also look to expand Victoria’s investment and business promotion activities globally through the expansion of new Victorian Business Offices in South America, Singapore and Turkey.

These initiatives will need to operate alongside the Commonwealth’s recently-announced Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda, much of which echoes the approach to be pursued by an Andrews Labor Government. However, the Commonwealth has already set its sights on pursuing further labour market/industrial relations reforms, as well as other legislative reforms that are likely to present significant points of difference between the incoming Victorian Labor government and the Abbott government nationally.

— Peter Gahan, Director of the Centre for Workplace Leadership, Faculty of Business and Economics

HEALTH

In the front cover of the Victorian Labor Party Policy for the recent election is an elderly woman in hospital. The polls have consistently shown that voters trust Labor more than the Coalition on health. So it is obviously most important for the incoming Andrews government that the new Minister for Health does, and is seen to do, a very good job. But health is not a fun gig. The easiest job in politics is being the Opposition Health Minister. The hardest is being the Health Minister.

I do not envy the incoming Health Minister Jill Hennessy. She will be burdened with a long list of promises which include a new Women’s and Children’s hospital in Sunshine, a major expansion of Casey Hospital and a new Heart Hospital in Clayton whilst at the same time cutting emergency room waiting times, elective waiting times and ambulance waiting times.

But the Health Minister, like David Davis the previous incumbent, will have to confront the ever-growing, three-propped perfect storm; increased, almost insatiable community demand for healthcare; increased physician demand for provision of the latest treatments, and expectations of an ever-increasing supply of more expensive diagnostic equipment, patient management aids and pharmaceutical therapies.

This is underlined by a willingness of funding by the Commonwealth. The Victorian Healthcare Association predicts that the states will receive up to $1.5 billion from the Commonwealth through the(continued)

About the Election Watch.edu.au project

Election Watch is an initiative of the University of Melbourne devoted to expert political analysis and debate; to the exploration of vibrant democracy; and to explaining the mechanics of democratic process.

In the past years Election Watch has launched projects focused on the 2013 Australian election, the 2014 Indian and Indonesian campaigns, and the November 2014 Victorian election.

Election Watch draws on the resource of the University of Melbourne’s experts to comment and analyse issues on their home turf, encouraging voters to engage deeply with the issues that shape their lives.

Election Watch brings together the University of Melbourne’s most respected and experienced academics to provide rigorous analysis and independent commentary on the Victorian election campaign – from political scientists and public policy experts to specialists in health, education and urban planning.

www.electionwatch.edu.au

ELECTION WATCH

— John Freebairn, Professor of Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics

EMPLOYMENT

The incoming Andrews Labor Government has committed to getting Victoria “back to work”. On being sworn in, it will bring in the Back to Work Act as a piece of legislation in its first term. A major plank of the Back to Work agenda centres on investment in new infrastructure, including a minimum investment of $1 billion in upgrading regional roads and a re-direction of the Commonwealth’s multi-billion dollar commitment to the East West tunnel of construction in Melbourne, which will now be abandoned.

While the details of this piece of legislation are yet to be confirmed, it will enable the implementation of a number of core policy
SHORT COURSES

Visual Art Summer School
13-16 January 2015
Ages 15-20
With streams in both painting and drawing, this 4-day program is perfect for those embarking on VCE study in visual art and those aspiring to pursue tertiary study at the VCA or elsewhere.

Theatre Summer School
19-23 January 2015
Ages 15-20
The VCA's week-long theatre summer school workshops cover all aspects of acting and theatre making, with six different training options on offer in 2015. The days start with voice and movement training followed by afternoon classes in your chosen stream. Streams include acting, Shakespeare, acting to camera and a VCE drama intensive.

Pop Song Writing Bootcamp
19-23 January 2015
Ages 16+
Over five days you will workshop your song into a finished product, ready for performance. Through a combination of group sessions and individual work you’ll explore essential songwriting techniques and creative process development under the guidance of world-renowned singer-songwriter Geoffrey Williams.

2015 Studio Programs
Now taking enrolments for year-long part-time programs in Acting, Art, Music Theatre and Jazz Ensembles.

Acting Studio is a one-year program for people aged 18 and over eager to act and learn new skills. Over the year, students are introduced to acting, performance and artistic expression. The program is delivered by dedicated theatre artists and industry professionals in two three-hour sessions per week; perfect for those with day commitments.

Jazz Ensembles Studio takes you inside the small ensemble and improvisation process, taps into and develops your creativity and provides guided performance practice and a public performance to elevate your ability. Designed especially for ages 15-20, this course is perfect for those with an interest in jazz and improvised music performance, with some existing musical ability. The tailored two-class program is for those keen to explore and enhance musical knowledge and understanding alongside ensemble, improvisation and performance skills.

Visual Art Studio courses provide opportunities for people aged 17+ with an interest in contemporary visual art to explore their own artwork at a level that suits their needs. These programs provide an excellent introduction to the practice and study of fine art, and an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to prepare for further independent research.

Music Theatre Studio is a dynamic one-year skills-building course for 15-20 year olds modelled on the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music Theatre). The course provides immersive triple threat training taught by highly experienced, friendly tutors who are specialists in their fields.

Term 1 Short Courses
Now taking enrolments for Term 1 Short Course in the following exciting programs:

Classical Singing 1
Acting 1
Acting 3 Devised Performance
Composition for Animation and Games

More information:
VCA-MCM.unimelb.edu.au/shortcourses
9810 3276
Triple win for Rhodes Scholarships

Three University of Melbourne graduates have been selected Rhodes Scholars, joining a notable list of Australians who have been awarded the prestigious international scholarship, including Prime Minister Tony Abbott, former Prime Minister Bob Hawke and former Governor-General Sir Zelman Coven.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

For the fourth time, the University of Melbourne has produced one Victorian and two Australian national Rhodes Scholars, all of whom will head to Oxford University this year to undertake postgraduate studies in each on their specialities – neuroscience, economic development and public policy.

Bachelor of Science graduate Alexander Eastwood, 24, was selected in October as the recipient of the Victorian Rhodes Scholarship, while in December Commerce and Arts gradates Andrew Wheeler and Hamish McKenzie, also 24, were chosen as national Rhodes Scholars.

In Australia, there are nine scholarships given annually, one for each of the six states and three national scholarships. On three previous occasions, the University of Melbourne has produced one Victorian and two Australian national Rhodes scholars. The recipients of those scholarships were Katherine Bird, Mark Moshinsky and John Tascoulas in 1989, Charles Day, Karen Yeung and Carl McManish in 1993 and Simon Chesterman, Joanne Painting and Ben Rimmer in 1997.

Rhodes Scholarships are awarded annually by competitive application to high-achieving students between the ages of 18 and 25 who show intellectual ability and demonstrate leadership qualities through community activity or sporting achievement. The Rhodes scholarship is the oldest and most prestigious international graduate scholarship program in the world. This year’s recipients will join 83 high achieving scholars from around the world, including from the United States, southern Africa, Germany and Pakistan.

Andrew Wheeler, who is currently a management consultant with global strategy firm LEX Consulting, is hoping to study a Master of Science in Economics for Development and a Master of Public Policy at Oxford.

Mr Wheeler’s interest is in economic development, with a particular focus on child health and education in the Asia-Pacific region. Having majored in economics and finance, he is also fascinated by the power of economies to guide global citizens to improve their living standards.

“My experiences volunteering with the New Hope for Cambodian Children Orphanage and Kikikalora-Sacco, a micro-finance organisation in Tanzania, showed me that a country’s people are its most effective agents to lead change and improve the quality of life,” he says.

“Good governance can unlock a country’s hidden potential, and requires multidisciplinary input from economists, teachers, doctors and many other practitioners and policy-makers.”

Mr Wheeler’s passion for community involvement has seen him lead a research team with ChildFund in Papua New Guinea to investigate child malnutrition, and become a founding member of the Australian Indigenous Education Support, a charity that donates computer equipment to remote schools in the Northern Territory.

“I look forward to the challenge of living up to the scholarship’s long history of outstanding community leadership, and I am excited to join with others in helping to eradicate extreme poverty,” Mr Wheeler says.

Hamish McKenzie has recently covered the UN climate talks in Lima, Peru for global newswire, TheVerd, and spent three years training in social advocacy and community volunteer for World Vision Australia. He has also established a social enterprise importing ethical made designer goods from Cape Town to support revetangement in parts of southern Africa.

Mr McKenzie says he is hoping to further his interest in social activism and advocacy by studying a Master of Public Policy at Oxford.

“I am to influence social change by understanding what the world looks like to policymakers who currently make important decisions that impact our lives,” he says.

Mr McKenzie says it’s not only social activists who can respond to the world’s challenges, but people in all sectors of society – business, government and the public sector – need to believe in social progress.

“Ultimately I wish to make an impact in Australia, but I’m hoping to work overseas to gain insight in how other countries are responding to climate challenges like green urban living, renewable energy, and using resources profits to invest in major national infrastructure.”

Mr McKenzie hopes to apply the learning from those countries’ policies for the benefit of Australian decision-makers.

“I am hopeful our future generations can make sensible policy decisions that are less unsustainable and more made in the interests of the public,” he says.

The Victorian Rhodes Scholar, Andrew Eastwood, will be pursuing his passion for the study of the mind and is hoping to study for Oxford’s Doctoral program in Neuroscience.

His scholarship selection was featured in November’s edition of ibice.

Congratulating the three Rhodes Scholars, Honorary Secretary of the Victorian Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee and Dean of the University’s Melbourne Law School Professor Carole White says, “The number of candidates who did not have a vote in the selection) says they are outstanding young Australians who are sure to make their mark on the nation and the world.

“Three scholars have shown a commitment to study and a passion for change. It is really encouraging to see the growth in numbers of applicants from the University of Melbourne with balanced and mature attitudes to work, scholarship and the community. I wish them all the best in their future endeavours and studies at Oxford.”

For more on the Rhodes Trust, Scholarships and notable scholars, visit: http://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/

Colombo Plan scholars to build Asian ties

Four students will head to China, Japan and Singapore to extend their studies as part of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) in 2015. By Stuart Winthrop.

Learning and teaching

The NCP Scholarship Program provides opportunities for Australian undergraduates to undertake semester-based study and internships or mentorships in the Asia-Pacific region.

Scott Giggante (Science) and Matthew Wiseman (Arts) will study at Fudan University in China, Indah Cox-Livingstone (Science) will study at the National University of Singapore and Georgina Davie (Arts) will study at Japan’s University of Kyot.

As the top-ranked of 11 NCP scholars studying in China, Mr Giggante was also named as the country’s NCP Fellow.

He says the scholarship would give him an opportunity to improve his Mandarin-language skills and build ties with China’s growing computer science industry.

“I expect Australian businesses’ relationships with their Chinese counterparts to grow in number and in importance in coming years, and the Government’s New Colombo Plan provides an amazing opportunity to form these relationships with students from around the world who will become the business leaders of the future,” he says.

Mr Wiseman, who previously studied Mandarin at Fudan, will return to the university to complete his Chinese-language diploma.

He agrees Australia’s relationship with China would be hugely influential in coming decades.

“I’m learning Mandarin because I’d like to understand as much as I can about the country that will perhaps shape the world the most during my lifetime,” he says.

“I think as many people as possible should experience the diversity of cultures in our region so that we can be an informed and respectful nation.”

Ms Davie says the cultural understanding the NCP scholarships aim to foster is a fundamental aspect of any Arts degree.

“I want to be a part of the development and change occurring in Asia, helping to harness the full potential that this diverse and complex region has to offer through my future life and career,” she says.

“I want to work to bring the regions of the world together in a manner that is sensitive to cultural preservation, as well as promoting equity of development and resources in the face of an increasingly homogenised world, which is why the NCP scholarship is such an exciting opportunity for me.”

Ms Cox-Livingstone says studying at National University of Singapore’s internationally supported immunology program will help prepare her for postgraduate veterinary science study and provide new perspectives on her studies.

“I believe that having mutual study exchange between countries displays respect and recognition of each other’s education programs, creating stronger networks and new friendships,” she says.

Study Abroad Program Manager Rachel Walters says the mobility is fundamental to the Melbourne experience and central to encouraging global citizenship.

“The development of students intellectual abilities is foremost, the development of intercultural understanding is significant and desired.”

“International education promotes transformative learning, which in turn brings about a real shift in consciousness that you couldn’t get simply by an individual’s way of being and seeing the world.”

All the Melbourne NCP scholars say this international engagement is a key benefit of the program.

“This engagement begins at an undergraduate level, from person-to-person links between students to institutional ties and collaboration between political and business researchers, Ms Gigante says. “Hopefully the New Colombo Plan can foster the beginnings of these ties and contribute towards a more Asia-aware future.”
SUMMERSALT FESTIVAL

VCA Art Attack
Watch Melbourne's newest public art work come to life!
From 27 January – 1 February, students from the VCA demonstrate their talents to the public as they transform the corner of Southbank Boulevard and St Kilda Rd into a large outdoor mural.
Don't miss your chance to see the next generation of Australia's visual artists in their element creating LIVE art.
Presented by VCA in association with SummerSalt Outdoor Arts Festival
Venue: Corner of Southbank Blvd and St Kilda Rd
Dates: 27 January - 1 February
Time: 10am - 5pm
Cost: Free

Encounters
Encounters brings art, technology, and people together in a weekly outdoor interactive installation at the VCA Courtyard.
Exploring notions of ritual and connection, Encounters offers a kinaesthetic experience – a cohesion of sound, music, lighting, and visual effects.
Dynamically construct your own experience through movement and social interactions, allowing you to encounter yourself and those around you in unexpected ways.
Presented by the Microsoft Research Centre for Social Natural User Interfaces and the Victorian College of the Arts in association with SummerSalt Outdoor Arts Festival.
Venue: VCA Lawn behind the Hub Building
Dates: Saturday 31 Jan, Saturday 4 Feb, Saturday 14 Feb, Saturday 21 Feb
Time: 7pm – 11pm
Duration: Approximately 5 – 10 minutes
Cost: Free

EXHIBITIONS

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

Everyday imagining: new perspectives on Outsider art
Wednesday 1 Oct 2014 to Sunday 18 Jan 2015
The work of Outsider artists is often interpreted as expressing a unique inner vision unshirkled by social or cultural influences.
Everyday imagining: new perspectives on Outsider art counters this view by presenting Australian and New Zealand contemporary artists whose works reveal their proactive engagement with the external world.
While there is much debate about the use of the term ‘outsider art’, this exhibition doesn’t aim to resolve ambiguities around relevance or definition but instead questions a key interpretive bias that is a legacy of its origins in art brut.
It includes artists Andrew Blythe, Kellie Greaves, Julian Martin, Jack Naphine, Lisa Reid, Martin Thompson and Terry Williams.

Between artefact and text: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome in the University of Melbourne Classics and Archaeology collections
Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome are all great civilisations of the ancient world; each one imbued with particular linguistic, social, religious and political systems. On one level these different societies are characterised by distinctive cultural developments and unique literary traditions. On another level connections and influences are clearly discernible.
Between artefact and text features selected objects from the University of Melbourne's Classics and Archaeology collections situated against the backdrop of four great literary works from the ancient world: the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, the Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe, Homer’s Iliad from Ancient Greece and the Roman Virgil’s Aeneid.
The objects inhabit a realm created and reinforced by the unfolding narratives represented in the literature.
It is a space filled with spreading artistic styles and evolving cultural influences.

Richard Avendon People
Saturday 6 Dec 2014 to Sunday 15 Mar 2015
American photographer Richard Avendon (1923-2004) produced portrait photographs that defined the twentieth century.
Richard Avendon People explores his iconic portrait making practice, which was distinctive for its honesty, candour and frankness.
This exhibition is presented in partnership with The Richard Avendon Foundation, New York, and The National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.

Norman Macgeorge: an unlikely Modernist
Saturday 6 Dec 2014 to Sunday 8 Mar 2015
In a 1935 lecture presented at the National Gallery of Victoria to coincide with the recently opened Loan Exhibition of Contemporary British Art, Norman Macgeorge declared “I would like to be a modernist myself”.
A long-time guide-lecturer at the Gallery, Macgeorge’s declaration was both a defence of Modernism in the face of criticism from artistic conservatives, such as Arthur Streeton, as well as a statement on his own practice.
As a critic Macgeorge fully embraced the direction of modern art. He had a broad understanding of the art historical canon as well as of more recent artistic developments from to Fauvism to Cubism to Surrealism.
As an advocate he argued strongly for the National and State Galleries to unleash their conservative shackles and to acquire modern works for their collections.
Norman Macgeorge: an unlikely Modernist, celebrates Macgeorge as both a great defender of Modernism and reveals his engagement with early European Modernism in his own artistic practice.
It shows his debt to artists such as Cezanne and van Gogh and highlights his admiration of both stylistic and thematic characteristics as he grappled with a quickly changing artistic environment.

RICHARD AVEDON PEOPLE
Until 15 March 2015
Free admission

The Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne
Swanston Street, Parkville, VIC 3010
Tues – Fri 10am – 5pm, Sat & Sun 12 – 5pm
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