Indigenous students travelled from across Australia last month to attend the Murrup Barak Experience program at the Parkville campus and find out about studying at the University of Melbourne. Photo: Peter Casamento.
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Inspiring spaces are learning places

Laura Soderlind looks at the way the spaces in which we learn can affect learning outcomes, and how inspiring environments can lead to inspired thinking.

Feature

“We shape our buildings; therefore they shape us,” observed Winston Churchill, referring to the House of Commons. This observation resounds alike through buildings circa 1800 and those with a contemporary timestamp.

Broken down to bricks and mortar, the University of Melbourne is a collection of buildings that house teaching, learning, research and the pursuit of intellectual advances. Inevitably, the buildings have shaped and directed the activity that takes place within.

Over the course of the University’s 160 years the multiple campuses have witnessed new buildings that mushroom up next to the spires and arches of 19th century designs. The campuses are themselves historical artefacts, evidence of prior educational attitudes as well as being manifestos to current styles.

The University recently unveiled its new kid on the block. A building devoted to buildings. This latest addition to house the Melbourne School of Design. This building is a remarkable place that inspires learning and encourages enquiry,” Professor Kvan says.

“There is a remarkable ‘outdoor room’ in the centre of the building, an enclosed atrium that encourages conversation and discovery.”

The building houses three lecture theatres, two galleries, many studios and seminar rooms, spaces for students to work alone or in groups, academic offices and workplaces for teams, a magnificent library and a large workshop.

Curiosity and innovation underscore the design of the building in such a way that these qualities are projected onto the generations of students who will study within its library and collaborate in the workshop.

“The guiding strategy behind this building was that we create places for contemplation or conversations, as it is through these that intellectual exploration and learning occur,” Professor Kvan says.

The building is a case study that teaches students as they journey from stairway design to the creative uses for glass, timber and metal.

“Throughout the building, the choices of materials, the details of connections, the way the sunlight is filtered and admitted or the glimpsed work under way will inspire students to look more closely and think about the place they are in,” Professor Kvan says.

Many other spaces around the University embody this approach to learning and challenging ‘chalk and talk’ educational models of yesteryear.

“Learning has changed from didactic to explorative. Today, we ask students to take more responsibility for their learning, thus we invite them to stay on campus and work in less structured spaces,” Professor Kvan says.

“With our learning space design we’ve moved away from this ‘lecture theatre’ model, creating spaces with more flexibility, and opportunities for different types of exchanges and teaching and learning approaches,” Professor Kennedy explains.

One of the spaces that showcases this best is the ground floor of the Baillieu Library on the Parkville campus, which is light-filled and airy, with dedicated places for students to work at desks, but also nooks and armchairs for students to escape with reading material. Groupwork booths are complete with digital technology, screens and a prudent number of powerpoints.

“The students are voting with their feet,” Professor Kennedy says. “There’s a very high visiting rate and use by the students.”

The University campuses have buildings that straddle different eras but must also gaze into the future to cater for students that haven’t even been born, learning styles that are in their infancy and educational devices that haven’t yet been invented.

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See the Melbourne School of Design’s newly opened home, and experience learning and teaching at the University of Melbourne on Open Day, Sunday 17 August.

Open Day. Make sure you head to the Community Life Precinct around the Grattan Street Gate 10 entrance, and find out how your life at university can be made a whole lot easier, a whole lot tastier!
Global health, human rights and HIV and AIDS

Global health and human rights have a history of convergence that has been formative for the evolution of public health and law. In a keynote speech hosted by the Nossal Institute for Global Health, the Honourable Michael Kirby emphasised the need to reform global intellectual property laws in order to beat HIV and AIDS. By Elizabeth Brumby.

In July 2014, Melbourne played host to the 20th International AIDS Conference: the world’s largest gathering of policymakers, researchers, health practitioners and activists, coming together in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

At the conference’s opening ceremony Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, described his vision for ending AIDS. "Voluntary testing and treatment reaching everyone, everywhere; each person living with HIV reaching viral suppression; no one dies from an AIDS-related illness or is born with HIV, and people living with HIV live with dignity, protected by laws and free to move and live anywhere in the world," he said.

It is a vision shared by the Honourable Michael Kirby, a champion of HIV/AIDS legal reform and a former Justice of the High Court of Australia.

Justice Kirby delivered the Jonathan Mann memorial lecture at the conference, exploring the convergence of global health and human rights from the perspective of his previous roles as a Commissioner of the World Health Organization Global Commission on AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme Global Commission on HIV and the Law, and the UN AIDS/Lancet Commission on Overcoming AIDS and Securing Access to Healthcare.

And at a public lecture delivered at the University of Melbourne during the conference, hosted by the Nossal Institute, Justice Kirby described how the law affects the spread of HIV/AIDS by marginalising vulnerable groups. At the same time, he highlighted the need to change international intellectual property law in order to access essential treatments that preserve life and human dignity.

"In the past, I have served on a number of bodies dealing with the way in which the law is an impediment to successful strategies in reducing stigma and infection rates in HIV and AIDS," Justice Kirby said, describing the battles that have been waged over patents for HIV and AIDS treatment and research since the 1980s.

He said the conceptualisation of health as a human right can be traced through the formation of the United Nations, the World Health Organization Charter, the Alma Ata Declaration on primary health care, and it underpinned the social mobilisation for the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS.

Describing the findings of the recent Global Commission on HIV and the Law, Justice Kirby said it was most important to uphold human rights when the law, far from being socially helpful, can add to stigma, discrimination and isolation.

"Coming to Geneva in the 1980s after witnessing the emergence of a mysterious new virus in then Zaire, my friend Jonathan Mann, the first director of the United Nations Global Program on AIDS, brought with him the idea that this ‘new’ epidemic would be subject to discriminatory practices, and must be addressed in terms of universal human rights and human dignity," Justice Kirby said.

"This remains true today. Today, vulnerable groups – in particular, men who have sex with men, sex workers and injecting drug users – still face legal barriers that, in some cases, have prevented people from taking the HIV test and seeking treatment."

Describing how intellectual property and patent law impacts on access to treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS, Justice Kirby outlined a "disproportionate" level of legal protection afforded to inventors of new drugs.

"The current global laws protecting the rights of inventors of new products – particularly in relation to pharmaceutical inventions – are disproportionate, both to the needs of invention and to the rewards that they carry. And too costly for people, especially in developing countries."

"Intellectual property laws relating to drug development have prevented people living with HIV and AIDS, especially in developing countries, from accessing treatments needed for them to be able to live with dignity. And without changing the global laws on intellectual property, people will die needlessly," he said.

"What is needed, as the Global Commission on HIV and the Law pointed out, is a new inquiry at an international level, inaugurated by the secretary-general of the United Nations, to investigate a reconciliation between the right to health and the right of authors to proper protection for their inventions."

The lecture was hosted by the Nossal Institute for Global Health as part of a new subject in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences focusing on the link between global health and human rights.

Reflecting the history of convergence between global health, human rights and the law, the subject is designed to provide grounding for students of public health on the normative content and interpretations of the right to health, and on the meaning of a rights-based framework for health in practice.

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A Melbourne alumna believes in providing women with the opportunity to make a difference. By Chris Weaver.

Sarah-Jane Beavitt vividly recalls her decision to focus on asthma research.

"I was having a glass of wine with a friend who is a rehabilitation specialist," she says. "My friend had just gone through an awful day, because one of her patients – a young man of about 18 or 19 – had a severe asthma attack and was without oxygen for 10 minutes."

The boy survived the attack, but lost all capacity to look after himself. He was a young adult sentenced to a life needing a full-time carer.

*I thought this was awful and happened just because he couldn’t breathe," Ms Beavitt says.

"It occurred to me that maybe he was missing an enzyme I was working on in my asthma research, and I just thought ‘I can’t sit here and do nothing.’"

That moment led Ms Beavitt to turn her Masters’ studies into a Doctorate in Pharmacology and focus on changing lives through research.

Ms Beavitt did not follow a conventional path into higher education. She was 31 when she made the decision to study for her undergraduate degree, following a decade in the workforce.

Her subsequent decision to continue into postgraduate research proved an adult move rewarded with the Ludwig Institute Medal for the top PhD medical student.

"It’s just a fantastic environment and one I don’t have any children and I believe that I think women don’t always get the same opportunities in life as men do, be it for further study or just their general advancement."

Ms Beavitt is a donor who.believes passionately in the goals of Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne. Yet like so many others, she is aware that her real legacy will likely come later on.

"I don’t have a lot of money to give away right now, however I feel if I leave a bequest then I can make a very real difference," she says.

"I don’t have any children and I believe that in creating this fund I can allow the family name to live on."

Ms Beavitt retains a strong relationship with the University. She continues to tutor at the Department of Pharmacology, attends events through the Heritage Society (individuals who have included the University in their wills) and revels in lifelong friendships made at Melbourne.

"This is a once in a lifetime chance for people to make some real contributions," she says.

"It’s just a fantastic environment and one I feel I can make a difference to."
Why cultural partnerships are a win-win

The University and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) have hosted a unique panel event to showcase their partnership. Zoe Nikakis talks to some of the panel members about their professional journeys and the importance of cultural partnerships for lifelong learning.

The University of Melbourne

It’s unsurprising the University’s Vice-Principal of Engagement Adrian Collette believes cultural partnerships, such as the one that exists between the University and the NGV, are mutually beneficial.

“Having campuses at Southbank and Parkville makes us part of the city, so it makes sense to take the cultural core of this University and form partnerships with the other great cultural institutions, such as the State Library of Victoria and the Melbourne Museum.

“The NGV is the foremost gallery of Australia by any measure, so this is a natural extension of the University’s aspirations.”

Mr Collette says the University needs to engage in such cultural partnerships partly because it has such rich cultural assets, and it is one of the great collecting institutions of Melbourne.

“The cultural life of the University runs very deep, so sharing it is a natural extension of what we do,” he says.

And it seems there’s tremendous appetite for these kinds of learning experiences in Melbourne. The University’s engagement with the public through programs such as its monthly 10 Great Books lectures and Cultural Treasures Festival are proving incredibly popular with the public.

“We get tremendous engagement,” Mr Collette says. “Every free event our academics have led at the NGV has been completely full. Our scholars are in touch with a broader community and they’re having an exchange with that community, which is priceless.

“Melbourne is a deeply cultural city, and we’re part of that, so it offers us the opportunity for much deeper and broader engagement.”

The two institutions’ latest panel event featured a University-NGV staff panel including Arts alumnus and the NGV’s Senior Curator of International Painting and Sculpture 1300–1980 Ted Gott.

Mr Gott says having studied French, Classics and also Art History at the University, he could have gone into teaching, but was drawn to the museum world.

“I think both institutions benefit from this sort of partnership,” he says. “The staff of both institutions often approach similar subjects from quite different perspectives, and ideally, each can shed light on the other.”

Though this panel event was about University alumni moving into careers in the Arts and cultural sector, partnerships also encourage staff working in industry to study or work at the University.

Mr Collette’s own professional experience supports this. Prior to joining the University, he was the Chief Executive of Opera Australia.

“The thing about working in the arts industry is that you are usually compelled to engage a market, or an audience, so the quality of your work is being tested – constantly,” he says.

“When you come from that culture, you bring that attitude with you. You get a rich exchange in working with the very, very best, in my case in a performing arts company, and then coming to the University and working with the very best scholars and researchers.”

Mr Collette says having people with deep industry experience can also shape thinking around how students are prepared for professional life.

“I feel that this University thinks about careers rather than, simply, jobs,” he says.

“The deeper your education, the more curious you become.”

One such student is Simon Maidment, the NGV’s Contemporary Art Curator who is also a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of the VCA and Music.

“My job is to reflect on where we are as a society and arts’ role in shaping its past, present and future; to recognise those practitioners who are making, or have made, a contribution to those societal shifts, or their antithom; and to communicate narratives, findings and intuitions through the form of exhibition, and through a range of associated communications,” he says.

Mr Maidment agrees the partnership is a natural fit, because the people within the University and the NGV are concerned with scholarship, and finding appropriate ways in which to capture and disseminate the results.

“We understand that we all make contributions to ideas, issues and conundrums (as well as institutions) that will outlast us,” he says.

“There are many, many areas of overlap with the concerns of both institutions. They both exist to provide accessible pathways for people to learn, to grow as individuals and to understand, appreciate, and contribute to the collective: who we are; where we are; in the ways our context can be improved from every perspective.”

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Legal advocates help make community policing fair

Two law graduates and a current JD student have joined forces with the Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre to educate the community about fair policing. By Stav Psonis.

A group of young legal professionals has seen how strategic litigation together with public interest advocacy and law reform work can improve the lives of local communities, through participation in a project with the Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre.

The Police Accountability Project (PAP) is an innovative public interest initiative which has an educational web portal, the first resource in Victoria that deals with police accountability.

Melbourne Law School graduates Amy Frew and Jessica Tang and JD student Rachael Lethbiabher have built the PAP’s web portal, with funding provided by the University’s Dreamlarge Student Engagement Grant in May 2013. This grant supports students working with organisations to help improve the social conditions of the local community.

The Centre’s establishment of the PAP in 2007 is in response to the local community’s concerns about discriminatory policing practices, one of which is racial profiling.

The Centre has been campaigning for reform of those practices, after reports of incidents between Victorian police and African and Afghani Australians living in Flemington and surrounding Melbourne suburbs.

Ms Frew explains that in 2013, the Centre reached an important agreement with the Victoria Police in the Federal Court case of Haile-Michael v Konstantinidis. The Centre acted on behalf of six young African-Australian men who claimed they were stopped and questioned on the basis of their race, rather than for legitimate policing reasons.

The case was settled and the Victoria Police agreed to publicly review its cultural training and field contact practices.

Ms Frew was an intern with the Centre in 2012 as part of the Melbourne Law School’s Career Development Services program. Her interest in developing the PAP’s legal and educational resources is to continue the momentum gained by the Centre with its campaign for police reform.

“It is important to drive reform in this area by raising the community’s awareness of their legal rights. Public interest initiatives such as the PAP lead to policy change that benefits the community. The outcome from the settlement of the Haile-Michael case is the launch by Victoria Police of a three-year action plan on discriminatory policing practices,” says Ms Frew.

For six months, Ms Tang and Ms Lethbiabher helped Ms Frew to develop the web portal, in collaboration with the Centre’s Executive Officer Anthony Kelly and communication designer Caitlin Wynne, owner of Northcote’s Raw Studio.

“The project involved us drawing on the Centre’s existing materials on its website, and introducing new materials to create a ‘one-stop shop’ resource for matters on police accountability,” Ms Tang says.

The PAP’s web portal includes questions and answers on police powers and a person’s legal rights and responsibilities, recent cases and news, and a guide to making a complaint about police misconduct for members of the community and their lawyers.

“They only help to take their case forward if they are familiar with their legal rights and the procedures of the judicial system,” she says.

Ms Frew was grateful for the opportunity to work with the legal team leading the Haile-Michael case at the Centre, including the principal solicitor at the time, Tamara Hopkins and Anthony Kelly.

“I am looking forward to using this experience when I start my graduate position with the Federation of Community Legal Centres next month,” she says.

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In debt to Kiffy Rubbo’s creativity

Louise Bennett explores the legacy of one of Australia’s most inspired art curators.

A symposium on the work of Kiffy Rubbo will be held this month to honour the curator’s legacy and explore for the first time the major contributions including 

Kiffy Rubbo devised an innovative program presenting a wide range of art forms including performance, painting, sculpture, video, print-making, film, installation and photography,” Dr Burke says.

Rubbo and Rogers also founded arts publications including Art Almanac in 1974 (still one of Australia’s top selling arts magazines) and Arts Melbourne in 1976.

Rubbo also foregrounded women’s art by commissioning the landmark historical exhibitions “Australian Women Artists: 1840-1940” and “Australian Women Photographers 1890-1950” (1981).

She co-curated Australia’s first feminist art exhibition ‘A Room of One’s Own: Three Women Artists’ (1974) and she presented sometimes controversial feminist group shows such as ‘Experiments in Vitreous Enamel: Silk-Screened Portraits of Women’ (1976) and ‘Portrait of the Artist as Housewife: A Postal Event’ (1977).

“With Meredith Rogers, who was the gallery’s assistant director from 1974 to 1979, Rubbo devised an innovative program presenting a wide range of art forms including the Almanac was the first publication to appear weekly. It was accessible to curators and researchers at the gallery,” Dr Burke says.

In 1980, after her innovative achievements in the 1970s, Rubbo took her own life. She was 36.

It has taken a long time for Rubbo’s reputation to gain the attention it is now receiving.

Her daughter, Bridie Carter – the highly-recognised Australian actress – will be speaking at the symposium in special recognition of her mother’s work.

“There is a terrible stigma associated with suicide,” Ms Carter says. “No one wants to talk about the person who’s gone so you lose them twice. You lose them, and you lose all the wonderful things about their life.

“This event is really thanks to Janine’s determination to set aside the personal tragedy and bring about the opportunity for Mum’s achievements to be talked about and celebrated openly and with the positivity they deserve,” she says.

Kiffy Rubbo’s obituary in The Age (Monday 10 November, 1980) read: “The particular quality marking her enterprises was a capacity to bring people together, observe them and see possibilities in creative situations.”

It has taken 40 years but the Centre is planning to do just that again at this month’s symposium.

For speaker and program information, and to register visit: alumnionline.unimelb.edu.au

Admission is free but bookings are required as seating is limited.
University to create 648 new student beds in Carlton

A

648-bed student accommodation facility will be built in Carlton under a new agreement between the University of Melbourne and Campus Living Villages (CLV) in a 38-year Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) contract.

The agreement with CLV will enable the University of Melbourne to substantially increase accommodation for its students and enhance the student experience on campus. The project is a key component of the University’s overall Student Accommodation Program.

It is the first time the University has opted into a BOOT scheme to provide new, high-quality, affordable student accommodation options to domestic and international students as part of its long-term strategy to provide at least 2000 new student beds by 2020.

The new 14-storey student accommodation facility will be developed on the site located at 108-128 Leicester Street and is expected to be completed in late 2015 and opened in time for Semester 1, 2016.

University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor Professor Glynn Davis said student accommodation was extremely important to the life and vibrancy of the University.

“CLV brings the highest level of international expertise in developing student accommodation projects. We look forward to working closely with CLV to achieve our vision for the facility,” he said.

The University’s Senior Vice-Principal Ian Marshman who has oversight of the Student Accommodation Program said the project was in line with the University’s ambition to offer a student experience of unmatched quality.

“As well as the provision of beds, the development of this facility South of the campus aims to enhance the urban amenity and contribute to a greater level of ‘24/7 life’ within the area,” he said.

The Leicester Street facility will offer students a coordinated residential life program to build a sense of community within the facility and strong connections with the University, its campus and an enhanced experience of the Melbourne CBD. This will include sporting and social activities, cultural and arts events and volunteering opportunities.

CLV Australia’s Chief Executive Officer, Michael Heffernan said: “We are very pleased to be working in partnership with the University of Melbourne. This is a partnership two years in the making. We look forward to applying our global experience to provide quality facilities and a supportive residential community for University of Melbourne students.”

“It was important to both CLV and the University that the design of the accommodation achieved a 5 Green Star Sustainability Design Rating,” Mr Heffernan said. “Features such as high performance insulation and glazing systems, solar panels, cross ventilation, and high efficiency fixtures and fittings have been incorporated into the design to achieve this important environmental rating.”

— Rebecca Scott

Over the past few years, the University of Melbourne has explored new ways of providing opportunities for Indigenous secondary students to experience campus life and, in the process, show that university is something to which they can aspire, where they can feel at home, and where they can succeed. By Gabrielle Murphy.

Last month a group of 46 year 11 and 12 Indigenous students travelled from schools across the country to attend the Murrup Barak Experience program at the University of Melbourne. They came from areas as far flung as Thursday Island at Australia’s northernmost tip, southern Tasmania, and just across the New South Wales border.

Run by the University’s Murrup Barak Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development, the three-day intensive program included accommodation at Trinity College, tours around campus and to city landmarks and cultural institutions, and a range of information sessions about courses and support services available to Indigenous students studying at Melbourne.

Ian Anderson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement) at the University of Melbourne and Co-chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Council, explains that the underlying intention is to build students’ confidence and familiarity with university and, where possible, contribute to their educational development.

“Drawing on my own experience and academic journey, I believe that such programs, especially those with a residential component, provide an opportunity for a deeper and richer experience of university education,” says Professor Anderson, whose family are Palawa Trowerna from the Pymarninger mob in Tasmania.

The Murrup Barak Experience is one of a suite of programs run across the University for prospective Indigenous students. Others are the Residential Indigenous Science Experience (RISE), the Indigenous Academic Enrichment Program (IAEP) run for the first time this year, and the Strengthening Engagement and Achievement in Maths and Science (SEAMS) program run in conjunction with Monash University designed to increase the participation and success rate of low socio-economic status and Indigenous students.

“The Murrup Barak Experience was a culturally based program that successfully engaged the hearts and minds of the young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who attended,” says Jarra Jarra woman Kalana Norton, the University of Melbourne’s National Indigenous Recruitment Officer.

“The students were empowered to visualise their academic aspirations by seeing themselves at the University.

“I was just so impressed by the character and attitude of this young mob as our future leaders and academics.”

The RISE program, co-ordinated by the School of Physics and supported by industry partners including NIM, Australian Synchrotron, the Gene Technology Access Centre, DSTO and Scienceworks, exposes Indigenous students to the breadth of science and applied science.

“An important part of the program relies on our undergraduate student mentors,” says Dr Roger Rassool, senior lecturer and co-ordinator of the University of Melbourne’s first-year studies in physics.

“They volunteer to be part of the program, live with the secondary school students at Trinity College, run the pastoral program and assist with delivery of the academic program.

“The visiting students really appreciate the hands-on nature of the program and importantly, get to see what a university is like, find out about some of the science opportunities, and how they can apply these skills in the real world.”

Dr Rassool also stresses the benefits of a program such as RISE for University staff, students and partners. “University teachers and researchers get the opportunity of promoting their area of expertise to students, test the effectiveness of their distillation of what’s important to young minds, and receive immediate feedback.

“For industry partners, they are able to communicate directly with the wider community the relevance of their organisation, and identify career pathways for students.”

As Professor Anderson explains, the aims are different according to the program.

“With the academic enrichment program hosted last month, we broadened our approach to involve our teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching and to invite onto campus not only Indigenous students in mid-secondary levels in Victorian schools, but their teachers as well.

“For these students we hope to enrich their learning with a particular emphasis on science, technology, engineering and maths, while at the same time providing professional development for their schoolteachers and our teacher candidates to enhance the capabilities of schools to provide a quality educational environment for Indigenous students.

“The participation of students and their schools, teachers and principals, has been very rewarding.

“And getting to meet Indigenous students in this latest Murrup Barak Experience program, students in their senior years who not only have university as a destination but can clearly talk about their desire to study law, medicine or engineering, is uplifting and gives me great hope for the future.”

www.murrupbarak.unimelb.edu.au
Safe societies are strong societies

Associate Professor Louise Harms, who chaired Melbourne’s program committee for a recent International Social Work conference, reflects on the event and the challenges ahead for social inclusion in Australia.

The delegates were invited to consider the ways in which this agenda could be advanced locally, nationally and globally. Ensuring safety in our homes, schools, communities, workplaces and physical environments contributes significantly to each individual’s capacity to experience social and economic equality, and therefore optimal wellbeing.

Vulnerable populations who experience lack of safety – women, children, gay and lesbian communities, displaced people and those living with chronic illnesses and disability – are much more likely to be at risk. For many women around the world, gendered violence and inequality remain stark, daily realities. This lack of emotional, sexual, physical and economic safety continues to influence their lives and those of their children. Refugees and asylum seekers continue to experience violations of their human rights, and struggle to engage with programs that address resettlement and trauma experiences.

With the increase in the occurrence of natural disasters, creating sustainable and safe physical environments is a priority for many in the profession and seeking solutions across this broad ranging context of vulnerability was a key aim of the conference. Delegates presented their work and drew from the rich insights shared by others to develop innovations in a wide range of economic contexts.

All aimed to alleviate poverty, build empowerment, and provide adequate social protection for all members of our societies.
The long and short of financial product disclosure

Katherine Smith speaks with Melbourne Law School’s Andrew Godwin about research into disclosure obligations on sellers of financial products.

It’s a case of buyer beware when it comes to purchasing financial products, with many people having been stung by the ‘small print’ detail, or in fact not really understanding how the products they’ve bought really work, or the associated risks. Some products are extremely complex in their design and application, and so steps have been taken to regulate there are moves to regulate the way they are disclosed, both in terms of the length and style of language used.

Melbourne Law School’s Andrew Godwin says plain English doesn’t go far enough, and has called for the use of what he calls “stark language” – so that buyers can be very clear about what they are purchasing, and the associated costs. Regulation is always complex, however. Voice asked Mr Godwin to explain the research into product disclosure that he and his Law School colleague Ian Ramsay have been doing with funding from Melbourne Law School and the Centre for International Finance and Regulation.

VOICE: What’s the background to your new research and report about disclosure and financial products?

ANDREW GODWIN: Some years ago, I researched and published some research on the failure of an investment product in Hong Kong called Minibonds. This product was arranged by Lehman Brothers and was a retail structured product (essentially a credit linked note), which collapsed spectacularly when Lehman Brothers went to the wall and brought retail investors out onto the streets of Hong Kong in protest – something that was unprecedented and came as a shock to the authorities, which subsequently set up an inquiry and instituted compensation arrangements.

The Minibonds collapse was of interest to me as it highlighted the shortcomings of plain language disclosure. As an expert in legal plain language Professor Peter Butt has put it, plain language can simplify the way in which concepts are expressed, however, it cannot simplify complex concepts

The collapse of the Minibonds highlighted the challenges that arise when complex products are sold to retail investors, even when the prospectus is prepared in accordance with plain language principles.

This led me to consider the importance of increasing risk awareness on the part of retail investors and the use of what I describe as “stark language”, a concept that was picked up by ASIC in its regulatory guide on non-standard investment arrangements.

In the light of its experience with the Minibonds, Hong Kong has now moved to a position that mirrors the position in many other jurisdictions; namely, a highly prescriptive approach for retail investment products, which involves the preparation of a summary document, called a Product Key Fact Statement, which has a maximum length and which is designed to operate alongside the full-form prospectus.

VOICE: What are the objectives of your current research project in the area?

AG: Our focus in this project is on short-form disclosure documents where a maximum length is prescribed, either on a mandatory or a recommended basis. This is based on the proposition that retail investors do not read lengthy disclosure documents. As a result, if shorter documents are prescribed, it is more likely that buyers will engage with them.

Our primary objectives were to review the international trend towards short-form disclosure documents and the drivers behind this trend, and to identify the criteria and factors that jurisdictions should take into account when they consider which approach to adopt.

In effect, we set out to produce a guide for regulators when considering the pros and cons of each approach and the inter-relationship between factors such as purpose, length and liability.

The project will take the form of a comparative analysis of six jurisdictions, all of which have moved towards producing short-form disclosure documents for a range of retail financial products. Criteria for assessment are the scope of the products (i.e. what products should come under the regulations), the length requirements for short-form disclosure, and the purpose of the document (namely, is the purpose of the document to act as a substitute for the full-form disclosure document or to provide a summary statement)?

VOICE: So will the new short-form documents replace long-form versions?

AG: In Australia, the shorter product disclosure statements, as they are known, operate as a substitute for the full-form disclosure document. This applies in respect of certain financial products and is an approach that is different from all other jurisdictions. The challenge of how to include all of the relevant information is achieved through the technique of Incorporation by Reference, where the document can incorporate certain information by reference and include links to the relevant information.

Another challenge is determining what information should be disclosed and whether the document is required to provide investors with all the information that they need in order to make an informed decision.

This is directly related to the question of liability; namely, what is the nature of the liability that product issuers have under the short-form disclosure document? For example, does liability arise only when the document is misleading, inaccurate or inconsistent when read with the formal disclosure document, or does it involve what one might call “full prospectus liability”, under which the issuer and other responsible persons will be liable for loss or damage suffered by investors as a result of a defective disclosure document?

VOICE: What are some of the findings of the research so far?

AG: We’ve found that first, to a significant extent, purpose determines content, length, liability and language. All of these criteria are inter-related and it is very difficult to achieve an ideal balance as the setting inevitably requires trade-offs to be made.

An example of this is Australia’s shorter PDSs, where the fact that they act as a substitute for the long-form disclosure documents means that the content and language is highly prescribed.

Secondly, complex products provide ongoing challenges in relation to criteria such as content, length and language.

We are currently undertaking a comparative analysis of sample documents used in each of the jurisdictions under examination. There is no doubt that disclosure documents for complex products often employ language that few (if any) retail investors will be able to understand, let alone their financial advisers if they have engaged them.

In my view, it is important not only to make investors aware of the nature of the risks, but also the consequences of the risks. This is part of my call for the use of “stark language”.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that disclosure is just one piece of the financial product jigsaw puzzle, which includes measures to improve the quality of financial advice – a very topical question in Australia at present – and also to increase investor literacy.

The Final Report from the Senate Economics References Committee inquiry into the performance of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) is at:


Watch a video presentation on this topic by Professor Ian Ramsay to a recent Centre for International Finance and Regulation symposium:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xQ_N0nIgqo
Challenged by utilitarianism

Laura Soderlind reports on a recent lecture for the 10 Great Books series, in which ethicist Peter Singer described the influence that John Stuart Mill’s Utilitarianism had on his work.

John Stuart Mill was a British philosopher and political economist who authored the 1863 text *Utilitarianism*, honing the definition, scribbling in the margins and fundamentally influencing the way individuals and scholars understand utilitarianism today.

Mill’s Utilitarianism is the most read of the classic 19th century works on this philosophical stance, and still influences current ethical thought.

Professor Peter Singer, who splits his time between the University of Melbourne and Princeton University, recently addressed John Stuart Mill’s seminal philosophical work at the Faculty of Arts’ latest installation of the 10 Great Books series.

When looking at the word ‘utilitarianism’, you might find yourself squinting and trying to summon, through the dusty corridors of memory, what it really means.

Utilitarianism is often summarised as the outcome that produces “the greatest good for the greatest number”.

Like so many philosophical positions it provides an answer to any number of ethical dilemmas, yet raises more questions in the same gesture.

When pondering a decision in the territory of the banal or when speculating about global politics, some find utilitarianism provides a framework to guide choices and actions. It is a comprehensive thought experiment that can be practised in the world at large.

Professor Singer raised the example of the ‘Hitler conundrum’: adopting a utilitarian approach, one could easily justify the assassination of a dictator like Hitler, arguing that his death would have saved countless billions of lives and left the world a better place.

The fact that Hitler’s murder would have been criminal must be overlooked as it would have been the action that benefited more people than allowing him to live would harm.

However, to some who believe in stable ethics where assassination is never acceptable, this solution cannot be justified.

“I’m interested in utilitarianism as an ethic and whether it is defensible,” explains Professor Singer, setting the parameters for debate.

The conversation continues. John Stuart Mill, from the 1863 text, wrote that: “Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle that holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.”

In the fit for talk, back and forth debate of philosophical inquiry, shades of grey sit side by side with retorts such as: “But then that means that murder or torture can be justified. What about human rights?”

Professor Peter Singer explains further, “This means judging actions not by their intentions, but by their consequences.”

In this way, utilitarianism is an ethical game-changer. It asks people to assess each situation based on its outcome. No action is purely good or bad in itself, but rather it depends on the outcome.

The great objection to utilitarianism, as Mill conveys it, is that it may lead people to act — unthinkingly, or as though justice doesn’t really count,” Professor Singer explains.

The slipperiness of language and issues around definition and interpretation also complicate matters.

When deciding what action would cause the greatest happiness, one must question how to define happiness.

Additionally, when the happiness or welfare of two people or groups are in conflict, whose happiness ought to be prioritised?

In guiding the reader on how to decide whose happiness matters more, Mill eloquently suggests: “It is better to be a human being disgusted than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates disgusted than a fool satisfied.”

A new exhibition about the life and work of Mortimer Menpes is on show in the University’s Grainger Museum, drawing on items from the Grainger Collection as well as others lent by the Art Gallery of South Australia and private collectors John Russell OAM, Caroline Webber and Philip Bacon.

A small exhibition of quite intimate works, An artist’s utopia: Mortimer Menpes in Japan, is very beautiful, highlighting the re-emergence of the 19th century and that Mortimer Menpes was well aware of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan was catapulted into a frenzied process of modernisation, and that Mortimer Menpes was well aware of this complex situation.

Originally a South Australian, Menpes moved to England with his family, where he became a pupil and close friend of the artist James McNeill Whistler.

Whistler was a central figure in the English Aesthetic Movement which flourished in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, and who embraced Japanese aesthetics for the integration of arts into daily life. Proponents of the Movement held strong beliefs about the value of art for art’s sake, and embraced what the saw as less emphasis on didacticism in Japanese decorative and visual arts.

Exhibition co-curator Astrid Krautschneider says that after visiting Japan in 1887, Menpes created a number of paintings and etchings which were shown at London’s prestigious Dowdeswell Gallery, and which sold out in three days.

“The exhibition was both a commercial and critical success, and effectively launched his very lucrative career,” she says. Ms Krautschneider says it is unknown just exactly where and when the Grainger and Menpes families met, but that they eventually developed very close family relationships, with the Graingers staying as guests at the Menpes’ family country property.

“The families exchanged many letters and Menpes can reasonably be credited with solidifying the Graingers’ strong aesthetic affinity with Japanese art and culture. Several items bought and collected by both Percy and Rose are on display in this exhibition, including make-up brushes, tea sets and a small wicker cabinet that Rose kept by her bed at the Grainger home in White Plains in New York, and all of which subsequently came to be part of the Grainger collection.”

An artist’s utopia: Mortimer Menpes in Japan is on show at the Grainger Museum at the University until March 2015.

www.grainger.unimelb.edu.au
“Chaos” hits the stage at VCA with possible next big musical hit

Liz Banks-Anderson reviews a new show from VCA which could be the next big thing in the Australian music theatre scene.

“I heard music from another room.”

“This music is the force that compels A Little Touch of Chaos central protagonist Arthur, played by VCA student Alex Gibson-Giorgio, to leave his life within an exclusive religious sect.

Being pulled in another direction by an undeniable force is the central premise behind A Little Touch of Chaos, where Arthur swears his life of strict religion for a world where curiosity, the idea of freedom and self-discovery pulled stronger than the familial and religious ties that bound.

The piece is a contemporary tale exploring themes of identity, familial bonds, inherited ideologies and smashing the ties that bind. It was launched at the newly refurbished Grant Street Theatre at the VCA in July, with Victorian Minister for the Arts Heidi Victoria in attendance.

With dedicated funding from the State Government through Arts Victoria, A Little Touch of Chaos writer James Millar and composer Peter Rutherford extensively workshoped the piece to create a strong, new, Australian voice in music theatre of a modern, urban, Australian identity. Chaos writer Millar was motivated to tell a loosely autobiographical story on how events and experiences between parents and their children manifest and evolve in the next generation.

“This work will appeal to anyone who has felt that they’ve inherited something through time from a parent. The idea of smashing the ties that bind and discovering yourself is where the heart of the piece lies,” he says.

Mr Millar says director Iain Sinclair’s priority was to express the tough Australian character in the face of adversity encouraging the cast of VCA’s music theatre students to make a new creation, rather than a remodelling of international music theatre influences.

Ms Victoria says the Government was proud to support the project as part of an ongoing commitment to fostering new talent and new works across the state.

“Melbourne is Australia’s epicentre for music theatre and the VCA our breeding ground for emerging talent. The New Music Theatre project has supported collaborations between our freshest new voices and professional directors, composers and musicians.

“Over the past two years they’ve taken this work from the page to the stage, and I can’t wait to see where the production goes from here,” Minister Victoria says.

Industry consultant and music theatre lecturer Martin Croft says A Little Touch of Chaos is the culmination of a two-year creative process and demonstrated the VCA’s ongoing commitment to supporting emerging talent in the arts.

“I today celebrate the continuing partnership with the State Government of Victoria whose ongoing funding support has strengthened the VCAs profile as a hub for young artists to develop their new work in an environment where new voices are workshoped and encouraged,” Mr Croft says.

The project is the perfect platform for the cast of final year VCA Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music Theatre) students to launch their careers and receive rare industry experience to workshop a piece over an extensive period of time.

Third Year student and cast member Michaela Powell pays the feisty character of Maxine. Ms Powell says the piece’s naturalistic writing captures the Australian sense of humour in an honest and refreshing way. It documents the “everyday fight, which I think is very Australian,” she says.

Mr Gibson-Giorgio says was it was exciting to work on a new piece of Australian music theatre and a musical.

“We often look to other cultures in music theatre so its nice to search within our own culture and be characters that we know and have seen and to originate roles...to bring so much of yourself to a part that is not defined by someone else’s performance,” he says.

In short, it’s an original touch of chaos.

www.vca.mcm.unimelb.edu.au

Exploration of racism in sport wins 2014 Basil Sellers Art Prize

The prestigious $100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize has been awarded to Indigenous artist Tony Albert for the work titled Once upon a time. The work consists of a painted target over which are hung 23 small framed works comprising watercolours on paper, photographs and collage, and small vignettes made of found objects – toys, blocks and figures.

The work is introduced by a typed letter by Albert to fellow Indigenous artist Gordon Bennett which pays tribute to Bennett’s important contribution and influence on Albert’s work, and acknowledges the elder artist’s sustained championing of Indigenous rights.

Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne, Kelly Gellatly, recommended all finalists for the depth of their engagement with the theme of sport and the quality of their art.

“The judges were impressed by the breadth of artists’ themes, which encompass the emotions and spectacle of sport, as well as challenging historical and moral issues. The ambitious new works by the Finalists present a rich engagement with the idea and experience of sport.

“The overall impact of the work as an exhibition is particularly impressive, reflective of the different ways in which the Australian spirit can be articulated; whether in the desire for equality, the behaviour of the fan, or the role of sport in everyday life.

“The winning work, Once upon a time, deals with the ongoing issue of racism in sport, and by implication, Australian society more broadly, and has at its heart the recent controversy surrounding the crowd abuse directed towards indigenous AFL player Adam Goodes (Goodes plays for the Sydney Swans, is a dual Brownlow medallist, and is the 2014 Australian of the Year).

“Within the suite of intimately scaled works comprising the overall installation is a delicate watercolour of the now iconic moment in 1993 when Indigenous former St Kilda footballer Nicky Winmar lifted his guernsey and pointed proudly at this black skin after enduring racial abuse during a match against Collingwood.

The separation of these two incidents by over 20 years, along with the collective imagery of Albert’s playful, yet deceptively powerful work, highlights the fact that as a society, we have a long way to go in both confronting and dealing with these issues,” Ms Gellatly said.

“Judges commended Once upon a time for its bravery and poetry, and for the fact that it tackles such a difficult and emotive issue in sport and Australian culture without being didactic or heavy-handed. The work is neither a lesson nor a sermon, and provides no answers, but instead creates a contemplative space that encourages the audience to think about these issues in a way that engenders a sense of hope, and of the possibility of change.”

“It also highlights the way in which sport can be a positive forum in which to both air and tackle difficult subjects. Issues such as racism will no doubt continue to arise and to confront, but the very public nature of sport ensures that it provides a platform on which to air, discuss and debate these issues rather than pretend that they don’t exist.”

Ms Gellatly said the responses of the 16 finalists in the Basil Sellers Art Prize keep pushing the boundaries of how sport and art relate.

“The Basil Sellers Art Prize provides a range of awards for artists. In addition to the $100,000 prize, the finalists are in the running for the 2014 National Sports Museum Basil Sellers Creative Arts Fellowship (valued at $50,000) to be announced during the Exhibition, and the $5000 Yarra Trams People’s Choice Award, voted on by visitors to the Exhibition at its conclusion.

The other 2014 Finalists are: Narelle Auto, Zee Creggion, Gabrielle de Vietri, Ivan Durrant, Shaun Galdwell, Richard Lever, William Mackinnon, Rob McIlhaffie, Noel McKenna, Rob McIntosh, Fiona McMonagle, Raquel Ormella, Khaleed Sababji, Jenny Wallace and Genny Weld.

— By Katrina Raymond

Watch an episode of Visions to hear Tony Albert describe his winning work.

visions.unimelb.edu.au

Basil Sellers Art Prize 4 Exhibition: open theatre until 26 October 2014

Nursing students get a taste for practice in Nepal

A group of University of Melbourne nursing students recently had the experience of a lifetime, travelling to a very remote area in Nepal to undertake an elective placement. By Kate Dukes.

Despite rising costs of health care and longer waiting times to see a doctor, Australians generally have access to one of the world’s best healthcare systems, with sophisticated treatments available for serious conditions. So it was quite an eye-opener for Masters of Nursing students who this year have travelled to areas of the world where unwell people share a hospital bed, or where individuals may need to travel five days to their local health camp.

The group met local Nepalese people at the base of a campsite upon arriving in Nepal and walked uphill for five hours to get to a landing in the mountain ranges, a location chosen to encourage the poorest Nepalese people to come down from the surrounding areas to receive the healthcare that so many urgently needed.

The arduous hours endured of an almost vertical ascent in the mountains, to get to the health camp location were incredibly challenging, "Ms Arthur reflects. “The hiking was extremely tough both physically and mentally. It was not, humid, at extreme altitude and hard work for all.”

The group set up a basic and hygienic portable health camp, using the materials they had carried for those long five hours to treat people. A message was put out to the community in advance as some of them live hundreds of kilometres away and had to travel for five days to reach the camp.

“People literally poured out of the mountains within an hour of us arriving. One baby was so unwell that I thought he was going to have a seizure and die right there,” Ms Arthur says.

“AFTER a consultation with this baby’s mother, we realised he had a gangrenous thumb. After treatment and antibiotics, we kept the baby and his mother with us for 10 hours and by the time they went home the baby had had his first ever bath. If they hadn’t come to the health camp, the baby would have died,” she says.

The group could treat only minor injuries in the health camp, so transported 16 of the most seriously ill patients to the closest hospital, selected based on strict criteria: does the person under 12 months old have a fever, does the patient have tuberculosis, does the person have malaria, is the patient underweight, is there malnutrition, is there skin damage, is there a wound, is there a court injury?”

The majority of the population does not seek health care until their situation is dire, as they have little or no money. But we were able to use the facilities to remove cataracts and perform other surgery.

Nikola Solomon is a second year Master of Nursing Science student taking part in the placement in October. Ms Solomon volunteered in a community childcare centre with young children in Cusco, Peru, before undertaking this course.

“Volunteering in Peru enabled me to step outside my comfort zone, overcome language barriers and learn to understand what was important to these young people and their families. It was during this time I realised I wanted to work with people to improve the health of others,” she reflects.

“The upcoming placement will be a unique opportunity to learn about and gain insight into the Nepalese way of life. I consider myself a life-long learner and believe that the experiences throughout this placement will improve my cultural awareness and appreciation of how people can help each other to better their communities,” she says.

“This experience will also challenge me to adapt and respond appropriately to my patients’ needs, given such limited resources. I will approach each opportunity with an open mind to learn.”

www.nursing.unimelb.edu.au/
The science of meat production

Andi Horvath speaks with the Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Science’s Professor Robyn Warner about her career in the science of meat production.

P rofessor Robyn Warner is one of those inspiring academics who exude infectious curiosity and have a genuine passion for solving scientific problems. With her team she investigates the biochemistry and microstructure underpinning the colour, flavour and texture of meat, in order to understand how to improve them to support the future of a sustainable meat industry. Unless you are a farmer, a butcher, or an enthusiastic cook, most of us get a little squeamish with the sight of meat or not, these are important contributions to society and the global food industries.

Professor Warner recently became the first woman to receive the International Lectureship award in 2014 from the American Meat Science Association. This award honours individuals for internationally recognised contributions in the field of meat science and technology as well as active leadership, promotion and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of society.

A pivotal point in her career was becoming a founding member of the Meat Standards Australia (MSA) Scientific committee, whose aim was to translate scientific research into meat industry improvements. The group’s activities also revised meat-grading systems that were underpinned by science and ultimately resulted in increased economic returns to producers, processors and retailers.

It’s a lab bench to kitchen bench success story.

Professor Warner describes the odd sequence of events that led to her involvement with meat research science.

“When I was at school it didn’t occur to me to study agricultural science. It was one of those last-minute decisions when I was applying for university courses. When I graduated I didn’t even think of a research career as my professors implied it was extremely hard to get into, and it was only for the top brainy students. So, I applied for a traineeship with the Department of Agriculture, and was asked to pick from 40 different traineeships. I had my heart set on working with dairy farmers at various locations like Warrnambool, Echuca and Leonagtha. Then out of the blue, they asked if I was interested in a job doing research on beef quality in cattle at Werribee. Once again I made a last minute change and said yes I’ll do that, and I did.”

“I tell this story to young people as I think it illustrates that you can often not guess the path you’ll take in your career.”

Professor Warner’s path like so many other professors is about making good use of random opportunities among the preferred plans.

“When at Werribee, I became very interested in pre-slaughter stress in animals and how it affected product quality. So I started researching meat and muscle fibres. I found it fascinating. The biochemistry was extremely interesting, so I tracked the papers of researchers in Canada, UK and Ireland as there were only one or two Australian scientists who were doing work in this area.

“Then crunch time came. I needed to do a PhD to answer my scientific questions so I enrolled at the University of Wisconsin in the USA because it was where my husband and I both got accepted for PhD candidature in our respective fields. I sponged up the lectures and loved sharing expertise in protein separation techniques and microscopy. I also made time to visit the various meat researchers overseas. I remember I thought of them as demi-gods but they all turned out to be quite human which at the time was such a relief.”

Professor Warner was recently involved in a panel discussion entitled “We are all Flesh” accompanying a recent exhibition at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. It explored our encounters with meat and flesh; ranging from the alluring to those encounters that make us recoil. Flesh is an emotional, psychological and sensitive topic.

“The panel discussion was fascinating, and included commentary from an author who is a butcher and a chef, academics who have expertise in horror movies and an embalmer. What transpired is all our areas can and some ways must be understood as an art and a science.

“I have images of raw, cooked and pressure-treated muscle as seen through a transmission electron microscope. They show detail down to the micron level – you can almost see the proteins. These images are like art to me.”

A picture tells a thousand scientific words, Professor Warner explains.

“Recently, a CSIRO and Canadian colleague and I made a video using confocal microscopy of a single muscle fibre (cell) heated from 25 to 95 degrees celcius on a heating stage attached to the microscope. We wanted to understand which proteins shrunk at particular cooking temperatures. The data (or art) led us to develop a new theory about muscle shrinkage during cooking which challenges the meat science dogma that connective tissue drives the shrinkage during cooking.”

New era for netball

Netball remains one of the country’s most popular participation sports, and as David Scott found out, the University will soon provide even more opportunities for those wanting to play at the highest level.

Victoria may be just weeks removed from claiming its second ANZ Netball Championship thanks to the Melbourne Vixens, but already netballers across the state are turning their attention to a new season. It is shaping up as a landmark year for the University’s netballing community in particular, thanks to the establishment of the Melbourne University Lightning, the University’s first foray into the state’s premier competition, the Victorian Netball League.

The Lightning, a partnership between the University and the Western Lightning Netball Club, will field 19 and under, Division 1 and Championship teams in the VNL from 2015 until at least 2018. A 10-team league, the VNL has long been a key part of Netball Victoria’s ‘faster Identification Development Program’, providing pathways for developing netballers into both the ANZ Championships and the Australian Netball League.

With the new club based at the University’s Parkville campus, present Melbourne University Netball Club players will have the prospect of a direct pathway into elite netball right on their doorstep.

With more than 14 teams competing under the MUNC banner, the club couldn’t be happier, according to President Jessica Jones. “The club is delighted to have the opportunity to be part of the new development of Western Lightning. The girls are looking forward to utilising the new resources that will be available to the club including pathways into the VNL.”

Lindy Murphy, the Western Lightning Club President, agreed with these sentiments and says the partnership is a milestone for the Lightning. “The alliance provides both the University of Melbourne and the club with the opportunity to forge an exciting and mutually beneficial partnership that also extends to MUNC.

“While the relationship provides a springboard for growth for the Lightning through an existing player network, it also provides a new high performance pathway within the University for players with the potential to play at VNL level.”

“The key reasons the University could establish a VNL presence came down to its own Elite Athlete Program, which provides career education and support to all elite athletes as part of the University’s community. The University is also an active participant in the Australia Sports Commission’s Elite Athlete Friendly University Network.

Selection trails for the 2015 season commence on 24 August, and President Lindy Murphy is excited about the potential turnout. “We have a new home base, a new coaching panel, and an elite group of high performance specialist coaches that hopefully will be seen as an attractive lure for new players aspiring to play at VNL level.”

“Our training facilities will be the envy of every other VNL club. This is a club with a very bright future and the players who choose Melbourne University Lightning will be well positioned to move along the high performance pathway into the Australian Netball League and ANZ Championship.”

You can follow all the action from the VNL

vnl.com.au

to find out more about the Elite Athlete program

sport.unimelb.edu.au/eliteAthleteProgram.

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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.
Diamonds are beautiful and useful: understanding diamonds

Head of the University’s School of Earth Sciences Professor David Phillips explains the science of diamonds – their shape, colour and how they find their way into Earth’s surface from deep inside the planet’s mantle. By Andi Horvath.

Diamonds. If you work in a busy open plan office chances are you are only several metres away from someone wearing one. You won’t find them just at jewelers; your local hardware store will also stock diamond drill heads.

Diamonds are both beautiful and useful and both the natural and synthetic are known to be the hardest ‘accessible’ material on Earth. Well technically, a laboratory made nanomaterial has claimed the ‘hardest’ substance billing but our quandary is if diamonds are so hard how do they cut and shape diamonds into spectacular shapes? If they are pure, packed carbon then why do some have a tinge of brown, pink, blue or yellow? Prof. David Phillips from the School of Earth Sciences says that in short, to cut a diamond you simply need another diamond.

“Jewellers will create a notch with another diamond and cleave it by tapping it with a steel blade. The reason is diamonds grow as crystals and carbon atoms are arranged in a cubic framework structure. While this arrangement makes a diamond very hard, it’s also somewhat brittle. This is because there are weaknesses along the cubic planes.”

“Diamonds are also cut using a Phosphor-bronze blade impregnated with diamonds and rotated at very high speeds. It is a slow process and the diamond glows red even with cooling fluid flowing over it.”

“Special lasers have also been useful to cut diamonds especially if they are irregular as they can shatter when being cut.”

“The brilliant cut is the favoured way to cut a diamond, however, it requires a very high polish in order to maximise light reflectivity from the facets.”

“The brilliant cut also utilises the natural octahedral shape of most diamonds, so the cutter can take advantage of the planes of weakness to cleave the diamond and minimise cutting and polishing time. Brilliant-cut gems diamonds are common in diamond rings.”

“Natural diamonds are just minerals. They are formed under extreme pressures and temperatures.”

“As the magma travels up to the surface at the speed of sound it rips off pieces of the mantle taking the diamonds with it.”

“The diamonds grow as crystals. If there are traces of nitrogen, the colour of the diamond is yellow, traces of boron make it blue. Some diamonds are brown and these have experienced a rough time in the planet’s mantle. At the molecular lever the planes of weakness have slipped or deformed. This means light penetrating the diamond is slightly distorted, resulting in the brown colour. The pink colour is a conundrum, but it probably also relates to plastic deformation of the diamond to a degree that gives it a pink hue. Black or grey diamonds may contain abundant inclusions such as graphite or sulphides and are often composed of many small diamonds intimately intergrown with one another.”

‘Diamonds are old minerals and can be millions or billions of years old. They are formed under extreme pressures and temperature below the Earth’s surface.’

“Professor Phillips says most diamonds originate from depths of around 150 to 200 kilometres in the mantle, reaching the surface of the Earth via erupting volcanoes.”

“The Argyle mine in Western Australia harvests lamproites.”

Screening along the spectrum: the search for a genetic test for autism
Neuropsychiatrist Professor Chris Pantellis and neural engineering researcher Professor Stan Skafidas discuss the potential for the use of genetics to improve the diagnosis of autism. Presented by Dr Shane Huntington.

“The new inequality: Researching the widening gap in wealth and income
Social policy researcher Professor Karen Rowlington discusses the growing inequality in income and wealth in the developed world, how it is researched, and its implications for society and individuals.

Balancing biology: Epigenetics and its influence on human development
Geneticist Dr Marnie Blewitt explains how epigenetics makes us more than just our genes and how gene inactivation can be crucial to our development. With science host Dr欧阳Lewis.

Up Close Podcast
http://upclose.unimelb.edu.au
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Visions mini documentaries
Experimental medical tourism
VISIONS looks at a new type of medical tourism which sees people seeking experimental treatments that are currently not approved in Australia. Sometimes risky – and with little effect – some of these include patients paying for stem cell treatments for diseases as varied as cancers, MS and Parkinsons disease.

Up Close Podcast
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Compounding benefits: Creating new materials to aid cleaner energy generation
Materials scientist Professor David Sholl explains how new hi-tech metal hydrides and metal-organic frameworks can be used to increase the efficiency of nuclear power stations and to capture carbon dioxide emissions in coal-fired power plants.

Up Close Podcast
http://upclose.unimelb.edu.au
@upclosepodcast

Online now

Available on iTunes, YouTube or via http://visions.unimelb.edu.au

Online 15 August

The new inequality: Researching the widening gap in wealth and income
Social policy researcher Professor Karen Rowlington discusses the growing inequality in income and wealth in the developed world, how it is researched, and its implications for society and individuals.

Karen Rowlington is Professor of Social Policy in the Institute of Applied Social Studies at the University of Birmingham, as well as Director of the Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management. She has a particular interest in looking at the financial security of families and individuals.

Online 22 August

Screening along the spectrum: the search for a genetic test for autism
Neuropsychiatrist Professor Chris Pantellis and neural engineering researcher Professor Stan Skafidas discuss the potential for the use of genetics to improve the diagnosis of autism. Presented by Dr Shane Huntington.

Chris Pantellis is Professor of Neuropsychiatry and Scientific Director of the Melbourne Neuropsychiatry Centre at the University of Melbourne and Melbourne Health. Stan Skafidas is Professor of Neural Engineering at the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, leads the Melbourne School of Engineering’s research in nanoelectronics, and is the Director for Centre for Neural Engineering.

Online 15 August

Balancing biology: Epigenetics and its influence on human development
Geneticist Dr Marnie Blewitt explains how epigenetics makes us more than just our genes and how gene inactivation can be crucial to our development. With science host Dr欧阳Lewis.

Dr Marnie Blewitt is a molecular biologist and geneticist at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

Online 29 August
**MUSIC**
- **THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ORCHESTRA**
  
  Sunday 31 August, 2.30pm
  
  Conductor: Brett Dean
  
  Percy GRANGER - The Warriors
  
  Barry CONYNGHAM - ANZAC* world premiere

  Brett DEAN - Fire Music

  **Venue:** Iwaki Auditorium, ABC Centre, cnr Southbank Boulevard and Sturt Street, Southbank

  **Admission:** Free registration required at conservatorium.unimelb.edu.au/events

- **MIMIR CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL**
  
  1 - 7 September, 2014

  A week-long festival bringing an array of leading musicians from North America and Australia conducting an intensive week of masterclasses, demonstrations, coaching and performances.

  **Venue:** Melba Hall, Royal Parade, Parkville

  **Admission:** $35 full / $25 concession

  **Tickets available at:** conservatorium.unimelb.edu.au/events

**CONCERTS**

**Venue:** Melba Hall, Royal Parade, Parkville

**Admission:** Free

**Information:** conservatorium.unimelb.edu.au/events

- **Melba Hall Lunch Hour Concerts**
  
  A series of lunch hour concerts hosted in the newly refurbished Melba Hall, held each Monday of semester from 1.10pm – 2pm.

- **Michael Burritt in Concert**
  
  Thursday 21 August, 7.30pm

  American marimba virtuoso and composer Michael BURRITT performs a program of works including his amazing Burritt Variations for solo marimba and work by Alejandro VNAO with the MCM Percussion Ensemble.

- **Brazilian Guitar Extravaganza**
  
  Tuesday 26 August, 1pm

  Acclaimed Brazilian musician Paulo Aragao leads this concert featuring MCM student chamber groups and soloists in a journey through South American musical styles.

- **New Music De-mystified: Cortex Ensemble**
  
  Monday 8 September, 6.30pm

  Join this leading Swiss ensemble on the Melba Hall stage as they discuss their work, approaches and passion for new music in an intimate Q&A discussion.

- **VCA Jazz and Improvisation**
  
  Ensemble Series
  
  2 & 9 September, 8pm

  Jazz and Improvisation: students present two performances of original works and arrangements for small ensembles.

  **Venue:** Bennett's Lane Jazz Club, 25 Bennett's Lane, Melbourne

  **Admission:** $10 Full / $8 Concession

  **Enquiries:** vca-musicconcerts@unimelb.edu.au

**EXHIBITIONS**

**Margaret Lawrence Gallery**

40 Dodds St, Southbank

**Opening hours:** Tuesday – Saturday, 12pm – 5pm

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** 03 9035 9400 or mlgallery@unimelb.edu.au

**Rising 2014**

14 August – 8 September

A 4-week exhibition of Sculpture and Spatial Practice students in the public space of Victoria Harbour, Docklands, commissioned by Lend Lease Developments.

**Venue:** Victoria Harbour, The Docklands

**Admission:** Free

**Marvel: The 2014 Windsor Prize**

30 August – 14 September, 11am – 5pm

Students from the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Art) Honours, Master of Contemporary Art, Master of Fine Arts (Visual Art) and PhD transform Australia’s most cherished grand hotel.

**Venue:** The Hotel Windsor, 111 Spring Street, Melbourne

**Admission:** Free

**Ian Potter Museum of Art**

Swanston 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

The Potter will be open early from 10am on Sunday 17 August for Open Day

**North South East West: Visions of mid-19th century Victoria from the University of Melbourne Art Collection**

From 22 July

By the mid-19th century Victoria had become a destination of choice for free settlers. The discovery of gold in 1851 encouraged mass migration which saw the colony grow from 76,000 to 540,000 in a decade. This exhibition presents visions of colonial Victoria from the north, south, east and west, revealing the dynamism and development of the gold rush and coastal regions as well as the yet ‘unconquered’ romanticised landscape further afield.

**SHORTCOURSES**

Short Courses and Workshops in Acting, Dance, Music Theatre and Music. Upcoming short courses at the Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music include audition preparation workshops for Dance, Contemporary Music Performance, Theatre and Music. To apply for these programs for teens and adults, from novice to experienced, you can fuel the creative fire in your belly.

More information: vca-mcm.unimelb.edu.au/shortcourses or 9810 3276

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**YOUR FUTURE IS OPEN**

**SUNDAY 17 AUGUST**

10AM - 4PM  |  PARKVILLE & SOUTHBANK CAMPUSES

**PLAN YOUR DAY. PLAN YOUR FUTURE.**

OPENDAY.UNIMELB.EDU.AU

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[Image 59x1037 to 149x1120]

[Image 131x306 to 264x482]

[Image 280x307 to 409x481]

[Image 418x307 to 541x481]

[Image 554x307 to 691x481]