

Welcome to the first community engagement newsletter. As you know I have recently been appointed PVC Community Engagement in addition to my DVC Learning and Teaching role. Anne Langworthy, Director of the Centre for Regional Development is working with me in this role.

Community engagement at Swinburne has many faces and we are aware of a lot of exciting initiatives in faculties and schools. I am conscious that there is much more we need to learn about. To that end we are talking to Deans and Directors and conducting an audit of community engagement at Swinburne. This newsletter will be produced every month to keep you abreast of the journey.

I am now located on Level Five, 60 William Street. Please feel free to visit or call.

I look forward to working with you as we develop this really important facet of Swinburne's future.



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What is Community Engagement

Community engagement is a two-way relationship in which the University forms partnerships with the community that yield mutually beneficial outcomes such as:

- Productive research outcomes that are, among other things, socially robust;
- Regional economic growth;
- Linking the community and the world (boosting local/global connectivity);
- Social capital development;
- Progress towards a region's sustainable development;
- Human capital development;
- Development of corporate and private citizenship attributes;

- Driving social change; and
- Development of cultural and intellectual assets for the community.

For universities, "the agenda has moved on from a desire to simply increase the general education of the population and the output of scientific research; there is now a greater concern to harness university education and research to specific economic and social objectives" (OECD 1999, p9).

Community engagement is thus more than community participation, community consultation, community development and public relations. It is much more than community service which is a one-way relationship in which the university provides benefits to its constituent communities. It also differs from community outreach or extension, in which university experts apply their knowledge to problems they observe or questions the community may propose. Whilst outreach is very much a unidirectional transfer of information on to a receptive public, engagement focuses on a two way interaction. This is the concept of engagement that is reinforced in the discussion paper "Higher Education at the Crossroads", a review of Higher Education in Australia (2002; pp. 23-24) which refers to "the new compact of mutual obligation involving active partnerships between institutions, their staff, students, government and employers" (and by implication the wider community).

Thus the learning institution is doing more than prepare students for employment; it is also preparing them to be fully functioning members of the community. This underlines the importance of university-community engagement in developing attributes in graduates that will enhance citizenship and community sustainability and foster lifelong learning.

See Community Engagement discussion paper at www.ld.swin.edu.au/crd

A view from the outside:

It is important that not only should we be aware of community engagement within the university but we should also be aware of initiatives happening in our colleague universities nationally and internationally. Swinburne has recently joined 29 other Australian university's as a member of the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA). Anne Langworthy was elected to the executive and holds the position of secretary. She will ensure that Swinburne connects to the national conversation about engaging communities and will report regularly through this newsletter. Indeed Community Engagement was the theme for no less than five conferences in 2005 including the 2005 AUQA conference held in Sydney in July 2005 and the UN international conference held in Brisbane in September. The full suite of papers for both conferences is available online. These reports will be linked to our new website shortly.

In addition, Barbara van Ernst, as an AUQA auditor, is able to direct us to good practice identified in recent audit reports. Not surprisingly, Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory was commended for its engagement with indigenous communities which is also of relevance to Swinburne.

Indigenous News

One key aim of Swinburne's Community Engagement agenda is to increase participation of indigenous students and thus reports on progress, projects and issues related to indigenous students will be an ongoing feature of this newsletter.

At our Croydon campus, First Stop has used settings outside the classroom to build relationships with indigenous students at Worawa College in Healesville.

This program involved young people from Worawa College, Knox Youth Ambassadors and the Knox Raiders Basketball Club. Young indigenous students have been involved in games and half time entertainment at Knox Basketball stadium. A reciprocal visit brought regional students and basketballers to Worawa. Outcomes include the ongoing relationship with the Knox Raiders basketball club (Worawa presented the Aboriginal flag at a Labour Day game between the Raiders and the English National Team) and improved learning. A staff member from Worawa College is undertaking

skills training to deliver careers education at the College and a satellite First Stop is being established at Worawa.

For further information contact Trevor Bayley at First Stop
Call (03) 9726 1432
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Swinburne TAFE
Gate 1, 12 Norton Road
Croydon (Melway 50 K5)

Adam Frogley, Manager of Indigenous Programs and part of the community engagement team will report in the next newsletter.

Centre for Regional Development - Engagement Projects

Indicators of Community Sustainability for Outer Eastern Melbourne

The Sustainability Indicators Project for Outer Eastern Melbourne is the result of a collaborative regional initiative developed as a means of monitoring community sustainability. By developing community visions, residents in the municipalities of Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges have expressed a common desire to achieve a better quality of life now and for future generations. This led to the project as a means of tracking the communities' progress in attaining the vision and includes 30 indicators that monitor the simultaneous objectives of sustainability: protecting the environment; prudent use of natural resources; social progress that meets the needs of everyone; strengthening our community and cultural life; and maintaining strong local economies.

Sustainability is about taking responsibility for the future and directing outcomes through individual and collective action. The Earth Summit in 1992 popularised the sustainability mantra: "Think globally act locally". Collectively, individuals can make a huge difference through reducing resource consumption and minimising impacts on the environment. The project acknowledges that ultimately indicators have to shift emphasis from money and consumption to factors that relate to the quality of our lives.

The sustainability indicators are not an end in themselves, nor are they the only measures of community health and well-being. They can however act as a spotlight by measuring attributes of sustainability that the community has told us are important. Indicators are a means to

inform and focus whole community action. The indicators are categorised under seven themes that describe a strong and sustainable Outer East: An active, healthy community; An accessible community; A prosperous community; A community that protects and enhances the environment; A well designed and well built community; A learning community and A culturally rich community.

For more information visit the website, www.sustainableoutereast.com.

Victorian Community Indicators Project

The Centre for Regional Development is a partner in the Vic Health funded and award winning Victorian Community Indicators project due for completion in July 2006. This project has involved extensive consultation with local government, government departments and politicians. For further information see www.communityindicators.net.au

Swinburne University and schools: pathways and partnerships

Schools have been identified as key regional stakeholders and university partners in the strategic plan of the Centre for Regional Development. The relationship has the potential to impact long term on regional and community sustainability. Schools have a natural potential to be a focus for the community and thus the partnership can promote wider learning, research and community development.

Over the past three years the Centre has established research partnerships with regional schools and other education providers, including the Eastern Metropolitan Region of the Department of Education, to address the issue of student aspiration, student engagement and enterprise and more recently Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivery.

The Learning Communities Partnership, an initiative arising from the Outer Eastern Indicators of Community Sustainability Project, identified VET as essential to improving student pathways for both academically weak and strong students.

VET in Schools programs enable students completing a senior school certificate to tailor their post-compulsory learning to their particular needs and aspirations. Additionally, there is evidence that the needs of tertiary education-bound students are served through participation

in a VET program with 20% of all VET graduates undertaking university study. The Eastern Metropolitan VET in Schools Delivery Partnership project was initiated to map VET in Schools delivery across the eastern metropolitan region. Building upon existing data provided by the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority and following a survey of government schools it is anticipated the project results will provide a sound basis for the strategic development of VET in Schools by the Department of Education. An appreciation of current delivery and relationships between schools and VET providers is important because VET in Schools plays an essential role in managing diversity and improving learning outcomes for students. VET programs contribute significantly to increasing educational outcomes. In 2005 Swinburne offered 12 VET in School programs to 22 Secondary schools in the region.

The VET in Schools Delivery project will seek to map relationships schools have with each other and with VET providers to identify gaps and opportunities for future collaboration and development of VET in Schools programs. Contact Fiona Mawson at the Centre for Regional Development for further information on this project (x7235).

Reports on collaborative projects with schools will be a feature of successive editions of this newsletter.

(Watch out for the full report on the CRD website)

Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement

Anne Langworthy, Centre for Regional Development, Swinburne Lilydale, for her outstanding work in regional community engagement. Anne has systematically built relationships between the University and the community, and maximising the outcomes through research activities and other collaborative projects that benefit both the University and community. One of these projects resulted in the identification of 'red flag' issues in the area of education and lifelong learning for regional sustainability, particularly in regard to low educational qualifications and poor retention rates.

Sharon Rice, on behalf of the TAFE Division's Regional Learning Networks Unit (RLN), for their excellent achievements in community

engagement. RLN's focus has been on interpreting new policy directions impacting on VET, and initiating appropriate change management actions and processes. RLN works across the matrix within the TAFE Division to design, trial and evaluate new program models in partnership with the community, with a view to mainstreaming new practices in VET delivery.

Website:

http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/spg/excellence_awards_winners2005.html#community

Events Calendar

Wal Elms Memorial Lecture
Wednesday April 19 at 7.30pm
Lilydale Campus LC 226

Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop Scholarship Award
Wednesday July 12 at 10am
Kings Domain Melbourne

Engagement around Faculties and Schools

In the next edition we hope to be able to profile some of the good practice community engagement already happening within faculties and schools.

Watch out for further information on

- The Boroondara Alliance established by David Hayward and staff and representatives from Boroondara Council which has already delivered improved services for Swinburne students
- Sports without Boundaries
- Living Hawthorn
- The Shared Kitchen Facility
- The VCE Physics teaching aid
- The Beechworth Bakery Award

Conferences

Community Development in a 'Global Risk Society'

Date: 20 – 22 April 2006

Venue: Hotel Y, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne

Convenors: Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights – Deakin University, Borderlands Co-operative and the International Association for Community Development.

Themes: Community development and risk society; Community development and the creative arts; Community development and globalisation; Community development practice in Indigenous communities; Combating xenophobia; Community development and environmentalism; New community development practices.

Website: <http://www.api-network.com/cgi-bin/page?conferences/globalrisk>

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts/cchr/CD/>

Empowering Individuals and Families in the Human Services

Date: 16 – 17 May 2006

Venue: Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre

Convenor: Social Enterprise Partnerships

Themes: Public policy for an agenda of empowerment for individuals and families in indigenous communities, disability, mental health, aged care, youth, education, health care, community building and family strengthening

Website:

<http://www.partnerships.org.au/PolicyConference2006.htm>

Communities in Control - The Community Summit – Challenging the Power of One

Date: 19 - 20 June 2006

Venue: Moonee Valley Racecourse

Convenor: Our Community Centacare Family Services

Theme: Annual conference on community strengthening

Website: www.ourcommunity.com.au

3rd Annual AUCEA National Conference 2006 - "Embedding University Community Engagement: The good, the bad and the ugly"

Date: 12 - 14 July 2006

Venue: Curtin University of Technology, Perth Western Australia

Convenor: Curtin University of Technology,

Objectives: Showcase research, theoretical aspects and best practices of embedding university community engagement into a changing academic culture; Strengthen the support network between universities for maintaining partnerships by learning and engaging within communities; Deepen the

understanding of the concept of scholarship of engagement; Communicate to decision makers and the public the value of embedding university community engagement; Offer provocative, interactive conferencing to enable the further development of engaged learning opportunities nationally.

Website: http://www.aucea.net.au/cgi-bin/articles/display.pl/a:286/National_Conference_2006_.html

Regional Development – Growing Regions Conference

Date: 25 - 27 July 2006

Venue: Brisbane

Convenor: Department of Transport and Regional Development

Themes: Regional and national development best practice; Maximising economic and socio-cultural opportunities in rural and remote regions; Improving opportunities and outcomes for indigenous communities; Regional governance; Regional youth leadership; New trends and approaches in regional development.

Website: <http://www.dotars.gov.au/regional/growingregions/index.aspx>

‘Positive Futures’ – Achieving wellbeing for children and families

Date: 14 - 16 August 2006

Venue: Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre

Convenor: 2006 ACWA Conference incorporating the 7th International Looking After Children Conference

Theme: Well-being for vulnerable children and families.

Website: <http://www.acwa06.com/Default.htm>

Governments and Communities in Partnership – From Theory to Practice

Date: 25 - 27 September 2006

Venue: Melbourne Park

Convenor: The Centre for Public Policy – Melbourne University

Theme: The aim of the program is to deepen the academic and policy debate about the impact and value of efforts to ‘join-up’ different public services and related initiatives to strengthen communities.

Website: <http://www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/conference06/>

EIANZ Conference 2006

Date: 17-20 September, 2006

Venue: Hilton, Adelaide.

Convenor: Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand – Environmental Practice

Theme: Environmental education; Environmental planning; Environmental assessment; Environmental approvals; Environmental auditing; Environmental research; Environmental reporting.

Website: <http://www.plevin.com.au/eianz2006/>