

Message from the Pro Vice Chancellor (Community Engagement)

Welcome to the third edition of the community engagement newsletter. Over the last months I have been delighted with your response and contributions to this newsletter and pleased to be able to share some of the good engagement practice at Swinburne. We realise that many valuable activities happen in your everyday work that we need to take the time to acknowledge and celebrate. Currently we are undertaking a desktop audit of community engagement at Swinburne with the intention of sending the results to faculties to check for accuracy and to identify gaps. We will also be asking faculties to highlight examples of best practice as part of this process. This work will provide the foundation of our community engagement strategic planning. I look forward to our continued work together. In the next issue we will be showcasing some Community Engagement projects from the TAFE division.



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Why universities are important to communities – the human capital perspective.

- University graduates are most likely to be employed (84.3%) Conversely people who do not complete secondary school are least likely to be employed (50.7%) (Productivity Commission, 2005). Continuous participation in education is the key to long term success in the labour market (Chapman B, Watson L, and Wheelehan L 2001). Graduates also receive more ongoing training in the workplace than non-graduates (Purcell et al 2004). University graduates earn more with a conservatively estimated annual gross income differential of 10% over a 45 year working life (IRIC 1999; IRIC 2001)
- Graduates have higher levels of earning power and contribute significantly to Australian household spending. The 1998-99 Australian Household Expenditure Survey reveals that graduates account for 27% of earnings averaging almost twice the weekly wage of non-graduates.
- NATSEM calculates that 12.4% of GDP is attributable to graduate education.
- Increased university participation has led to significant increases in annual labour productivity and overall per capita growth Australia since 1930 (Pope and Withers 1995; in Chapman and Withers 2002, Laplagne and Bensted, 1999).
- Government sees a crucial role for universities not only in responding to the knowledge and skill demands from community and industry but also because the *“hopes and aspirations of young people depend on opportunities to improve their education”* (Kosky 2005; Nelson 2002; Nelson 2003).
- Universities foster democratic participation (Harper cited in Benson Harkavy and Hartley, 2004; Kezar Chambers and Burkhart, 2004). Graduates are more likely to participate and accept diversity in their communities and are over three times more likely to be a member of a voluntary organisation than non-graduates ((Purcell et al 2004)) Not only are graduates more likely to participate in and accept diversity in their communities but they have better health and wellbeing (Hillman & McMillan 2005; King, 1999; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; and others) and are less likely to be involved in crime (Chapman B, Weatherburn, Kapuscincki, Chilvers and Roussel, 2002). Degree holders are significantly more likely to hold positive attitudes to race and gender equality (Purcell et al 2004).
- Graduates live healthier lifestyles, are less likely to smoke, less likely to be obese, 40% less likely to suffer from depression and more likely to report “excellent” health (Wilberforce cited in Graduate Careers Australia 2006).
- Higher education qualifications are associated with less physical decline, depression, loneliness, social loss and positively associated with continuous growth in aging people (Steverink, Westerhoff, Bode and Dittman-Kohli 2001; Miech and Shanahan 2000).
- Universities contribute to local, state and national economies. Communities use university facilities, students and staff volunteer in the community, the university, university staff and students spend money in the community, international students contribute financially and culturally to the community and universities attract project and research funding. As examples, Wollongong University injects \$1.3 million a day into its regional economy - second only to Bluescope

Steel as the most important economic driver in the region. (Campbell, 2004) and 100% of nursing graduates at Deakin Warrnambool are employed within 6 months of graduation with 80% working within 100km.

- The benefits of higher education are intergenerational. Graduates are more likely to take an interest in their own children's education and to be involved with their children's school which are predictors of schooling success (Purcell et al 2004)

**Prepared by Anne Langworthy
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Institute for Social Research

Swinburne's Institute for Social Research has established a reputation for innovative high quality social research over the last thirty years and has always been a leader in engaging with the community. The ISR's mission is to undertake valuable and innovative social research and deliver high quality postgraduate education and training.

ISR is a focal point for the study of democracy and civic responsibility and participation at Swinburne; and has a strand of work within citizenship that focuses on gender and cultural diversity. The Institute also focuses on programs related to "Media and Communications", and "Cities and Housing". The ISR is home to postdoctoral fellows and PhD scholarship holders, and delivers Australia's only national housing management course.

Within ISR, the Citizenship and Government¹ program has a strong foundation in critical intellectual investigation of citizenship, liberal democracy and governance. This supports strategic research on public policy issues, combined with applied research on social and community planning. Research within the program combines expertise in sociology, history, public policy, political science, economics and anthropology. Its key terms are rights, risk and security.

The Institute is home to Australian Policy Online (APO). Managed by site editor Peter Browne, APO provides direct links to news and reports from more than ninety research centres and institutes around Australia, giving readers a broad overview of social, economic and cultural policy research. APO is a major professional and community resource provided by the university.

We hope to feature ISR's work regularly in this newsletter. For this edition we are featuring their major research project into participation in local government.

¹ <http://www.sisr.net/cag/welcome.htm>

ISR Current project: Community consultation and the hard research

The ISR is currently undertaking a major research project looking at the issues faced by local governments when trying to engage hard to reach communities. The project is a collaborative research venture supported by the Australian Research Council (ARC); [Denise Meredyth](#), [Nicola Brackertz](#) and [Ivan Zwart](#) are working in partnership with eight local councils and the [Victorian Local Governance Association](#). Partner councils to the project are the Cities of [Boroondara](#), [Darebin](#), [Maribyrnong](#), [Melbourne](#), [Moreland](#), [Nillumbik](#), [Port Phillip](#) and [Whittlesea](#).

The *Hard to Reach* project takes place at a time when there is increasing emphasis on good governance and the capacity of local government to strengthen communities. Consultation methods are seen as central to these processes, allowing local government to fulfil its role as a place for civic engagement at the neighbourhood level. In the broadest terms our research question is: What are the characteristics of successful consultation with hard to reach communities?

Two reports and one working paper have been completed to date, outlining the first year's work. Research is now continuing with a series of case studies with each partner council to see how the issue of hard to reach appears in real life and how effectively the problem can be addressed by various methods.

Copies of publications and working papers can be downloaded at:
<http://www.sisr.net/cag/projects/community.htm>

For more information about the project, contact:
Nicola Brackertz on 03 9214 5609 or NBrackertz@swin.edu.au
Ivan Zwart on 03 9214 5978 or IZwart@swin.edu.au

Around the University

There are many exciting activities around the University which make us part of our communities. In this edition we are pleased to highlight:

Dr Simone Battiston

Dr Simone Battiston has recently joined the Faculty of Business and Enterprise (Hawthorn campus) as Cassamarca lecturer in Italian. This year, he completed his PhD in Italian Migration Studies at La Trobe University. Excerpts from his doctoral dissertation on the history and collective memory of the Italian migrant organisation FILEF of Melbourne have been published in the *Journal of Australian Studies* and the Australian newspaper *the Age*. His research interests include the migrant political and socio-economic contribution to post-war Australia, ethnic community politics, and interculturalism. He is currently researching occupational mobility among

Australians of Italian background and the Italian vote overseas.

Cassamarca Foundation, the Cassamarca lectureships in Italian, and the Treviso Program

The Cassamarca is a private financial foundation, based in the City of Treviso (north of Venice), which is involved in a double philanthropic effort in Treviso and in countries around the world with a historical strong Italian migration wave. Cassamarca Foundation has been investing a huge amount of money to sponsor several lectureships in Italian in different countries around the globe, including Australia. Swinburne University is one of nine Australian universities to benefit from a generous gift of €900,000 per year over 13 years (approximately \$23 million dollars) as an investment in the nurturing of Italian language and culture in Australia.

At Swinburne University the Cassamarca Foundation has agreed to continue to fund the Cassamarca lectureship in Italian. This is an acknowledgement of the very important contribution that the Swinburne Italian and European Studies section is making in the promotion of Italian and European Studies in Australia. The Italian Studies program at Swinburne is unique in that it offers an unusual combination of a business degree in addition to providing competence and fluency in the Italian language, an understanding of modern Italian culture including the social, economic and political aspects and an appreciation of the importance of the EU in the business environment. It provides an insight into Italy's commercial and industrial sectors which have contributed to the making of the country the seventh leading economic power in the world.

The Cassamarca Lectureship has also given Swinburne Business students the opportunity to extend their boundaries and travel outside Australia as part of their course through the Treviso Program (run in 2002, 2004 and 2006) and through student exchange with the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice - Treviso campus. Senior Lecturer in Italian and European Studies Laura Hougaz is the promoter and coordinator of Treviso Program.

Dr Railton Hill

'Starting Points' Parenting Program Joint Evaluation Project: SUT Faculty of Business & Enterprise & Focus on The Family Australia

A partnership has been established between the Faculty of Business & Enterprise and leading community based provider of parenting education Focus on the Family Australia (FOTFA) to evaluate Starting Points, a new parenting program for parents of children aged 0 – 4 years. Swinburne's Dr Railton Hill and Prof. Sue Moore, with FOTFA Program Manager Anne Hill, have prepared an innovative research design which will evaluate both the parenting education outcomes of the new Starting Points

program, and the social marketing framework within which the program is made available to parents.

The *Starting Points* parenting program has been developed by FOTFA, a not for profit community based organisation that seeks to strengthen Australia's families through events, programs and resources. The distinguishing features of *Starting Points* are that it:

- has been developed specifically to *conform to Australian government initiatives and priorities* under the National Agenda for Early Childhood
- *builds on parents' existing strengths* (i.e. is strengths based)
- is *preventative and proactive* with an early intervention focus (most such programs are 'reactive' – they address problems only *after* they have become evident)
- is *evidence based* and developed with assistance from a panel of professional advisors in areas of child development, parenting, education and social marketing
- addresses 'at risk' factors and strengthens 'protective' factors
- is delivered by local **community based 'peer' facilitators, via a community development approach**, a highly innovative delivery model applied in previous FOTF programs. Facilitators may include parents, social workers, counsellors, teachers, paramedics or community workers. These are trained specifically to *both market and facilitate* the program within their own community contexts. The peer facilitator delivery model results in an impact 'for the community by the community'.
- is being marketed across Australia via an innovative not-for-profit 'social marketing' approach
- has rigorous *evaluation built into its development, marketing and delivery*, conducted in partnership with academics from Swinburne University of Technology

Although the literature recommends that evaluation be built into all phases of parenting program development and implementation (Powell, D.R., 1998), only limited information has previously been collected from parents during and after their participation in parenting programs (Bowes, 2000). Evaluation of parental learning in this study is paired with evaluation of the not-for-profit 'social marketing' process by which parents come to be involved as participants in the *Starting Points* program. Dr Railton Hill has expertise in education, program evaluation and in social marketing. Professor Moore is a leading researcher in psychology.

In spite of the numerous parenting programs/courses that are available to parents, a recent report (ACF 2005) found that 70 percent of parents feel under pressure concerning their parenting. 71 percent

struggle to find time to enjoy activities with their children but 80 percent feel a positive relationship with their children is a priority.

Evidence supports the benefits of parental training. Programs which include practical aspects of parenting supported by research and policy, are particularly effective (Taylor and Biglan, 1998). Positive benefits are experienced when family relationships are enhanced through parenting education (Wilczak and Markstrom, 1999). The family 'tone' is influenced and families are more able to 'work together' as a unit (Eastman, 1989; Bogenschneider, K. et al., 1994). FOTFA has long adopted the *community development* approach to their programming. Their highly successful program *How to Drug Proof Your Kids* has been delivered to more than 40,000 parents Australia wide. Almost 1900 community based facilitators have been trained to deliver this program in their local settings *How to Drug Proof Your Kids* has been launched in Canada, Scotland, England, France, South Africa, and New Zealand the US.

The immediate beneficiaries of the evaluation program to be undertaken are participants in subsequent *Starting Points* programs throughout Australia. The evaluation feeds into a process of continual improvement. The whole community benefits from effective parenting. Deficits in the mental health and wellbeing of both parents and children are very expensive to treat and manage in a variety of ways, once these become evident.

Further, providers of a range of other types of socially beneficial programs can benefit immensely from the knowledge to be gained of how this type of not-for-profit 'social marketing' can be successfully undertaken.

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Appendix: The Research Design

Evaluation is proposed of both *processes* and *outcomes* for parents involved in *Starting Points*. We are evaluating both parental learning, and the marketing of the program within each community by facilitators drawn from within those communities. This is a particular type of 'social marketing' linked closely to the process of 'community development'. While some traditional elements of marketing promotion, pricing, distribution and the development of a suitable service 'product' etc are obviously part of this, participation in a parenting program is most likely to occur through relationship building in community networks. This is currently very little understood. Thus the evaluation seeks to understand this process, in addition to the learning experienced by parents as participants.

Parental learning is not easy to directly observe in the home. Hence we have opted for the questioning of respondents, both verbal and written (questionnaires) and the collection of *third party observations* from

another responsible and closely placed adult. In most cases this will be the other parent and/or spouse. The evaluation plan includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. It also aims to provide a *longitudinal rather than cross-sectional evaluation* pre-training, immediately after completion of training and at a period some months post program. The use of a control group of non participants, with the pre and post course measures, will enable a quasi-experimental design.

Refs:

Australian Childhood Foundation (2005), *The Changing Face of Parenting*,

Indigenous News

A graduation ceremony was held at Lilydale recently to celebrate the achievements of a number of indigenous students. Diplomas and Certificates I, II, and IV were received in the fields of Arts, Horticulture, Business and Community Development. The students participate in workplace-based culturally appropriate training in mainstream nationally accredited Training Packages developed in partnership by Swinburne TAFE with Koorie Women Mean Business and Ngwala Willumbong Cooperative Inc. Shane Charles accompanied the Academic Procession on didgeridoo and the traditional welcome was given by Murrindindi – a Wurundjeri Elder.

Centre for Regional Development

AUCEA News

An Invitation to the next AUCEA Victorian Chapter Meeting

To be held Friday, August 11 at VU Flinders St campus 9 am – 11.30

Visiting Scholar: Frank Lyons from the University of Portsmouth, has considerable experience in work based learning and customer led learning environments. He has recently been appointed as Director of Foundation Direct a HEFCE funded Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning that builds on the University of Portsmouth's excellent and innovative practice developed in student support, the careers service and work-based learning.

The University of Portsmouth is a major provider of foundation degrees within the South East region and Foundation Direct supports the University's growing number of foundation degree students.

RSVP Nadine White x7314 by Wednesday August 9.

AUCEA Position Paper

The AUCEA conference held in Western Australia 12th – 14th July, continued national deliberation about scholarship and community engagement. As a result of conference input AUCEA has produced a "**First Statement on Universities and Community Engagement**". The statement can be found at

<http://www.ld.swin.edu.au/crd/documents/AUCEAPositionPaper.pdf>



Dr Helen Sheil
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115b, Lilydale

We welcome Dr. Helen Sheil who has joined the team at the Centre for Regional Development. Helen has a keen interest in the future of rural communities and the potential of regional universities and the TAFE sector to resource an informed response from within communities. Helen's research on strategies of collaborative engagement originated from studies of rural women's programs and now extends to whole of community engagement. A key link in this process has been to develop an accredited program to introduce regional workers to the strategies of collaborative engagement.

Helen has run a Graduate Certificate in Regional Community Development accredited through Monash University since 2002. This multi-disciplinary approach to regional engagement has relevance for workers from health and human services, local government, environmental programs, natural resource management, enterprise, arts, recreation and culture as well as community organizations, indigenous groups and women's organizations. The work offers a unique mix of theory and experiential learning that requires practical implementation through study circles or projects. A professional development manual *Growing and Learning in Rural Communities* (Sheil 2000) provides a text for this approach, while a study circle kit incorporating steps of collaborative engagement has been a valuable resource in facilitating community involvement. She is currently editing a book on *Collaborative Engagement* that elaborates the underpinnings and potential of this model.

TAFE Awards

We join with DVC Alistair Crozier in congratulating Swinburne Statewide award winners: Kirk Gibson, a Diploma of Community Development student, won the Outstanding Student of the Year-Vocational Award

Dr John Butler from the Department of Arts at Prahran won the Outstanding Teacher/Trainer of the Year Award

First Stop, a youth employment, education and training resource service based at our Croydon campus won the Training Initiative of the Year Award. This achievement is due to the terrific work of a team of people including Sharon Rice, Jill Slater, Penny Corser-Hatten, Rob Regester, Trevor Bayley, Fiona Purcell (OELLEN) and all the teachers and support staff who work with the young people.

Measuring Wellbeing

Swinburne has been fortunate to be represented as one of 550 invited experts from over 40 countries including senior government bureaucrats, OECD officials and heads of national statistics institutes who met in Palermo Italy at *Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, OECD World Forum on Key Indicators* in November 2004. In a sense this forum marked the culmination of a decade of concern about indicators of sustainability and demonstrated the growing importance of comprehensive and reliable information to inform policy development and track progress. Whilst the forum highlighted the development of indicator suites by the OECD, the United Nations, the European Union and many countries including Australia, it also demonstrated an increasing trend towards local measurements of economic social and environmental sustainability in cities and regions around the world. In July 2006, a joint OECD –JRC workshop, *Measuring Wellbeing and Societal Progress*, with the objective of producing recommendations for a framework of indicators to guide policy-makers in the pursuit of well-being was held in Milan. This began a series of workshops leading up to the second world forum to be held in Istanbul 2007. The background paper for this workshop provides a comprehensive picture of progress towards developing alternative global measures to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) a powerful economic tool never intended as, but nevertheless often used as, a measure of wellbeing; http://farmweb.jrc.cec.eu.int/crell/Well-being/papers/Matthews_Well-Being%20Measures_Milan_final.pdf

Events Calendar

William Barak Lecture – Syd Jackson

Date: Thursday August 17 at 7.30pm.

Venue: Lilydale Campus - Lecture theatre LC226

Contact: Adam Frogley x7208

Seminar on Dual Citizenship and Transnational Voting Rights: An Australian Perspective

Date: 25 August 2006 at 9am-1pm

Venue: Hawthorn Campus - Building TD121

Convenor: Swinburne University of Technology

Theme: This seminar will focus on the topical issue of dual citizenship and transnational voting rights from an Australian perspective with keynote speakers Hon. Marco Fedi MP (Italy) Carlo Carli MLA (Brunswick) Professor Graeme Hugo (Uni of Adelaide).

Contact: Sue Lester:

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Conferences

AUGUST

'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.

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

SEPTEMBER

The Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) Forum

Date: 14-15 September

Venue: Griffith University

Contact Judie Kay x8108

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/hosting/acen/>

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.

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

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.

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

OCTOBER

International Service Learning Research Conference

Date: 14-16 October

Contact: Professor Rob Wallis

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