

Message from the Pro Vice Chancellor - Community Engagement



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The Executive Group has approved the Community Engagement Plan for 2007-09. This is an ambitious plan which aims to embed Community Engagement into the culture of the University and into the thinking of staff and students. A pdf of the document can be found at <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/spq/docs/swinonly/planning/2007-09CommunityEngagementPlan.pdf>

When working with external partners, it is essential that we in the University have a clear view of what we intend to work on together, what the outcomes will be, where responsibilities lie and how partners will communicate. It is essential that once established, a partnership is nurtured, developed and celebrated.

For Community Engagement to be effective it needs to be for mutual benefit, bringing together the experience, ideas and expertise of community members and Swinburne staff and students.

In order to get a better picture of the full range of Community Engagement activities, we would like to invite anyone working with Schools to let me know so we can begin to document and share experiences. We will broaden this to other areas of engagement in later editions of this newsletter.

Barbara van Ernst.

Around the University

Glenferrie Rotary Rural and Regional Equity Merit Scholarship

Three years ago, Geoff Hopper, the Club President at the time, and Carolyn Fraser met with Jan Edwards from Student Equity and Janelle Hansen (who was once a Rotary Exchange student), to discuss setting up a Glenferrie Rotary Rural and Regional Equity Merit Scholarship for a first year student at Swinburne University. This was to be a partnership between the Rotary Club of Glenferrie and the University.

Swinburne was pleased to be involved and all three recipients so far have been young male students studying Engineering. The first was from a dairy farm near Sale, the second from an organic farm near Ballarat, the third from Tocumwal in country NSW. The study grant is generally awarded to students who are the first in their family to study at tertiary level.

All three students have addressed Rotary Club members who enjoyed hearing about their transition from the country to the city, combined with first year of university studies. In one student's case, it was a very big adjustment as, during term-time, he was living opposite the demolition and then construction site which has now become the Swinburne Place West and South complexes on campus.

This Rotary initiative, worth \$3,000 to the recipient, will continue into its fourth year in 2007.

Drinking in the Sound of Live Opera

From small acorns giant ideas grow. This particular acorn was planted in Semester Two 2006, during a unit of the Advanced Diploma of Business (Advertising) course at Swinburne Prahran. Entitled COORDINATE ADVERTISING RESEARCH, the major assignment was to create

a virtual company or product and then research how best to advertise this to its target market.

First year student Sophie Spargo had recently transferred from RMIT. The fact that her main interest was opera came out in class discussions. Move over Mozart! Sophie has been composing since she was 4 and wrote her first full opera at 14. She is now 21 and has 7 operas to her credit, including one, LOLITA, which will billow the Utzon sails of the Sydney Opera House this year.

Her lecturer, Randall Berger, also came from a background in the performing arts. He fondly recalled visits in his youth to an opera bar THE BOCCI BALL in San Francisco and offered the idea to Sophie as a possible subject for her research project. Why not research how to promote an opera bar in Melbourne with the question, "Would Melbournians frequent a bar where the main entertainment was opera singing and classical music?"

Together they brainstormed some of the pie in the sky possibilities. This virtual venue would be called "La Scalapini" and serve opera-themed wine and food such as "Cosi fan Tutti Frutti" dessert platters. People could come and go as in a real bar. Singers could rotate. There could be opera karaoke for the powder room Pavarottis and shower Sutherlands who would pay for the privilege of assailing the audience.

During the course of her research, Sophie asked a number of Melbourne venues for their input as part of the project. The Curve, one of the watering holes at the Victorian Arts Centre, was so taken with the idea that they offered her a one-off trial as proof of concept.

One Sunday afternoon in late November, the first "Opera @ Curve" was scheduled. Sophie held auditions amongst opera singers and music students, putting together an ensemble of superlative talent. The Curve went so far as to supply a baby concert grand piano, tuning it each time it was moved.

It may not have been a financial success for the management, but they were so taken with the wonderful ambience created by the opera singing and classical piano pieces that they invited Sophie and her troupe back in 2007 to continue the Opera @ Curve soirees on a monthly basis. The first regular performance was on Saturday February 2, 2007. Word is obviously spreading as the crowd was larger and more varied. Unlike most bars, you could almost hear a pin drop,

apart from the performers. Even the waiters try not to make a noise.

Oh, and Sophie passed the Advertising Research unit.

Randall Berger x6835

Australia Day Award

It is with great pleasure that we congratulate Trevor Brown, Swinburne's Deputy Chancellor, on his receiving of an AM in the Australia Day Honours List.

Trevor received the honour for his service to Swinburne, and to the accounting profession - particularly through the development of ethical and professional standards in the areas of risk management and auditing processes.

Trevor Brown was first appointed as a Councillor of the then Swinburne Institute of Technology in 1991. He became Deputy Chancellor when Swinburne was officially granted university status in 1992 and has acted as Chancellor for two extended periods.

National Centre for Sustainability

Sustainability Covenant

In October 2005, Swinburne became the first university in Australia to develop a Sustainability Covenant.

The Sustainability Covenant is a voluntary agreement between Swinburne University and the Environmental Protection Authority Victoria (EPA), which commits Swinburne to a range of innovative sustainability initiatives.

The Covenant aims to build leadership in sustainability through mutually beneficial links with the community. Examples of this include:

- Community Water Grant which has been awarded to Swinburne for a water recycling initiative at the Wantirna nursery. This will involve the local community, Horticulture students and industry and will help showcase Swinburne's nursery as a world best practice nursery
- Environmental memoirs, which is a global initiative by the National Centre for Sustainability to collect a series of memoirs from citizens that are living within degrading ecological environments

- Participation in community events such as the Sustainable Living Festival and the Wonthaggi Energy Innovation Festival
- Environmental Science Expo held at the Croydon Campus which involved many local environmental groups engaging students in environmental activities

For further information on Swinburne's Sustainability Covenant, please contact Darren Moore on (03) 9214 5957 or email dmoore@swin.edu.au.

'Sustainability is a hot topic - water resources are stretched, the volume of waste is growing and greenhouse emissions are accelerating climate change. It's time for all of us to take action to make a difference.'

This is the attention grabbing headline on the flyer promoting the 'Living for our Future' workshop series piloted by the National Centre for Sustainability in 2005 and hosted by the City of Boroondara to promote environmentally responsible behaviour.

The 2007 series is funded by the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund with contributions from Melbourne Water, Origin Energy Pty Ltd. and VISY Recycling Pty. Ltd.

NCS Project Manager Julian Donlen said: "The workshops are designed to inspire long-term behavioural change and give people information they could use and act upon, to reduce the impact of their lifestyle on the planet." Up to 400 Boroondara residents will participate in the program and provide an example to their households with their resulting actions.

Results from the pilot program have shown the approach has worked with key results including:

- An average annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per household of 28%
- An average 16% decrease in participant household water bills
- Estimated water savings of 1296 to 1655 kilolitres per annum from participant households
- An average 15% increase in car trips with more than one person
- An average 15% increase in material recycled each week
- Attitudinal increases in awareness of toxic chemicals used in the home; recycled content products; and recyclable packaging;

- 80% of participants discussed the program with household, family and friends.

The workshops are being held at community venues around the City, including churches, schools and neighbourhood centres, from February to May. Swinburne staff residing within the City of Boroondara are welcome to attend.

For more information contact Julian Donlen on x 5930 or visit:

www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/environment

Centre for Regional Development

The Centre is pleased to welcome two senior research fellows who are familiar Swinburne faces but new to the Centre team this year.



Dr Sue Lewis

Sue has had a range of educational development roles and managed a range of innovative curriculum and teaching projects within Swinburne and industry from 1992 to 1998.

Since 1999, Sue has been a senior research fellow and has managed large research projects that have education and training components as well as organisational change. These projects have been as diverse as a national survey for BHP (then) identifying their diversity issues across the company through to a long term research and organisational changes program in one of Melbourne's emergency services. Sue has worked extensively in a range of technology-based industries as a researcher and consultant and brings a very broad experience of working in industry, government and education.

For four years, Sue was Director of the National Centre for Gender and Cultural Diversity and developed and market-researched, training and consultancy programs in gender and cultural diversity.

Sue's work in the Centre is focussing on understanding the technical as well as the social in a range of contexts relating to regional sustainability. Already, projects with the cherry growers, strawberry growers and wider agribusiness and local government sector are under development.

suelewis@swin.edu.au

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Dr Elfriede Ihsen

Another familiar name to many around the University is that of Dr Elfriede Ihsen. Her professional expertise and interests are in the development of children who grow up under less than favourable circumstances, be it because they have a disability or because their family and community environment is non-optimal. She is also interested in services that support these children, families and communities.



Elfriede is working with the Department of Human Services - Eastern Metropolitan Region, the Family and Children's Services Department of the Shire of Yarra Ranges (SYR) and Child and is a member of some key regional child and family and early learning networks.

Her two major research projects involve designing and conducting an evaluation of the family service systems changes in Shire of Yarra Ranges brought about by a reform in child protection and family support services. A report of the first stage of this evaluation is to be released in March 2007. The second stage of this study is planned for 2008-9. She is also working with Anglicare Victoria evaluating the "Boys Will Be Men" Mentoring Program aimed at 9-11 year-old boys who are at risk of developing behaviour or psychosocial problems.

Engaging Students to Improve Higher Education Participation and Outcomes

This project aims to engage students as part of their core undergraduate studies in applied learning tasks with regional secondary schools in order to enhance their learning, contribute positively to innovative secondary school programmes and increase secondary school students' aspirations to undertake university study.

The Centre is also pleased to welcome Helen McKernan who anticipates bringing her experience in diversity research, indigenous and gender education to this project at Swinburne. Helen has a track record in innovation and entrepreneurial approaches that build strong and diverse learning communities. Her recent project 'More Bytes' linked girls in a remote Indigenous school to Victorian schools and Swinburne undergraduates in ICT and multimedia. The project networked girls across place, space and time to support innovation and change in IT education.

Helen has implemented collaborative action research projects in the corporate, government and educational sectors. Successes include designing a case study action research model that enabled Environmental Health Officers to more effectively transit the diversity of cultures they experience on the beat. She has also worked on challenging organisational dynamic projects with Victoria Police to increase internal understanding of systemic barriers to diversity innovation.

Helen's role in this current project involves establishing robust dynamic community based projects that link undergraduate students to secondary schools, community or business. If you are interested in involving your students in the LT project or have personal experience and insights to offer please contact Helen hmckernan@swin.edu.au tel 0414310438 or 92148660

Regional Skills Audit

Since the mid-1970s nearly all OECD member countries, including Australia, have experienced fundamental economic and social change which is manifested in a variety of ways, including rapid technological change, freeing up of capital markets and increasing overseas trade. Labour market changes have also been striking. In addition to increased part-time work and jobs that involve varying hours of work there has been an increase in casual employment. Over the last decade the Australian labour market (and that of most OECD nations) has experienced persistent levels of skill mismatches between employees and jobs or employers and persistent levels of skill shortages in many occupations and particular industries. These mismatches have impacted heavily on regions around Australia.

According to a recent report by the Centre for Regional Development, the region is showing progress towards sustainability but there are five areas highlighted for action, one of which relates to the regional economy. This report notes the high proportion of routine (process and manufacturing) workers to symbolic analysts or those who have the capacity to take part in the emerging "knowledge economy".

The need for a skills audit occurs in the context that today's dynamic workplace is characterized by technological advances, new management techniques and other changes which spell shifting requirements for workers, businesses and the community at large. In this changing occupational landscape, informed decision-

making requires employees, employers, and policy makers to consider occupational requirements in a new way, which requires a closer focus on skills.

The Centre for Regional Development is working with the three municipalities of the Outer East on a skills audit project that aims:

1. To determine whether occupations in the Outer Eastern Region of Melbourne have become more or less skill and knowledge intensive.
2. To define, measure and identify the skill-sets that are most prevalent in Outer Eastern Region of Melbourne's labour market.
3. To identify the skill-sets associated with higher wages and employment growth.
4. To forecast the skill-sets that are required by high growth occupations and industries in the Outer-Eastern Region of Melbourne.
5. To determine whether the region experiences a net loss of skill and knowledge intensity as a result of the types of occupations created and available in the region.
6. To investigate business and industry perceptions of skills gaps and opportunities

Project researcher **Rebecca Feldman** has a Degree in Psychology and is working in her immediate postgraduate year in the Centre for Regional Development. Rebecca can be contacted on 9215 7193, or mobile 0419 644 166.

Events

Are we fostering enterprising young people?
Student Aspirations in Outer Eastern Melbourne:

On 8 March, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ian Young and Dr Terry Stokes (Director, Office of Higher Education, DET) will launch the report of the Student Aspirations Project undertaken by the Centre for Regional Development in collaboration with regional secondary schools.

The Project surveyed 425 Year 10 students, undertook several focus groups and conducted an audit of enterprise programs in the region. The findings highlight some key concerns for Swinburne and other educational institutions in the region. The full report will be on the Centre for Regional Development website after the launch.

Town & Gown Free Lecture Series 2007

The first lecture will be held at Lilydale on Wednesday 21 March at 7.30pm in LC226. This is the Wal Elms Memorial Lecture which each year has a hospitality theme in acknowledgement of Wal's contribution to the hospitality industry particularly in the outer east.

This year's speaker is David McNamara, a chef of over 20 years experience who left a well paid job catering to the self-centred café crowd at Crown Casino to feed the hungry and homeless at St Kilda's Sacred Heart Mission. David works with a crew who have three hours to prepare and feed up to 400 people every day – his story of the volunteers, food donors and the mission is not to be missed. RSVPs to Sue Lester at 9214 5157 or slester@swin.edu.au

Conferences

MARCH 2007

13– 14 March, 2007

Community Engagement 2007

Citigate Sebel Sydney NSW

<http://www.igpc.com.au/cgi-bin/templates/genevent.html?topic=234&event=11819&>

APRIL 2007

20 – 22 April 2007

Campus-Community Partnerships for Sustainability

Second Annual Conference

Eastern Kentucky University, Perkins Conference Center, Richmond KY

http://www.ulsf.org/resources_events.html#dec06

MAY 2007

27-28 May 2007

Yapaneyepuk – coming together

A Conference with Associated Forums and Workshops to Celebrate and accept the Challenges of Indigenous Education

<http://www.cse.edu.au/>

28 - 29 May 2007

9th International Conference on EDUCATION
Athens Greece

<http://www.atiner.gr/docs/Education.htm>

30 May – 2 June 2007

"The Portraits of Tomorrow" - Landscapes, Learners, Leaders

The Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE)

[The Westin Edmonton](http://www.cauce2007.ca/)
<http://www.cauce2007.ca/>

JUNE 2007

13 - 14 June 2007

Focus Conference

Canberra

<http://www.aare.edu.au/conf2007f/nutshell.htm>

JULY 2007

2 - 4 July 2007

4th Annual AUCEA Conference

"The scholarship of community engagement:

Australia's way forward

Alice Springs Northern Territory

<http://www.apapdc.edu.au/aucea/>

8 – 11 July 2007

HERDSA 2007 International conference

Enhancing Higher Education, Theory and

Scholarship

Hilton Hotel Adelaide

<http://conference.hersda.org.au/2007/>

11 – 13 July 2007

National VET Research Conference ('No Frills')

Charles Darwin University, Alice Springs

campus, Northern Territory

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/events.html>

[#NCVER Research Forum](#)