A NEW CHAIR FOR THE VICTORIA UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Harriet Speed to the position of Chair, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Harriet brings with her a wealth of experience, both as the former Chair of the Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development Human Research Ethics Committee and as an active researcher in the School of Human Movement Recreation and Performance. Harriet commences her role as Chair in September.

Dr Harriet Speed

ICEPA TO EVALUATE REFUGEE BROKERAGE PROGRAM

The Institute for Community, Ethnicity and Policy Alternatives (ICEPA) has been commissioned by the Victorian Multicultural Commission to evaluate the Refugee Brokerage Program (RBP).

A project team, including Associate Professor Danny Ben-Moshe, Jo Pyke, and Associate Professor Michele Grossman will analyse the outcomes and processes of the Program and provide recommendations for its future structure and ongoing evaluation.

The study will involve a literature review, interviews with lead agencies, as well as focus groups and case studies with refugee participants. The final report will also draw on consultations with related service providers, including Local Government and other community support services.

The RBP is part of the state government’s Refugee Support Package and aims to create opportunities and address disadvantage for all Victorians.

Dr Jo-Anne Duggan, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the FAEHD

Factors Impacting on the Adoption and Operation of Corporate Governance Reforms in Australian State Government Departments

Avatar Project

Secomb Conference and Travel Fund Presentations 2008; Postgraduate Research Scholarships 2009; Sem2 Postgraduate Training Program

Warwick Hosking: Paper Recently Accepted for Publication

ARC Linkage (Round2) and Discovery Grant Timeframes for 2009-10

Workshop and Call for Papers
FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE ADOPTION AND OPERATION OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORMS IN AUSTRALIAN STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

PAUL RAMAGE
MANAGER, CORPORATE PLANNING BUDGET, PLANNING AND REVIEW BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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PAUL.RAMAGE@DHS.VIC.GOV.AU

Corporate governance reform is essentially concerned with changes to the structures and processes for decision-making, accountability, control and behaviour at the top of organisations.

Much research has been conducted into identifying what governance changes have occurred in public sector organisations over the past 10-20 years. Little attention has, however, been given to the way reform decisions have been taken, or how these decisions have been implemented and operated. Consequently, little is known about how corporate governance change is affected by environmental, organisational or other issues.

The major aim of this project was to identify and describe variables associated with corporate governance reform in Australian state government departments.

Paul found that the factors that impact on the adoption and operation of reform could be distinguished as rational/scientific factors and political/cultural factors.

Rational/scientific factors have a positive impact on the adoption of governance reform, in particular adoption was driven by external accountability factors, efficiency drive, compliance with regulatory requirements internal service coordination and organisation knowledge and skills. In particular CEO leadership was a major factor in the adoption of governance reforms.

The implementation of the reforms is particularly influenced by political/cultural factors that include organisational culture, the number of people involved, change fatigue and the hierarchal nature of the public service.

The research has implications for the ways in which reforms can most effectively be introduced.

AVATAR PROJECT

A. JOINT SUBMISSION WITH BURNET INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Avatar Project has been working in partnership with the Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health to propose a project for piloting HIV prevention/education strategies within the virtual world Second Life.

We have been working with Professor Robert Power, Burnet's Principal for Disease Prevention & Senior Harm Reduction Adviser, on a submission to the US-based amfAR AIDS research round. We have submitted a Letter of Intent, and a full submission will be developed if we are invited to proceed in September.

B. WORKING PARTY FOR PROJECT ON VIRTUAL & PHYSICAL LEARNING SPACES

Stefan Schutt, project manager of the Avatar Project, has been invited to join a Working Party for the Melbourne University-led Project on Virtual & Physical Learning Spaces. Stefan will be joining a Working Party looking at Fragmentation & Recombination within virtual worlds, and which will be convened by Leon Sterling, Director of E-Research at the University of Melbourne.

C. CONFERENCE PAPERS

Dr John Martino from the School of Education presented a paper on the Avatar Project's work in Second Life in August at the conference Social Inclusion and Exclusion of Culturally Diverse Communities: Strategies and Experiences.

The paper was titled New Worlds: Old Game: Aspects of the New Media and its Social Meaning.

Avatar's researchers (John Martino from VU's School of Education and Debra McCormick from Monash University) are currently working on a number of other conference papers and journal papers on the project including the VicHealth international public health conference ‘From Margins to Mainstream’.

D. MELBOURNE GRAMMAR YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE & CONCERT
A group of students from the secondary college we are working with (a school in the inner West whose students are generally disadvantaged, with many from refugee/CALD backgrounds) teamed up with students from Melbourne Grammar School for Melbourne Grammar’s "Framing the Future" Youth Leadership Conference, and in particular their "Make Poverty History" concert:


The convention was a three-day event focusing on the collaborative use of the virtual world Second Life, with events, presentations and activities organised for students and teachers to take part in.

Students worked in groups to create machinimas (movies made using Second Life or games engines) with other students from Australia, NZ, Singapore and Japan as well as teachers, educational experts and Second Life educational luminary Lindy McKewon, who led the group sessions. An example of one machinima is here:


The congress was a resounding success, as was the Melbourne Grammar concert collaboration. The Avatar Project has developed some close relationships with our school partners which will see more partnership activity undertaken in the future.

For more info on the Avatar Project, the site and blog are here:

http://www.avatar-project.org/

http://vichealth.wordpress.com/

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAM - SEMESTER TWO, 2008

The training program for the second half of the year has been released and some sessions are open for registration. For a full list of available sessions, and to register, please go to http://www.vu.edu.au/Research/Office_for_Postgraduate_Research/Training/index.aspx

WARWICK HOSKING: EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGY

PAPER RECENTLY ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION

Quitting smoking is a complex social behaviour of particular interest to psychologists. Tobacco control policies have been very effective in many Western countries, including Australia, but vary in their strength and level of enforcement in Southeast Asian countries, where smoking prevalence remains high. Dr Warwick Hosking is an early career researcher in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology in his first year as a lecturer at Victoria University. Warwick came to VU from being a researcher at The Cancer Council where he worked on a large project examining the influence of smoking attitudes and norms on smokers’ intentions to quit in two southeast Asian and four western countries.

Data from the International Tobacco Control Project (N = 13,062) revealed that, in general, smokers’ perceptions of anti-smoking norms together with negative personal attitudes towards smoking increased their intentions to quit. However, these norms and attitudes played a different role in different cultural contexts. For example, in Thailand perceived anti-smoking norms from significant others (e.g., friends and family) were not a factor influencing the intentions of Thai smokers to quit, but had a strong influence on Malaysian smokers’ quitting intentions. Warwick’s research...
will shortly appear in the well-regarded international journal *Psychology and Health* and is his first peer reviewed full length paper on which he is the first author. In conducting the research Warwick worked closely with colleagues from the International Tobacco Control team, which is a collaboration between several worldwide research institutions. We congratulate Warwick and see this as an important first step in a research career that will produce many influential psychological articles.

### ARC LINKAGE GRANT – LP2009, ROUND 2 TIMEFRAME

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<tr>
<td>Reviewing via Research Development consultant – Emeritus Professor Alan Johnson</td>
<td>Wednesday, 24 September, 2008 (A complete application is required for Emeritus Prof A Johnson)</td>
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<td>Reviewing via an approved reader program within your Faculty - check with your Faculty Associate Dean (Research &amp; Research Training)</td>
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<td>Reviewing among your peers.</td>
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<td>Face to Face Feedback with Emeritus Professor Alan Johnson (30 minute sessions)</td>
<td>OIR for organising date and time Thursday, 9 October 2008 &amp; Friday, 10 October, 2008</td>
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<td>Closing date for eligibility ruling and exemption requests, Round 2</td>
<td>OIR and CIs Friday, 10 October 2008 with the ARC</td>
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<td>Final Application submission</td>
<td>30 October, 2008 (A/Deans Res &amp; Res Training &amp;</td>
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### 2010 ARC DISCOVERY GRANT TIMEFRAME

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<td>Expressions of Interest (EOI) to be forwarded to the appropriate Faculty Associate Dean (Research &amp; Research Training) &amp; OIR</td>
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<td>EOI workshop with Emeritus Professor Alan Johnson – Research Development Consultant, Associate Deans (Research &amp; Research Training) &amp; OIR</td>
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Useful Information:

- **“How to get an ARC Grant” workshop presentation by Emeritus Prof Alan Johnson**
- **Associate Deans (Research & Research Training)**
  - Professor Gregory Baxter FHES
  - A/Professor Barry O’Mahony FBL
  - A/Professor Michele Grossman FAEHD

**WORKSHOP**

ISI will be conducting a workshop on "Management of Cynobacteria (Blue-Green Algae) in Inland Waters" on 15th September at Ballarat and 6th October at Wangaratta. Participants can choose to attend on either of the dates. Cost: $450 per person. Click here for more details: [http://isi.vu.edu.au/events](http://isi.vu.edu.au/events)

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**ACS APPLIED MATERIALS & INTERFACES**

Submit your papers now to the NEW international forum for materials science and engineering, coming January 2009. The new international forum for applied materials science and engineering. More info:

[http://pubs.acs.org/journals/aamick/index.html](http://pubs.acs.org/journals/aamick/index.html)

**THANK YOU** to all who contributed to the content of the Research Matters bulletin.