We are delighted to advise that Dr Gerard A. Kennedy, from the School of Social Sciences and Psychology, is one of a number of Chief Investigators named on a successful TAC grant titled “Optimising sleep in quadriplegia: mechanisms and management.”

The grant was funded to the tune of 4.9 Million with a further 2 Million promised over the 5 year life of the grant.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:
Most patients with quadriplegia have poor sleep quality which impacts on their daily functioning, quality of life and recovery from injury. This program will address how the sleep of people with quadriplegia can be assessed, managed and improved. We will use our unique national and international collaborations between sleep and spinal clinical researchers to systematically investigate the mechanisms and management of the major causes, develop novel treatments and translate that research into improved outcomes for the sleep problems in quadriplegia. The program will work with consumers, scientists and clinicians to ensure that this knowledge is translated into improved care. Both immediately after injury and in chronic quadriplegia the research program will investigate the utility of pharmaceutical and physical treatments. The anatomical determinants of sleep apnoea in quadriplegia will be explored using cutting edge, imaging technology and detailed studies of upper airway and pulmonary mechanics.

Good sleep is an essential element of a good life. Humans are asleep for almost one third of their lives, yet sleep in quadriplegia has received very little attention in research circles outside of Victoria. Our research group has previously characterised the sleep problems of those living with quadriplegia across the spectrum from acute injury to the community and demonstrated that sleep disorders impair daytime functioning and compromise quality of life. In Victoria we are now uniquely positioned to meet these challenges by creating new knowledge and developing innovative treatments which will yield dramatic benefits in functional and rehabilitation outcomes.

THE OFFICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STAFF HAVE MOVED OFFICES

The Office for Postgraduate Research (OPR) has moved offices to Building C, Level 3, Room C320, Footscray Park Campus. The office at its new location C320 Footscray Park will re-open on Monday 2nd March, 2009 for normal business.

For any urgent matters during office closure, supervisors and students should contact their FAO for assistance.

- Elizabeth Smith (HES) 9919 4228
- Grace Schirripa (AEHD) 9919 2127
- Anne Hicks (B&L) 9919 1549

OUTSTANDING DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Office for Postgraduate Research warmly congratulates Ms Gretel Taylor on achieving an outstanding result for her Doctor of Philosophy in Performance. All three examiners recommended that the thesis be passed without further corrections. Her performance and exegesis were titled ‘Place and the Moving Body.’ Her principal supervisor was Dr Elizabeth Dempster.
2009 RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP ROUND

The Office for Postgraduate Research would like to welcome the successful recipients of the 2009 postgraduate scholarship round. Two International Postgraduate Research Scholarships were awarded. The University has 20 new Australian Postgraduate Award holders, four of whom also were awarded Vice Chancellor's Top-Up scholarships and one of whom was awarded the Precilla Choi Top-up Scholarship.

For the first time the Victoria University Scholarships were opened up to include international as well as local applications. Twelve VU scholarships have been awarded. We look forward to meeting all the new scholarship holders as they enrol.

EDUCATION INVESTMENT FUND (EIF) ROUND 2

On 16 February 2009, the Deputy Prime Minister and Senator Carr announced the opening of Education Investment Fund (EIF) Round 2.

EIF Round 2 will be conducted within a short timeframe to maximise the opportunity to provide a much-needed stimulus to the Australian economy. This will be a single stage application process and priority will be given to projects which are ready to proceed immediately.

Applications must be received by Monday, 2 March 2009. This will allow successful projects to be announced in the 2009-10 Budget context.

JIM BOURKE’S AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR

One of our new HDR students received an AM in the Australia Day honours list. Co-supervisor Robert Pascoe cannot praise his new MA student Jim Bourke too highly. Bourke is as tough as teak, personally very charming, and a bundle of energy. ‘If Jim Bourke said to you, “Listen, Four Eyes, we’re going into that bushfire to rescue a few folks, right now!”, you would follow him anywhere.’

Bourke did two tours of duty in Vietnam and heads up a not-for-profit organisation called Operation Aussies Home, dedicated to recovering the bodies of the six Australian servicemen who were declared Missing in Action during that conflict.

Together with co-supervisor Dr Adrian Threlfall, Pascoe teaches a first-year unit on Australians at War. Part of their curriculum charts the shifting attitudes to Vietnam veterans as the anti-war sentiment of the late 1960s is relegated to history’s dust-bin. Their undergraduate students are mostly too young to remember the war, and the plight of the diggers returning from the jungles of Vietnam engages them at a profound level.

A key text in this story is Barry Heard’s evocative Well Done, Those Men, which does for these vets what Albert Facey’s A Fortunate Life did for the men who came back broken from the Great War.

This is the background for Jim Bourke’s work. At a practical level he has been fighting the good fight for the families of those six men left behind, against the opposition or sometimes the inertia of the defence bureaucracy. He heard of Victoria University because one of these family members, Christine Gillespie, has studied and taught here.

Bourke understands how his campaign fits a larger narrative of how a society got itself implicated in a dirty war and then turned its back on those warriors it sent to kill people in a distant land. This is the essence of his research – to document and analyse the challenges and issues thrown up in his persistent and patient campaign to win back those bodies, and to restore the dignity of the men he led in battle.

Four bodies have now been located and returned for burial in Australia; two others still lie in unmarked resting places in a foreign jungle, waiting for repatriation.

The training was sponsored by DEEWR and led by a team from The University of Pennsylvania. The Victoria University team along with 300 teachers from around Australia addressed educational strategies to develop and enhance the quality of teaching and learning engaging the principles of Positive Psychology in educational settings.

The Vic Uni Positive Education in Practice team have been invited to present their emerging research to the First International Positive Psychology Congress to be held at the University of Pennsylvania in June.

THE GLENCROSS MEMORIAL YOUNG SCHOLAR AWARD

Recently Mr Dawson Kidgell (PhD candidate in School of Exercise and Sport Science) and his supervisor Dr Alan Pearce attended the 9th Motor Control and Human Skill Conference in Hobart Tasmania. Dawson presented a paper entitled “Effect of Strength Training on the Cortical Control of Movement” in which he was awarded one of three student prizes in “The Glencross Memorial Young Scholar Award”. Dawson’s presentation will now be written up for publication in a special edition of Human Movement Science.

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