Senator Julian McGauran opened the Victoria University’s new Large Scale Experimental Building-Fire Facility at Fiskville, on Tuesday 14 November 2006 - the only facility of this type in Australia. The new facility was built with $2 million of funding from the Federal Government, under the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative, a project funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Several demonstrations, including a display showing the severity and speed of fire development in a bedroom, were prepared highlighting activities and research projects undertaken by the University’s Centre for Environmental Safety and Risk Engineering (CESARE). CESARE is lead by Professor Ian Thomas.

A demonstration highlighting the research facilities at Fiskville.

The Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee plays a vital role in the University’s research by considering students’ proposals to conduct research that involves human participants. The VUHREC and its sub-committees review in excess of 250 applications every year. Five recently retired VUHREC members, including Dr Katie Hughes, Reverend Harry Kerr, Mr John Shaw, Dr Robert Smith and Associate Professor Ross Williams, several with over 10 years of service, were thanked for their contributions to the University during the recent Doctoral Graduate celebrations.

Senator Julian McGauran opening the Large Scale Experimental Building-Fire Facility at Fiskville.
Associate Professor Ross Williams, a recently retired human research ethics committee member with the Chancellor.

Doctoral Graduates Cocktail party attendees with the Chancellor.

OFFICE FOR RESEARCH: WELCOME TO NEW STAFF MEMBER

The Office for Research has recently seen the arrival of a Research Information Officer, Ms Cora Ng. Cora is formally from Monash University where she was an administrative assistant. Cora will be providing invaluable assistance in research data collation and reporting, and website administration.

PROFESSOR JOHN HOUGHTON: THE IMPACTS OF OPEN ACCESS

There is worldwide interest in Open Access to research data and scientific publications, with a number of institutions (such as the US National Institutes of Health and Wellcome Trust) and government research councils (such as the Research Councils UK) demanding that findings from the research they fund be openly accessible through subject archives or institutional repositories. As part of its policy development, The Department of Education, Science and Training recently funded a study led by John Houghton (CSES) to examine the costs of scholarly communication, explore the impacts and measure the benefits of open access to research findings.

The study, Research Communication Costs in Australia, Emerging Opportunities and Benefits, included three main elements:

• Cost estimates for scholarly communication activities, using a systems approach to estimating full system costs (including those relating to research, publishing and the research support infrastructure);
• Estimates the potential impacts of enhanced access on returns to R&D, using a modified growth model which introduces “access” and “efficiency” parameters into the standard growth model; and
• Preliminary cost-benefit estimates, comparing the costs of a national system of institutional repositories in Australian higher education against the benefits of enhanced access to higher education research.

The work broke new ground in moving the Open Access debate beyond costs and exploring the potential impacts and benefits. As a result, John Houghton was invited to present a keynote address at a JISC Conference at Keble College, Oxford in late September, with the work coming to international attention through Open Access News and The American Scientist. A summary of the report has since been translated into French and circulated by INIST-CNRS (Institut de l’information scientifique et technique). There was also media coverage in Australia upon the report’s release, including in The Australian and Campus Review. More recently, the work has been extensively quoted in the Productivity Commission’s report on Public Support for Science and Innovation in Australia, and has shaped their recommendations on Open Access. In turn, this support for the CSES report has been noted as implied Australian Government support of Open Access (e.g. Open Access News).

The CHTR is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Ashley Scott as a research Professor of Corporate Sustainability. Professor Scott, who has been instrumental in the design and development of the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre’s (STCRC) environmental benchmarking system, will contribute to the Centre’s research efforts in the area of sustainable tourism practices. Professor Scott’s position is funded by the STCRC.

As the current executive director of Earthcheck, a federally-funded cooperative research centre focused on sustainable development, Professor Scott has carried out environmental, social and economic sustainability work, the outcomes of which have been applied in over 30 countries. Victoria University welcomes Professor Scott and looks forward to an exciting collaboration over the next few years.

GRANTS SUCCESS

• Kevin Zhang and Stephen Gray were awarded a Smart Water Grant on “Guidance for the use of recycled water in industry” ($160,000). The project will be targeted at increasing industry acceptance of recycled water to reduce potable water consumption.

• Sue Dodd and Enza Gandolfo have just received project funding for VU of $20,000 from the Arts Victoria program: Arts Development for Communities for the project Op Shopping: More than Retail Therapy. This project looks at the role and impact of op shops in local communities. Our project will produce a range of creative research outcomes with a strong focus on community development and participation.

COLLEGE OF REVIEWERS FOR THE CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

Paul Hawking, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Information Systems, has been invited to serve on the College of Reviewers for the Canada Research Chairs Program. This program is a tri-granting program of the Government of Canada which provides 2000 excellent researchers in Canadian universities with salaries and support. It supports Chairs for seven year renewable terms and five year renewable terms to outstanding researchers and exceptional emerging researchers. Paul is a very productive researcher and this invitation is an indication of Paul’s high standing in his field.

CONNECT CP

Santina Bertone, Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) in the Faculty of Business and Law has been invited to join ConnectCP, the international who’s who of cultural policy. Connect CP is an online data base of cultural policy experts, researchers and policy makers. It is an international project initiated by IFACCA (International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies) and the Boekman Foundation of the Netherlands.
LIFE SCIENCE POSTER AWARD

Gerard Kennedy, School of Psychology, recently won the Life Sciences Award for his poster during Austin Health Research Week 2006, held in October. The poster details are: ML Jackson1, ME Howard2, G Kennedy1, P Swann3, RJ Pierce1, "The interactive effects of sleep deprivation and low dose alcohol on driving and vigilance".
1 Institute for Breathing & Sleep, Austin Health, Melbourne; 2 School of Psychology, Victoria University, Melbourne; 3 Department Road Safety, Vic Roads, Victoria, Australia.

GROW ME THE MONEY

Grow me the money is an initiative between VECCI and EPA aimed at increasing the environmental performance of small to medium size enterprises (SME’s). VU will be on the reference group for the Western Regions trials program and there may be opportunities for student placements or research around the effectiveness of these programs via the Grow me the Money program (http://www.growmethemoney.com.au)

KEY RESEARCH ARTICLES

Sharif Shuja, a Sessional Academic in the School of Social Sciences has published a monograph entitled “Japan’s Changing Security Policy: An Overall View”, which appeared in the Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, No.1, 2006 (published by the School of Law at the University of Maryland). He has also authored a research article entitled “The United States and India”, that appeared in the International Journal on World Peace, Vol. XXIII, No.2. 2006 (published by the Professors World Peace Academy, USA).

CONFERENCE INVITATIONS

Professor John Cary has been invited to be the keynote speaker for the Tenth Anniversary Conference of the New Zealand Landcare Trust to be held in Wellington 17-19 October. His paper is ‘Beyond environmental awareness: The next challenges for Landcare’.

Professor John Cary has been invited to attend the National Water Initiative Conference to be held at Parliament House Canberra on 4-5 December. The conference is sponsored by the Australian Government, the National Water Commission and the Australian Academy of Social Sciences.

Nalin Sharda has been invited by the Australian Academy of Science to attend the High Flyers Think Tank on innovative technical solutions for water management in Australia, The University of Adelaide, Monday 30 October 2006.

WORKSHOPS

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY & SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS WORKSHOP

The Alternative Energy and Sustainable Buildings workshop was held at Footscray Park on 30 October. There was good participation from VU staff as well as RMIT, Deakin and CSIRO. Representatives from the Department of Sustainability and Environment were also present as well as Mike Hill. The event was a good networking opportunity and at least one collaborative research proposal is being prepared for the State Government Alternative Energy Grants R&D scheme. Further follow up from the workshop is anticipated in the coming weeks.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

In November 2005, the Center for Water Law & Policy and the Texas Tech Law Review at Texas Tech University hosted an international symposium: “Precious, Worthless, or Immeasurable: The Value & Ethic of Water” (www.watersymposium.net). The program generated considerable discussion and debate over these immensely interesting and (as we learned at the symposium) rather controversial topics and, overall, was a fantastic success. Following numerous inquiries, and despite various obstacles, we have prepared the following symposium material: 1) a two-volume conference proceedings prepared by the Texas Tech Law Review (volume 1) the Center for Arid and Semi Arid Land Studies (volume 2), 2) a CD containing the material distributed at the symposium including many of the PowerPoint slides; and 3) video of the entire symposium on a set of DVDs produced by the Center for Water Law & Policy and TexasBarCLE.

For information on obtaining this symposium material, please go to: http://www.law.ttu.edu/lawWeb/centersprograms/centerevents/water/conferences/2005FallProceedings.shtml

UP-COMING CONFERENCES:

Materials Australia and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainable Materials in Construction (http://www.aasmic.org/) invite you to sponsor or exhibit at the Sustainable Materials in the Built Environment 2007 conference to be held at the Hilton on the Park Hotel, Melbourne 18 -20 February 2007. This Conference is a joint venture between Materials Australia and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainable Materials in Construction. The conference will cover materials, especially the new advanced materials and technologies that support sustainability in the building industry and will be aimed at the entire supply chain and in particular end-users.


VOLUNTEERING IN THE MUSEUMS SECTOR: INSIGHTS FROM RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This seminar is the first of a series of industry-based seminars designed to profile the applicability of CHTR research to industry. They provide an opportunity for industry to access the results of research conducted at the Centre and involve a mix of industry speakers as well as CHTR researchers. The Volunteers seminar highlights ongoing work in this specialist area by Professor Leo Jago, Associate Professor Margaret Deery and an international speaker Karen Smith who is currently spending her sabbatical as a visiting research fellow at the Centre.

SEMINAR DETAILS:

The Centre for Hospitality and Tourism Research, in conjunction with the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing & Museum Victoria will host a volunteer research seminar at the Melbourne Museum on Thursday 7 December 2006.

The seminar will focus on issues relating to the changing nature of volunteering in the cultural attraction setting. Speakers will include:

- Associate Professor Margaret Deery, Victoria University, Melbourne
- Dr Karen Smith, Victoria University, Wellington (NZ)
- Dr Leonie Lockstone, Victoria University, Melbourne
- Jane Humphrys, Manager, Volunteers, Museum Victoria
- Carolyn Meehan, Manager, Research, Museum Victoria

When: Thursday 7 December 2006.
Time: Refreshments from 5pm, Seminar start 5.45 pm.
Where: Melbourne Museum, Carlton Gardens.
RSVP: Thursday 30 November 2006.
Phone: 03 9919 4911
Fax: 03 9919 5278
Email: chtr@vu.edu.au

UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES


For further information please visit: http://research.vu.edu.au/calendar.php

THANK YOU: To all who contributed to the content of the fourth Research Matters bulletin.