



Intervention needed to prevent high incidence of obesity in children

By Tina Sorenson

Urgent intervention is needed to reverse an alarming incidence of obesity in Illawarra school children, some of whom are so large they need help to rise from chairs, a University of Wollongong study has found.

Research by a postgraduate member of the University's Metabolic Research Centre, Ms Diane Harland, also found abnormalities in the feet of obese children, which could be 'pads' of stored fat common in young children, or fallen arches from the burden of excess weight.

The study is believed to be the first in the world to examine how obesity limits mobility in prepubescent children. Its findings appear to support dietary experts who warn Australia now faces an epidemic of obesity, similar to that experienced in the United States.

Ms Harland, who conducted the research as part of an Honours Master of Science degree in the University's Department of Biomedical Science, said she was surprised to find that almost 15 per cent of the Illawarra school children who participated in the study were obese.

"And that could be an underestimate as teachers indicated many of the larger children elected not to come to school on the days the tests were carried out," Ms Harland said.

"What's really distressing is the number of obese children tested who had trouble getting out of a chair."

Ms Harland tested 431 Year 3 students from 18 randomly selected Illawarra primary schools.

The children progressed through a circuit of stations designed to assess their physical characteristics and functional capacity.

Height and body mass measurements were taken from the 8- and 9-year-olds to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI), which is currently regarded as a valid measure of obesity in



Research student Ms Diane Harland, of the University's Biomechanics Research Laboratory, has found abnormalities in the feet of some obese children.

children. Lower limb alignment and foot structure were also measured.

Functional tests included basketball throws, sit-and-reach tests, sit-to-stand transfers and vertical and standing long jumps.

Results showed that sit-to-stand transfer ability, jumping and footprint measures were significantly affected by obesity. However, upper body strength and power, and lower limb alignment, were unaffected.

"The study proved obese children as young as

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\$600,000 Laser Laboratory opens

A new state-of-the-art Laser Diagnostics Laboratory will bring new research opportunities and lucrative consultancy work to the University's Faculty of Engineering.

The \$600,000 laboratory, which opened recently, is believed to be the first in Australia with a full range of laser systems and the capacity to manufacture its own laser probes.

Commercialisation of the world's first two-dimension laser Doppler probe built by the laboratory, through the ITC Development Fund Program, will begin later this year.

Mechanical Engineering Discipline Leader, Professor Kiet Tieu, said the lab was the result of 15 years' development of laser expertise and theory by the Faculty.

Funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) RIEF grant and two University RIGB grants, the lab will add to the University's prestige and extend the Faculty's research into high-speed bearings for use in rotating machinery, such as gas turbines for chemical industry.

Professor Tieu said the laser systems could measure the velocity of air, oil, water and other elements with pin-point accuracy. Measuring blood flow through human veins and flow in the combustion chambers of engines were other applications.

The BHP Steel Institute has been using lasers from the lab to improve the performance of the steel rolling process at BHP Steel mills.

Bringing the world to UOW via the web

The eyes of the world are on the University of Wollongong thanks to a comprehensive range of on-line services introduced by the Academic Registrar's Division (ARD).

Monitoring has shown that universities in the United States and England, and Australian business and government, regularly access the University's on-line calendar, subject database and class timetables.

"All this reinforces the notion that people are looking at the University of Wollongong from far afield in a way they never have before," said Deputy Academic Registrar, Mr Bob Prater.

The Division also reported a boom in e-mail communication from students since the introduction of a web-based enrolment program last year.

The system created by a class of final-year computing students in 1998 was introduced last year for re-enrolling students. It affords greater flexibility to students whose travel and work commitments take them away from Wollongong to such far-flung places as Antarctica.

"The program was extended to first-year enrolling students for the first time this year as part of a complete overhaul of the enrolment process for the new millennium with very positive results," Mr Prater said.

"Emphasis on improved arrangements on the day ensured students completed enrolment as effectively as possible in minimal time with little inconvenience."



Honours Science student Jodie Dunn re-enrolled in a plant ecophysiology subject from Antarctica through the University's web enrolment program - one of a suite of successful on-line student services.

Mr Prater said on-line enrolment familiarised new students with the University's on-line services and reduced the potential for data entry errors and misunderstandings. Resources previously spent on clerical data entry were now used to employ student helpers to assist enrolling students in the process.

Feedback from new students showed 44 per cent took between one and two hours to complete the enrolment process, which involved collecting kits, receiving academic advice, attending information sessions, obtaining photo identification and

completing electronic enrolment.

Thirty-six per cent were on campus for more than two hours; 16 per cent for 30 minutes to an hour; and four per cent for just 30 minutes.

"Ninety-one per cent of students reported high levels of satisfaction with the academic advice they received on enrolment day," Mr Prater said.

"On-line enrolment and other services that we have begun to provide will be further enhanced and expanded this year to keep UOW at the forefront of this type of development in Australian universities."

Celebrating our Diversity

Stolen Generation Commissioner Sir Ronald Wilson released a policy encouraging racial tolerance and celebration of diversity at the University of Wollongong (UOW) on 9 March.

UOW's multicultural awareness program Surfing Diversity hosted a breakfast at Food Re-Thought to release the new campus Respect for Cultural Diversity Policy.

Sir Ronald shared leadership of the national inquiry into the Stolen Generation, an investigation of the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. He co-authored the best-selling report from that inquiry: *Bringing Them Home*.

The new policy explains that UOW seeks an environment where all cultures are respected and graduates and staff are equipped to engage in a world with increasingly open national boundaries. The policy is designed so all staff and students can enjoy and benefit from an environment free from all manifestations of racism, and one which values and supports cultural and ethnic diversity. It recognises racism is unacceptable and contrary to the University's objective of creating an environment which allows all students and staff to achieve their full potential.



Sir Ronald Wilson with Wollongong Aboriginal Elders Aunty Mary Davis (left) and Aunty Jean Morris at the release of UOW's Surfing Diversity Program

Sir Ronald highlighted in his speech his sadness for the full acceptance of his report, *Bringing Them Home*, after it was tabled in Parliament in 1997.

He said the refusal of the Prime Minister to apologise on behalf of the nation really exposed the poverty of the Government's response to the report.

"An apology is a 'heart' thing and it is there that healing must begin. Being torn from the bosom of a family tears the heart, and no amount of promises to address

material disadvantage can even begin to mend that tear," Sir Ronald said.

Sir Ronald was Solicitor-General for Western Australia from 1969 to 1979, and a Justice of the High Court of Australia from 1979 to 1989. He was Chancellor of Murdoch University from 1980 to 1995, President of the National Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission from 1990 to 1997, Deputy Chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation from 1991 to 1994, and President of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid from 1997.

A keen ecumenist, Sir Ronald has been active in church and inter-faith affairs. He was national President of the Uniting Church from 1988 to 1991 and President of the Australian Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace from 1991 to 1995.

Note: Since the launch, two further public lectures in the Surfing Diversity Program have been delivered.

United Nations Human Rights Prize winner, Sunila Abeysekera, spoke at the University on 29 March on the topic "The Female Citizen" and Senator Aden Ridgeway, a member of the Gumbayngirr people of northern NSW, spoke on 30 March on the topic of "Reconciliation: A Relationship in the Making".

Slippery slippers go under the microscope

Slippers - the footwear preferred by the elderly - could be causing the slips, trips and falls that are the major cause of injury-related death and hospitalisation of older Australians.

The guilt of the humble household shoe will be determined in April when 30 elderly women 'road test' two types of slippers on a variety of common floor surfaces in the University's Biomechanics Research Laboratory.

Safety harnesses will protect the women from injury should they fall during the experiment, which will yield findings crucial to the doctoral work of Biomedical Sciences and Metabolic Research Centre student Ms Bridget Munro.

It's believed Ms Munro's work could help reduce the nation's \$3.17 billion bill for slips and falls and contribute to the development of better footwear standards.

"In the Illawarra alone, falls account for 37 per cent of all deaths from injuries; 40 per cent of all hospital admissions from injuries; and 40 per cent of nursing home admissions," Ms Munro said.

"Next year, the cost to the region of slips and falls is expected to be \$238 million.

"One study in the Illawarra found 50 per cent of older people were wearing slippers when they fell. It's my job to find out if that's because they wear slippers all the time or because the slippers themselves are dangerous."

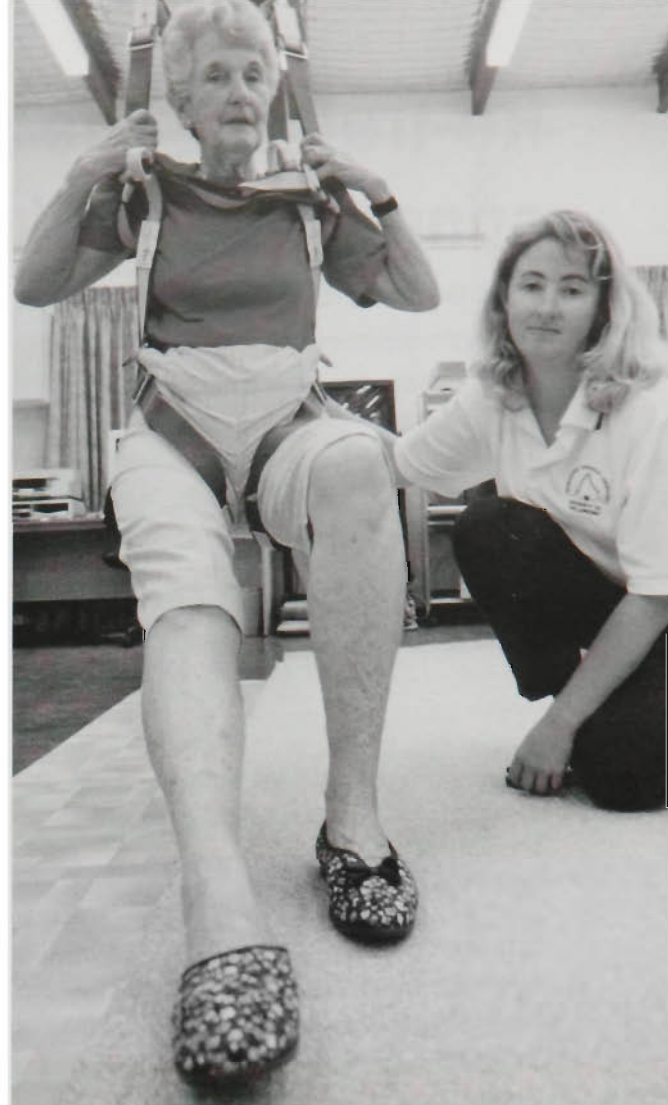
A survey conducted by Ms Munro in the Illawarra found older people favoured slippers because they are comfortable, inexpensive and easy to put on. However, such easy-to-wear characteristics, such as loose fits and slip-on styles, could, ironically, make slippers dangerous.

The walking patterns of older women with rheumatoid arthritis and foot problems will be tested. The study will also examine if fear of falling can cause changes in gait, which may increase the risk of a spill.

Ms Munro was interested in how her research could contribute to better shoe design.

"A South Australian study advised that knee-high Ugg boots were the safest shoe of all, however, they're not really practical because arthritic people find them hard to put on and take off," she said.

Women over 60, with or without rheumatoid arthritis, who are interested in participating in the



PhD candidate Bridget Munro (right) is testing the safety of the humble slipper, worn here by volunteer Mrs Enid Steele.

study should phone the University's Department of Biomedical Sciences on (02) 4221 3881.

UOW wins first licence for a foreign university in United Arab Emirates

The University of Wollongong has been chosen as the only western university in the world to be issued a licence from the Federal Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to operate an offshore campus in the UAE.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton, has described the announcement as a "major coup for the University" as the only foreign campus licensed to operate anywhere within the Middle East.

A special purpose-built campus will be constructed in Dubai and ready for student occupation in 2001.

The University of Wollongong, through its private company ITC, has been responsible for the running of a full offshore campus in Dubai in the UAE since 1993. It has been doing so in rented premises covered by a licence from the State Ministry of Education to conduct

courses as well as holding a trading licence from the Dubai Municipality.

The Vice-Chancellor said the granting of a Federal Government licence would have major implications for Wollongong's current operation in Dubai.

"As well as the construction of a new campus, we will be able to broaden the courses on offer and appoint more full-time staff. It will also mean expatriates will be able to stay on in the Emirates to do full-time study.

We expect overall student interest to grow rapidly because the Dubai campus now has the imprimatur of the Emirates' Federal Government," Professor Sutton said.

Past and future graduates will now be major beneficiaries of the new licence.

Professor Sutton said UOW got the nod because it met all the necessary higher education policies appropriate to the Emirates

which involved the University providing a development plan for its future presence in the area.

There is no doubt that the standing of UOW as Australia's University of the Year and the desire of the Emirates government to be involved with a university playing a major role in its own country aided our win. The quality of our graduates from Dubai will have also helped," the Vice-Chancellor said.

Some other western universities run MBA courses by distance education to the Emirates but UOW continues to manage the only offshore campus with about 400 enrolments in all courses.

The Dubai campus now offers international students, both individuals and corporations, English language training, pre-university short courses and a selection of UOW bachelor and masters degree courses. Students can transfer to Wollongong to undertake further studies.

Re-training the brain to prevent sports-related knee injuries

Could the brains of athletes be re-trained to reduce the incidence of one of the most common and painful sports-related knee injuries?

Award-winning PhD student Liz Cowling hopes the results of extensive testing in the University's Biomechanics Research Laboratory may prove just that.

The rupture of anterior cruciate ligament, which joins the thigh bone to the shin bone, crossing behind the knee, is one of the most common injuries in netball and all football codes.

It was this particular injury that ended Ms Cowling's representative netball career and sparked her interest in knee damage prevention.

The 23-year-old researcher snapped the anterior cruciate ligaments of both her knees in separate incidents and spent about six months in rehabilitation recovering from painful and costly surgery.

Research into the problem conducted by Ms Cowling during the Honours year of her Bachelor of Exercise Science degree recently won her a \$15,000 'young investigator' award from the NSW Sporting Injuries Committee.

The study, which examined the effect of upper limb motion on lower limb injury, was also short-listed for Best Medical Paper at the recent International Olympic Committee Medical Congress in Sydney.

It found that players who jump to catch a ball use their leg muscles in a less protective way on landing than when they're not catching a ball.

"Now, for my PhD study, we want to look at

whether we can re-train the leg muscles so that they can provide better protection to the anterior cruciate ligament during stressful activities such as landing from a jump," Ms Cowling said.

Hamstring muscles behind the thigh were important in providing extra support for the anterior cruciate ligaments. Typically, these muscles tended to be activated before muscles at the front of the thigh.

"If we can get the hamstrings to tense even earlier, these muscles can be called upon to better help out the anterior cruciate ligaments when they are under greatest stress and most likely to rupture."

The first experiment of the PhD study will see 18 recreational athletes tested in the University's Biomechanics Research Laboratory.

Once fitted with electrodes to monitor leg muscle activity, verbal commands designed to get athletes to 'turn on' certain muscles during play, will be given in a bid to over-ride learned muscle activity patterns.

"If we can retrain the brain, we may be able to get people to a point where they can protect their knees," she said.

Miss Cowling's supervisor, Biomechanics Research Laboratory director Dr Julie Steele, said her protégé's work 'could make a big difference' to people at risk of anterior cruciate damage, which could cripple sporting careers and threaten earning capacity.

The laboratory within the University's Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences was last year named Outstanding Achiever in Applied Sports Medicine by the NSW Sporting Injuries Committee.



Liz Cowling's work could potentially save sporting careers and reduce the nation's annual bill for costly and debilitating knee surgery.

Dr Steele, who won the Committee's inaugural \$25,000 FE Johnson Memorial Fellowship in 1998, said: "It's very encouraging that a non-medical research group is able to achieve a top award against a strong field of medically-based practitioners."

People interested in volunteering as a test subject or being involved in the project in other ways, should call Ms Cowling on (02) 4221 3881.

Thai Princess accepts doctorate and signs agreement with UOW

UOW's links with Thailand were strengthened further in late January when the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton, accepted an invitation from Thailand's royal family to visit the Chulabhorn Research Institute.

During a two-day visit to Bangkok, Professor Sutton visited the institute to learn about the important research conducted there before hosting a function for more than 200 Thai alumni at the Hotel Sukhothai.

Thailand's youngest Royal, respected scientist Professor Dr HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol, visited Australia to accept an Honorary Doctorate of Science and sign an Education and Scientific Agreement with the University of Wollongong on 16 December.

It was the first time Princess Chulabhorn has accepted a degree from an Australian

university and to agree to personally receive the degree was regarded as a major coup for UOW.

Princess Chulabhorn, is an internationally renowned research chemist and the founder and president of Thailand's Chulabhorn Research Institute.

Her Royal Highness met some of the University's leading researchers in the fields of smart foods, multimedia, intelligent polymers and environmental science, before signing an Agreement for Education and Scientific Co-operation between the Chulabhorn Research Institute and UOW. UOW is the first Australian institution to sign an agreement with the Chulabhorn Research Institute.

Almost 200 Thai students are currently enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the University -- one of the highest Thai enrolments in the country.



Princess Chulabhorn and UOW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton, after the signing of the agreement at the University in December.

Who's Afraid of Sharon Beder?

Ten years ago, some multinational corporations wouldn't have thought twice about using strong-arm tactics and threats to silence an outspoken critic like Sharon Beder.

Now they try to buy her allegiance.

Prior to the launch of a revised edition of her controversial book *Global Spin - the Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*, a certain multinational has offered Associate Professor Beder a position at three times her current salary. She refused the offer and declines to name the organisation.

"The modern corporation uses sophisticated public relations tactics and media manipulation to counter opponents rather than threats and intimidation," said Professor Beder, the head of the University's Science, Technology and Society program (STS).

"Although some corporations still use lawsuits to silence their critics, such tactics are likely to backfire and increase unwanted publicity."

Such observations of the way that companies with vested interests try to manipulate public opinion to counter environmental measures, form the basis of *Global Spin*.

The book has made Professor Beder an international figure in environmental politics and earned her the admiration of British playwright Harold Pinter and veteran Australian investigative journalist John Pilger.

A revised edition of the book, which sold out in Australia, was launched in Melbourne in March.

Excerpts of new chapters that expose Sydney's 'Green' Olympic Games as a 'PR and marketing sham', and criticise Greenpeace Australia of 'selling out', ignited debate when they were published in the US journal *PR Watch* earlier this year.

Suddenly, journalists and news organisations who had previously ignored the book were clamouring to interview Professor Beder. Then came a published and very personal attack on her character and motivation from one of the Greenpeace figures she had criticised.

"(The attack) did not bother me because it was completely untrue and I was able to show it was untrue and in very poor taste," Professor Beder said.

"That they had to resort to such a response shows they didn't have a good argument. It did them more harm than good as many people who read it asked how Greenpeace could be so tacky."



Head of Science, Technology and Society, Associate Professor Sharon Beder.

Professor Beder is anything but recalcitrant about her critique of the Green Games: "Nothing changes the fact that it's a PR sham to cover up that it's being held on a toxic waste dump that's never been cleaned up properly."

A trained civil engineer who completed a PhD in Science and Technology Studies from the University of New South Wales, Professor Beder said her desire to see justice served and truth told overrode her fear of personal retribution.

"Yet I wouldn't call myself thick-skinned; I do not have supreme self confidence, particularly when people write in harsh letters to Engineers Australia (for which she writes a regular column)," she said.

"While I want people to like me, I have to get over that and think about what's important. I can't say the things I say and have everyone like it."

Professor Beder's personal convictions have seen her speak out publicly against the 'hypocrisy' of politicians such as the Premier of NSW, Mr Bob Carr.

Her ire was raised earlier this year when Mr Carr, known for his concern for the environment, was quoted as being deeply concerned at the effect the world's booming population would have on the Earth in the new millennium.

"There is this tendency to blame population for environment problems and I think Bob Carr was doing that to divert attention from his own responsibility for environmental problems in NSW," she said.

"Cars are one of the key contributors to global warming but he's yet to put in place effective public transport systems. Since I've lived in the Illawarra the number of trains stopping at my local station have halved and the Labor Government has done nothing to rectify the decline of train services in some areas."

Professor Beder said critical thinking was the most important lesson she could impart to students.

"I am dismayed by the lack of critical thinking in the community in general, which tends to passively accept what it's told by advertising and political propaganda."

The mainstream Australian media could also do with a lesson in critical thinking: "I think Australian journalists need to investigate more and figure out the truth for themselves rather than rely so much on sources."

Critical thinking was also in short supply in universities, which were suffering from the effects of Federal Government funding cuts.

"Critical thinking has gone on the backburner to other commercial interests and education is becoming very vocational, which may be good for employers in the short term but is neither good for employees nor society in the long term," she said.

"Far too few academics are fighting this and putting up arguments against it. People in universities have become really demoralised by the funding issue to the extent to which the fight's gone out of them."

Professor Beder believes that if the world is to survive, society must overcome its slavery to economic interests and compulsion to consume goods and services.

Her next book will deal with consumption, the work ethic and employers.

"Work has become too dominant in our lives to the benefit of employers at the expense of the planet, families, communities and overall wellbeing," she said.

"We're producing these things we don't need to provide as many jobs as possible. The planet cannot support ever increasing consumption but the current emphasis on work gives little choice."

Yet despite all the world's problems there was hope, Professor Beder said.

"If I didn't believe there was hope I wouldn't be fighting for change."

Summer



1. University administrative trainee Sonia D'Ambra, received a bouquet from boyfriend Daniel Cuthbertson on receiving her Bachelor of Commerce degree.

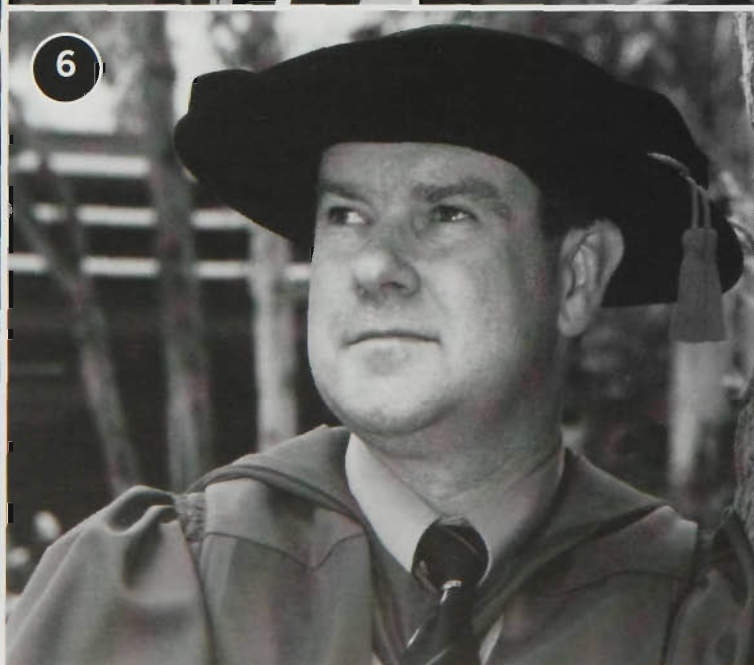
2. Former UOW academic and Southern Cross University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Barry Conyngham (right), returned to Wollongong to see his son Samuel graduate with Bachelor of Mathematics and Bachelor of Computer Science (Honours) degrees. Professor Conyngham, who has been appointed Head of Australian Studies at Harvard University in the United States, is pictured with his wife, Deborah, and UOW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton.

3. Another administrative trainee, Julie Wheway, received a Bachelor of Science Advanced (Honours Class I) degree.

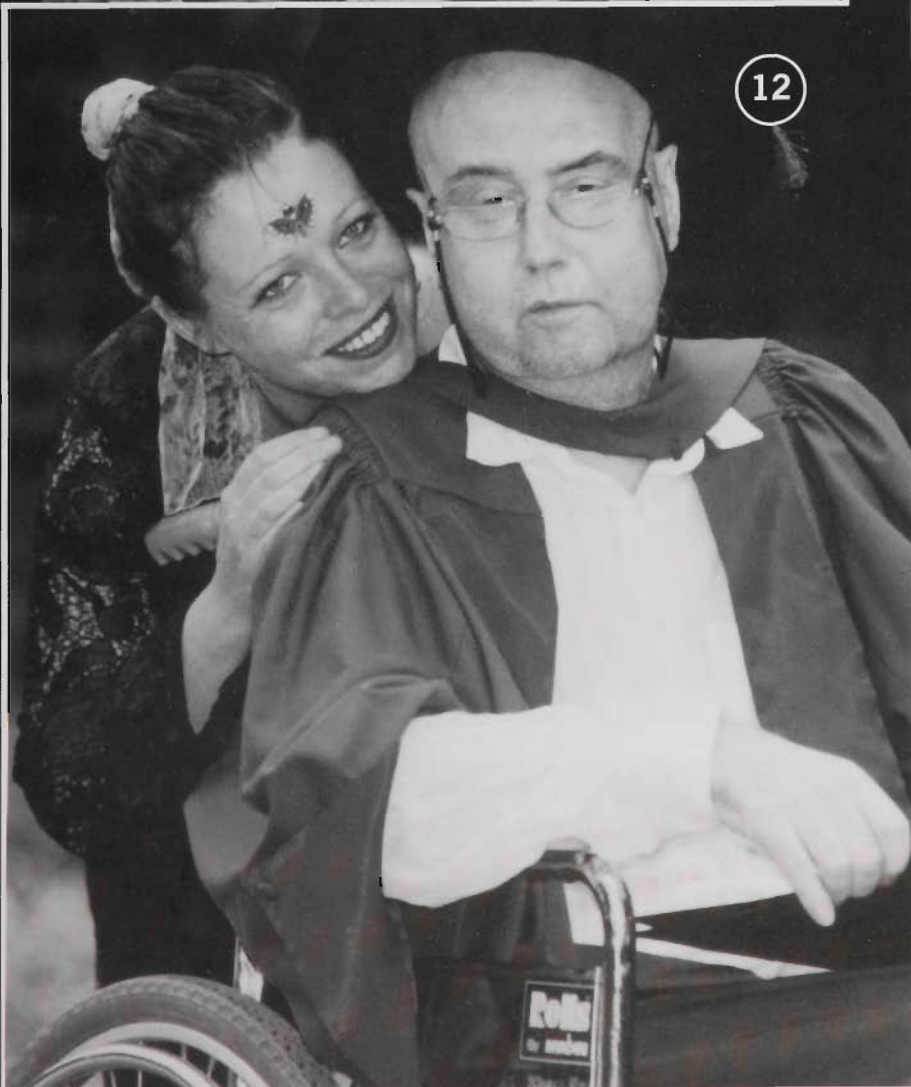
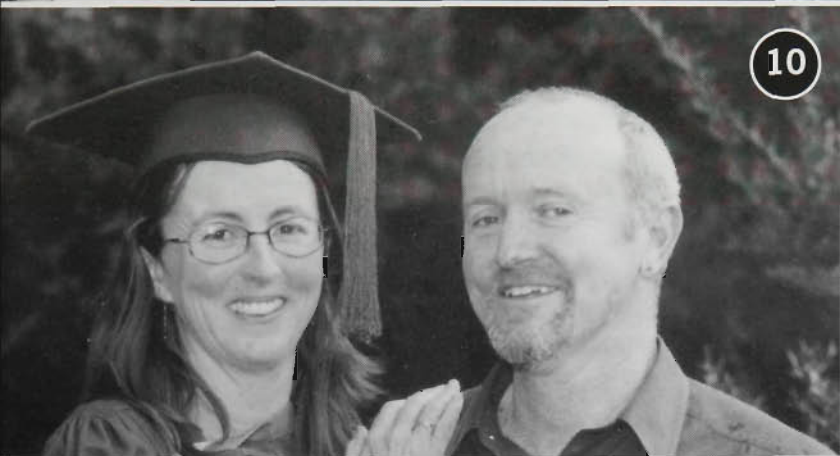
4. Social reform activist Ms Shirley Nixon delivered the Occasional Address at the Faculty of Education graduation ceremony. Ms Nixon is a fellow of the University and a member of the University Council.

5. NSW Police Service Acting Inspector Paul Scott received a Graduate Certificate in Management. The course, run in conjunction with the NSW Police Academy, taught about human resource management, information technology, management policies and service delivery.

6. Dr Richard Dwight, of the University's Department of Mechanical Engineering, was admitted to the degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) for his thesis entitled Frameworks for Measuring the Performance of the Maintenance System in Capital Intensive Organisations.



Graduations



7. UOW's former Vice-Principal (Administration), now Registrar at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Ken Baumber, congratulated his son Tristram, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in English and Creative Writing. Tristram is pictured with his brother Alex, father Ken, mother Ann and girlfriend Anna.

8. UniAdvice General Manager, Ms Robin Buckham, delivered the Occasional Address at the Faculty of Commerce graduation ceremony. Ms Buckham came to the University from Tubemakers where for 10 years she managed the Oil and Gas Pipe Plant. Prior to that, she was with IBM, and her first career was as an English/History teacher.

9. Dawn Whitby, a Professional Officer with the Faculty of Education, received a Bachelor of Arts degree.

10. Anne Marie Phelan graduated with a Master of Education degree and was congratulated by her partner Mr Martin Smith, the University's Careers Service Coordinator.

11. Bulli MP Ian McManus and his wife Dot watched proudly as their daughter Corrine graduated with a Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) degree.

12. Jazz composer and musician, the late Dr Roger Frampton, was awarded the degree Doctor of Creative Arts for his thesis entitled The View from Within, which examined co-relations between his composition and improvisation. Dr Frampton died at home in Wollongong in early January after battling an inoperable brain tumour.

Degree to meet shortfall of IT workers in new century

The University of Wollongong has risen to the challenge of the Internet boom by creating a new Bachelor of Internet Science and Technology degree.

More than 40 students have enrolled in the degree - the first of its kind in NSW.

It was designed to meet an estimated shortfall of 200,000 qualified information technology (IT) workers in the new century, as predicted by the Australian Information Industries Association.

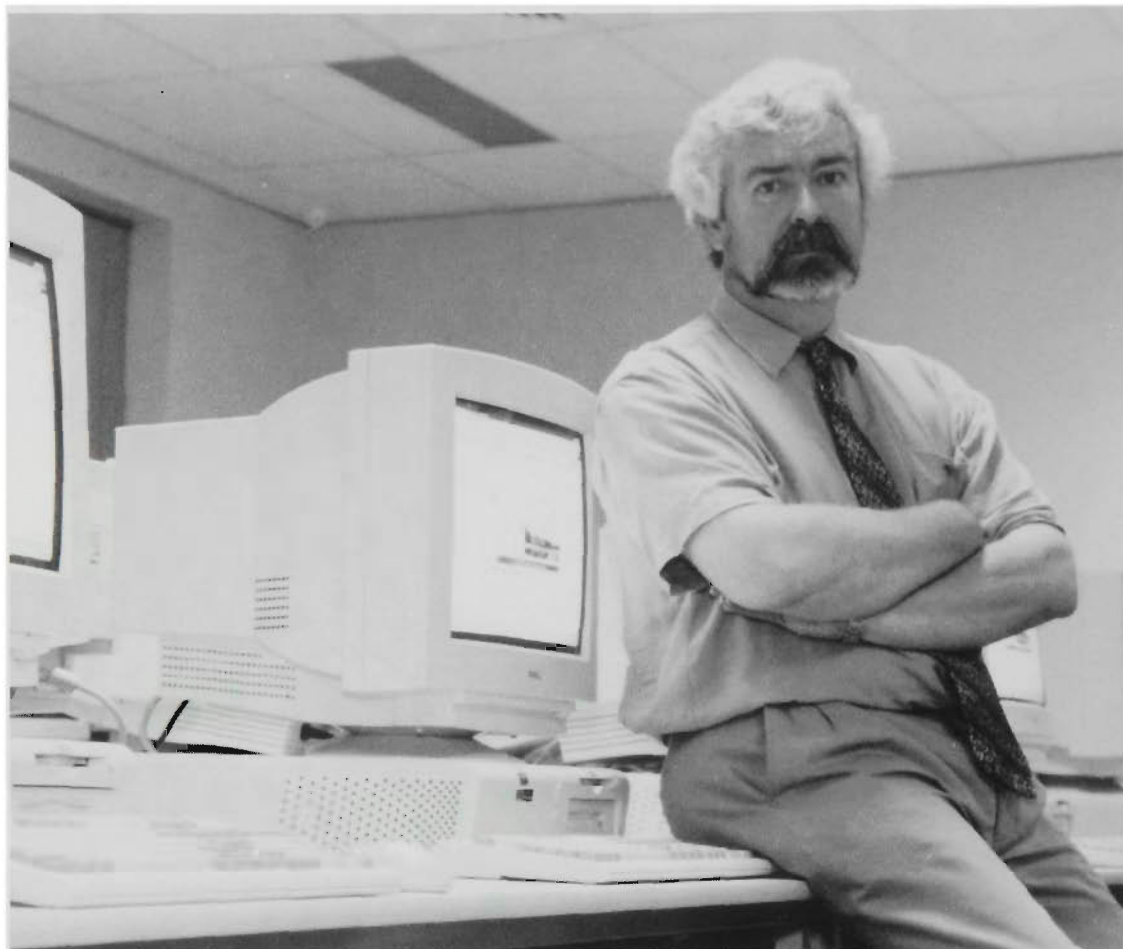
Associate Dean of the Faculty of Informatics, Associate Professor Graham Williams, said the course would produce graduates ready to work in the IT marketplace.

"We've done our research and know there's enormous demand for programmers and people who know the technical side of the internet," Professor Williams said.

The new course strives to ensure that the way students learn and work mirrors job conditions wherever possible.

Professor Williams said strong industry support and overwhelming interest from students indicated a successful future for the new degree.

It is unique in that it trains students in all aspects of Internet hardware and software.



Associate Professor Graham Williams in one of the new state-of-the-art Informatics computer laboratories.

Most existing courses produce graduates proficient in one area of expertise only. Professor Williams said a firm understanding of

Internet hardware and software was essential if IT workers were to keep pace with rapid technological change.

Scholars welcomed to new degree

The inaugural intake of students into the new Bachelor of Arts (Dean's Scholars) Advanced Degree have been officially welcomed to the University.

The degree for top Arts scholars is understood to be the first of its kind offered by a university Arts faculty in NSW.

It will enable some students to fast-track their way through a four-year Honours program in just three years. Many will opt to study second year subjects in their first year.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Anne Pauwels, said all of the 10 Dean's Scholars were viewed as potential Honours students.

The group, which included three mature-age students, had a proven record of excellence in one or more of the Arts disciplines.

All were very focused in their studies and had decided their preferred field of Arts study. Disciplines included Communication Studies,



The Dean of Arts, Professor Anne Pauwels (centre front) with the Dean's Scholars.

English, Politics, Sociology, History and Language Studies.

"Students have told us this is the type of advanced Arts degree they are looking for," Professor Pauwels said.

"Similar programs exist for Science students, but until now, there has been nothing like it for Arts students."

Individually tailored programs have been prepared for the Dean's Scholars, each of whom will be teamed with an academic mentor with expert knowledge in a student's chosen discipline.

A work placement program is being developed to add further depth to the degree.

See **Page 11** for a degree that is done via the workplace

Library wins Australian first in best practice

The University of Wollongong Library has become the first library in Australia to achieve a prestigious international best practice standard for the management and development of people to achieve organisational goals.

The Investors in People (IIP) standard, made under the auspices of NATA Certification Services International (NCSI), was awarded to University Librarian, Ms Felicity McGregor, by NCSI Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Sue Chapman.

Mrs Chapman said assessors had praised the University Library: "An evaluator who has assessed organisations in the UK and Australia, said the University of Wollongong Library was one of the most impressive organisations he had visited. Their planning, he said, is a 'work of art'."

Mrs Chapman said libraries today had double the challenges of most organisations. They had to grapple with changes within the business/operating environment and also with explosive changes in information technologies.

Ms McGregor said investing in training and development was a strategic decision, directly related to the Library's vision of becoming recognised for the provision of exceptional information services.



NCSI CEO Mrs Sue Chapman (second left) presents the award to University Librarian Ms Felicity McGregor, flanked by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Christine Ewan and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton.

"Staff skills, knowledge and attitudes are the foundations of a quality service," she said.

Library staff could feel pride in winning the award: "With all organisational achievements, it is not sufficient to only have good leaders and managers, we need staff who are motivated, willing to learn, flexible, knowledgeable and

committed - and we have these in abundance."

Ms McGregor praised the contribution of the Library's Staff Development Officer, Ms Lorraine Denny: "Lorraine works very hard to ensure we get the best value for our training dollar and that programs are related to achieving the Library's mission and goals."

Desktop scholars - a growing reality

Students and staff will have unprecedented access to the full text of more than 2,500 electronic journals through the University Library's new JournalSearch database.

JournalSearch also provides location information for the core print collection of 2,000 journals. Web links provide immediate access to the electronic titles.

University Librarian Ms Felicity McGregor said databases used previously gave citations to articles from many journals not owned by the Library.

"This was very frustrating for students who wanted to locate a useful article quickly, and not to be referred to another source," Ms McGregor said.

"Full-text databases alleviate this problem to some extent, as access to content is immediate. Purchasing access to these electronic collections means we can afford to make available a much broader range of journals than if we purchased individual print titles."

New databases this year include journals from

publishers such as Elsevier, Academic Press, ACM, American Chemical Society and Blackwell Science.

"Access to some collections is on a trial basis and we will be seeking feedback from staff and students in order to evaluate their usefulness and to help us decide which databases should be continued. Suggestions about improving content or functionality will be passed back to the suppliers", said Ms McGregor.

Ms McGregor is an executive member of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), which has taken a consortial approach to negotiating supply that has helped libraries obtain value for money.

"CAUL is responsible for negotiating pricing and licensing arrangements which are favourable to libraries. In a competitive market, publishers and suppliers are now more willing to listen to what their customers want," she said.

Access to electronic journals via JournalSearch is available to desktop scholars from any computer on campus and can be found on the Library's web page at <http://www.library.uow.edu.au>

Anyone who would like personal assistance in using databases, setting up alert services or any other assistance with electronic resources should contact Helen Mandl on (02) 4221 4176 or



The University's Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Christine Ewan; Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton; and University Librarian, Ms Felicity McGregor, at the JournalSearch display board in the Library foyer.

email helen_mandl@uow.edu.au

JournalSearch is explained in a display in the Library foyer, which gives interested people the chance to sample the service on the spot.

Conferences put Canada on the map in Wollongong

The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has given \$60,000 to support two international conferences and a proposed Canadian Studies Centre at the University.

The Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, the Honourable Gilbert Parent, made the presentation to the University's English Studies Program head and Canadian conference convener, Dr Gerry Turcotte, at a function in Sydney.

The University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton, attended the ceremony to accept a further \$20,000 in conference sponsorship from Nortel Networks' Asia-South Pacific President, Mr Reg Bird.

The Second Asia-Pacific Conference in Canadian Studies and the Biennial Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand, will run from 1 July to 4 July and feature filmmakers, artists, academics, politicians and experts in Canadian Studies from around the world.

Delegates will celebrate Canada Day on 1 July with a beachside fireworks display in Wollongong.

Dr Turcotte said winning the right to host the conferences was recognition of the University's excellent and diverse expertise in Canadian and Asia-Pacific Studies. "The conferences, held jointly under the banner of Renegotiating Identities: Canadian Studies in an Asia-Pacific Context, will allow us to



UOW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton; Head of UOW's English Studies Program, Dr Gerry Turcotte; Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, the Hon Gilbert Parent; Consul General, Canadian Consulate, Sydney, Mr John Mundy; and Nortel Networks Asia-South Pacific President, Mr Reg Bird.

develop and consolidate our existing expertise and attract grants, postgraduate students and visiting scholars to our dynamic campus."

Dr Turcotte hoped the conferences, for which more than \$100,000 in sponsorship has been raised, would provide impetus for the establishment of a Canadian Studies Centre at the University, a plan supported by the Canadian Government, which gave a seeding grant of \$15,000 to initiate the project.

Quebec-born Dr Turcotte, who would be the proposed centre's founding director, said interest from students in Canadian/Australian studies was growing. Past years had seen up to 70 students enrolled in a second year course in Canadian

literature, and more than 50 in a comparative Australian/Canadian literature and film subject.

Speakers confirmed for the conference include the University of Ottawa's Dean of the Faculty of Arts and General Editor of the New Canadian Library, Professor David Staines; and poet, critic and author Professor Roy Miki. Aboriginal writers and scholars Jackie Huggans and Anita Heiss will sit on a conference panel on Indigenous and Multicultural Issues. Sessions on oceans policy, law, migration policy and theatre are also planned.

Other conference sponsors include Wollongong City Council, Qantas and the Sydney Maritime Museum.

Intervention needed to prevent high incidence of obesity in children



A pedograph imprints showing the broader outline of an obese child's foot (right) compared to that of a normal weight child (left).

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eight are at a functional disadvantage when required to move their extra body mass against gravity," Ms Harland said.

Research has shown that obese children tend to become obese adults who are prone to a range of possible life-threatening conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes.

"Clearly, intervention is needed before the age of eight to stop these children becoming obese."

Head of the University's Biomechanics Research Laboratory and co-supervisor of Ms Harland's thesis, Dr Julie Steele, said:

"Diane's research has provided a broad foundation upon which we have been able to focus specific studies to examine in further detail problems caused by obesity in young children, such as changes in foot structure and chair rising problems."

Work would be done to determine whether irregularities in the footprints of obese children were the result of fat pads or flattened arches, and whether this further hindered the mobility of larger children.

Ms Harland can be contacted on (02) 4221 4480 for further information about the study.

South Coast centres receive first students

Almost 100 new students have enrolled at the University's new education access centres at Bega and Batemans Bay, and the soon-to-be opened Shoalhaven Campus at Nowra.

The University's National Recruitment Manager, Mr Canio Fierravanti, said he was pleased with the response, which confirmed the need for improved access to tertiary education in the areas.

"The support shown by the people of the South Coast is encouraging. We expect student numbers will continue to grow along with the reputations of the centres in those communities."

Coordinators for the centres and the new Shoalhaven Campus were appointed in January.

Mrs Gayl Vidgen will head the \$1.8million Batemans Bay Library and Education Access, which officially opened on 31 March; Ms Ann Montague will head the \$1million Bega Education Access Centre, which is expected to be



Ann Montague and Gayl Vidgen, coordinators of the University's Bega and Batemans Bay education access centres.

officially opened in May.

Meanwhile, the Head of the University's Graham Park Campus, Berry, Dr Ray Cleary, has been appointed Coordinator of the \$13 Shoalhaven Campus. The \$13million facility will be fitted out and ready for operation by mid-session break in April and is due to be officially opened in June.

Dr Cleary was recently named the Shoalhaven's Australia Day Citizen of the Year.

Appointments and citations

The University's Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), **Professor Christine Ewan**, has been appointed to the Federal Government's new Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC).

The appointment, effective from 2000 to 2001, was finalised by the Federal Education Minister Dr David Kemp earlier this year. The new committee will take a broader view of Australian higher education teaching development and will establish and strengthen international links.

It replaces the former Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD), which contributed to the quality of teaching in Australian higher education through its program of individual and organisational teaching development grants and its National Teaching Forum.

Professor John Rossiter, of the University's Department of Marketing, has been elected a Fellow of the American Psychological Association. The appointment was made in recognition of his career contributions to research into consumer psychology and advertising.

The world expert in advertising management is believed to be the first Australian marketing academic to be elected an APA Fellow.

Professor Rossiter, who is the most cited

marketing academic in Australia, joined the University last year as the nation's first appointed research professor of marketing.

The world's leading technology management journal, Research Policy, has recognised **Professor Paul Robertson**, of the University's School of Management, as one of its most cited contributing authors.

Professor Robertson, the co-author of two papers that have appeared in the journal since 1992, was one of few scholars world-wide to achieve more than one entry in this time.

He is believed to be the only Australian-based academic published in the journal.

Work to create a mobile robot that uses ultrasonic sensing to navigate its way through crops and recognise plants has won UOW researchers top marks at a prestigious European conference.

The paper by the head of the University's Intelligent Robotics Computer Laboratory, **Associate Professor Phillip McKerrow**, and his colleague **Dr Neil Harper**, was chosen as one of the 10 best presented to the Third European Workshop on Advanced Mobile Robots.

An extended version of the paper will be published in a special issue of the Journal of Robotics and Autonomous Systems.

Radical new IT masters degree

Workers in the rapidly changing Information Technology and Telecommunications (IT&T) industries will be re-trained at work as part of a radical new Masters degree devised by the University of Wollongong.

The new Masters of Industry-based Information Technology, launched by the University's School of Information Technology and Computer Science, is believed to be the first in Australia to offer industry-based delivery.

Managers at BHP Information Technology have endorsed the new qualification, which will allow workers too busy to undertake traditional postgraduate study to get their degrees at work.

Research, training and project work will be undertaken at the office as part of students' daily workload. The academic component of the degree will also be delivered at work, or in other convenient locations, as short courses.

The University's Chair of Software Engineering, Professor Peter Croll, said the new degree addressed shortcomings in education and training in the IT&T sector. It allowed workers to update their skills and advance their professional development in new software technologies without changing jobs. Professor Croll said companies would benefit by retaining more highly-skilled employees for up to two years - a long time in IT&T, where six-figure salary inducements were commonplace and staff had been known to leave after as little as three months on the job.

"The IT&T sector is a growth area with Australia having a current shortage of 30,000 skilled IT staff, predicted to reach 90,000 in the next three to five years," Professor Croll said. "This shortage cannot be satisfied by overseas recruitment since, for example, the United States alone is predicted to need a further 500,000 IT professionals within this period."

"Companies, professional institutions and government all recognise that they need to bring more of the current potential workforce into IT through basic training or retraining."

The Masters of Industry-based Information Technology (MIIT) offers specialisations in Software Engineering, Electronic Commerce, Network Security Multimedia and Information Management. Beyond this, Research Masters and PhD are possible as a seamless continuation also at work.

New courses offered in Malaysia

Students at Malaysia's Inti College, Subang Jaya, will now be able to complete UOW undergraduate degrees in Accounting and Computer Science without leaving the country.

The courses approved recently by the Accreditation Board for the Malaysian Ministry for Education for teaching at Subang Jaya, were introduced at Inti's Sarawek campus last year.

The Head of the University's School of Information Technology and Computer Science, Professor Joan Cooper, and Dr Robert Williams, of the University's Department of Accounting and Finance, travelled to Malaysia to launch the new programs.

The function was attended by the President of Inti College, Tan Yew Sing (pictured) and more than 60 other guests, including members of the Malaysian media.

Professor Cooper said the new Bachelor of Internet Science and Technology degree introduced at the University of Wollongong this year, might be introduced in Malaysia in the future.



The University of Wollongong's Professor Joan Cooper and Dr Bob Williams, pictured with Inti College President Tang Yew Sing.

UOW to host first SME conference of its type in Australia

The first Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) conference in Australia to bring together academics, business practitioners and an expo of SME facilitators, will be hosted by the University in June.

The International Business Research Institute and the University's Faculty of Commerce are staging the conference in collaboration with Telstra, several Illawarra business organisations and the Department of State and Regional Development.

The Institute's Associate Professor Charles Harvie said the conference would examine SMEs in East Asia in the aftermath of the Asian financial and economic crisis.

Almost 100 academics and 150 business people from Australia, Europe, North America and Asia are expected to attend the conference from 15 to 17 June.

The Faculty of Commerce is working to develop stronger links between academics and the Illawarra business community that may result in the establishment of an SME Research Centre associated with the University and an SME Support Network in the region.

A workshop was held at the University on 24 March to explore the value of establishing the proposed centres and possible activities that could be conducted by them.

An SME Support Network would help small firms better access the wide range of SME



SME conference convener, Associate Professor Charles Harvie, of the Department of Economics.

business support services and programs available in the region.

An SME Research Centre linked to the University would provide local business with access to international best practice information and the expertise of academics. It could also be commissioned to undertake special projects to add to the current knowledge base, for example, GST implications for Illawarra SMEs.

Fellowships scheme rewards innovative young scientists

In a bid to retain Australia's innovative young scientists from heading overseas, the University of Wollongong has introduced a new UOW Fellowships Scheme to ensure these researchers are justly rewarded and able to work on their own ideas.

The introduction of the new fellowships were formally announced at the University's annual Planning Conference held from 2-4 February. They will carry an annual salary of around \$50,000 which is higher than the usual postdoctoral awards. Recipients will be required to demonstrate that they will be undertaking innovative research.

UOW's recent PhD graduate, Dr Kirsten Benkendorff, who won the Young Australian of the Year science and technology award for her work with marine organisms, was the first person offered such a fellowship on 8 February. Dr Benkendorff has discovered a new antibiotic and, at the same time, help preserve a marine species. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Chris Brink, said he made the offer of the fellowship to Dr Benkendorff to ensure UOW - and Australia - did not lose somebody of her calibre. Professor Brink said there was a real problem in Australia with the employment of young scientists and that UOW was happy to take the lead in trying to turn this situation around.