Ian van Tets introduces one of the pygmy possums to its temporary home before relocating it to the Barren Grounds.

Pygmy possums go home

Ian van Tets, a doctoral student attached to the Australian Flora and Fauna Research Centre, released his experimental animals on Thursday, 25 March.

Mr van Tets has been working on the importance of pollen in the diet of small mammals and as part of his research has been keeping eight pygmy possums in the University’s animal house.

Mr van Tets came to Wollongong from Monash University in 1992 and has carried out his research under the supervision of Professor Rob Whelan and Associate Professor Tony Hulbert.

Because of work done by the Research Centre students, in particular by Ross Goldingay and Sue Carthew, it is known that the pollination of many banksia species is the result of small mammals rather than the more traditional birds and bees.

So Mr van Tets came to Wollongong to see what benefit the mammals were getting from the flowers in return.

In the first phase of his experimental work, he studied the diet of four native mammals in the field.

They were the Australian bush rat, the sugar glider, the brown marsupial mouse and the eastern pygmy possum.

He discovered that all four mammals had quite different diets, but that both the sugar glider and the pygmy possum ate a large quantity of banksia pollen.

In theory, pollen is very difficult to digest. It has a hard three-layer cell wall.

Continued on page two
Hands-on environmental education

Students in the Faculty of Education had a chance recently to try out their skills in environmental education working with students at Otford Public School.

Otford Primary is in a wonderful place for environmental education that relates to a natural setting.

It is a small, two-teacher school on the edge of the Royal National Park with only just more than 50 students.

The Principal of the school, Tracey Rea, was most enthusiastic about the involvement of the student teachers.

Ms Rea said she was keen to see the variety of approaches to environmental education and enjoyed watching the involvement of her students, including those in Kindergarten.

The Environmental Education subject is part of the electives for Primary, Early Childhood and Physical Education teachers.

Subject coordinator, Brian Ferry, said: ‘We always try to make our courses as practical as possible’.

The aim of the courses in environmental education is to use real situations by liaising with schools, companies and a wide variety of groups.

The lecturer, Neil McLaren, negotiated the visit to Otford. He is negotiating for the second session Environmental Education elective which will involve industry visits and briefings.

From this the student teachers will develop resources for school excursions to industries.

Mr McLaren said: ‘Our aim is to maintain a balanced environmental message that incorporates the theme of sustainable development.

‘Environmental education is about understanding the natural environment, and also about the human environment. People have to be thoughtfully involved in understanding a balance between the two.

‘This is where we as educators have a crucial role to play in the whole environment issue.’

Pygmy possums go home

From page one

While large mammals such as cows have highly adapted digestive systems to deal with cell walls, small mammals such as pygmy possums do not.

So, in order to test whether the pygmy possums get any benefit out of the pollen they swallow, Mr van Tets captured some pygmy possums and brought them back to the University.

The possums were housed in large enclosures in the animal house and maintained on a daily diet of muesli and dried fruit.

They were periodically placed in smaller cages and fed a diet that contained only one protein source – either pollen or insects.

Dietary requirements other than protein were not limited during these periods.

By analysing the nitrogen content of the pygmy possums’ faeces and urine, Mr van Tets measured the efficiency with which protein was removed from the pollen.

He found that pygmy possums could extract pollen protein very efficiently and that they were able to meet their protein needs from the pollen.

So, it appears that pollen is a major source of dietary protein for these animals.

In autumn and winter, when insects are scarce and flowers plentiful, pollen may even be the most important protein source.

This has several implications for studies of both the nutrition of small mammals and the pollination ecology of many Australian flowers.

How do the pygmy possums digest the pollen? and if the plant requires the pollen for pollination and its pollinators eat lots of pollen, how does this affect the plant’s reproduction?

On a more practical side, this information will also help park managers working with pygmy possums and similar species, to maintain their parks in a way that caters to the animals’ needs. In return for all this information, Mr van Tets has made the readjustment to life in the wild as easy as possible for his ‘assistants’.

They were released last week because the banksias were in flower and the weather was still mild.

The pygmy possums were released at the sites where they were originally captured.

Nest boxes and supplementary food were provided to help avoid competition and they have even been allowed to fatten up for winter before release.

All the animals weighed at least 10 percent more on release than they did when they were captured.

In order to determine whether the release was a success, the animals were marked.

The markings and other details have been left with the wardens of the nature reserve who will keep an eye out for the pygmy possums during their own survey work.
AIDS awareness week of great value

Handled in a sensitive and entertaining way, an AIDS Awareness Week on Campus brought into sharp focus the need for individuals to take precautions against the AIDS virus.

The week was organised by the University's EEO Office, Affirmative Action Committee (AIDS Education Sub-Committee) with the assistance of many groups and individuals on campus.

Activities included several performances of a topical and relevant play, 'All My Honey Sunsets', with Janys Hayes and students from the Faculty of Creative Arts, safety information sessions, Duckpond Forum 'Myths of AIDS', a hypothetical on 'Safe Sex, Whose Problem?' and the distribution of information by Clarie the Condom who wandered around the campus during the week.

More than $550 was raised which will go to the Positive Wellbeing Fund in Illawarra.

Wollongong appointment to quality panel

A researcher in the Faculty of Education, Dr Penelope Murphy, has been appointed to the panel of evaluators for the Australian Quality Awards.

The awards acknowledge outstanding achievements in organisation-wide implementation of the quality culture, and its direct link to productivity and international competitiveness.

The awards are on a par with the US Malcolm Baldridge National Quality Award and were introduced in the same year, 1988.

They are presented annually in four different organisational categories - large organisations, subsidiaries and divisions, medium enterprises and small enterprises.

The awards process is administered by the Australian Quality Awards Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation which is a subsidiary of the Australian Quality Council.

The foundation's strategy is to encourage organisations to use the awards' criteria and process for organisational improvement.

The assessment criteria are designed both for self-assessment by organisations and for external evaluation of award applications.

The panel of evaluators is chaired by John Lysaght and consists of volunteers with a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experience.

It is largely self-regulating, under the guidance of the General Manager, Board and National Council of the Australian Quality Awards Foundation (AQAF).

Evaluators donate their time and experience, and receive no fees. They are expected to have a commitment to the philosophy of quality management.

In return for their participation, evaluators can expect to obtain a clear understanding of the awards' criteria; knowledge that can be utilised within their own organisations; growth in knowledge of quality and its implications; access to a unique network of people and valuable experience in team building; good training in evaluation and diagnostic skills; and an opportunity to apply those skills.

Dr Murphy welcomes this appointment as she has a research interest in the interpretation of quality in the management of higher education institutions.

Involvement in evaluating organisations in other sectors, including the private sector, will provide her with insights into a range of different comparative cases.

Dr Murphy had training at an evaluators' conference of the AQAF in Melbourne earlier this week.

She is now attending two peer reviewed conferences in the United States. The first is the fifth International Conference on Scientometrics and Informetrics in Chicago from 7-10 June.

Her paper is entitled 'From Bibliometrics to Research Productivity Benchmarks and Self-Assessment'.

The second is the 10th Annual Conference on Assessment and Quality to be held in Boston from 11-14 June by the American Association for Higher Education.

Her paper is entitled 'Connecting Quantity with Quality Through Research Productivity Benchmarking'.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Robinson (front right), on his way on stage to introduce a performance of 'All My Honey Sunsets' in the Union Common Room. With him are Janys Hayes from the Faculty of Creative Arts, students Shannon Brewer and Tom Griffiths. At the back, Clarie the Condom.
Building and construction industry looks to Wollongong for training

Educational Media Services is undertaking a 12-month project to develop computer-based training modules for the building and construction industry.

The training material will be used on construction sites, under the wet day training agreements between unions and employers, at industry skill centres and at SkillShare centres around Australia.

There is also interest in the courseware being exported to Malaysia.

The training material will utilise a wide range of interactive multimedia techniques, for example graphics, animations, video, voice-over (in different languages) and text.

Interactivity will be included in the form of multiple-choice questions, clicking and dragging objects displayed on the screen and identifying items shown on building plans.

It is hoped to use the architect's drawings of the McKinnon Building to illustrate the exercises.

As well as being available in AutoCad format, and therefore readily input into the computer training packages, this building has a range of the features typical of modern city centre developments.

The first year's program is to develop training modules for 10 of the 49 units of competency making up stages one and two of the industry skills program.

If this stage is successful, it is hoped that continuing funding will be forthcoming so that the program can continue, ideally eventually covering all skill stages.

The funding is being provided by the Construction Employees' Redundancy Trust (CERT) and the project has the support of many organisations within the industry, including unions, employers, industry training councils and skill centres.

Geoff Hamer, from EMS, said that he proposed the project to CERT in May, 1994, and since then has spent much time responding to their requests for further information, most of which were focused on ensuring that the development had the support of industry bodies and would enjoy widespread use by them on its completion.

Mr Hamer said that as well as benefiting the construction industry and enhancing the University's reputation in the application of technology to learning, the project would fund the salaries of about four of the staff of Interactive Multimedia Production, the unit he manages within EMS, and thus help keep this valuable team together.

Engineer returns to training grounds for work

Former Wollongong graduate, Alan Hutton, recently filled the retitled position of Maintenance Manager in the Buildings and Grounds Branch.

This position was previously held by M.S. Wong as Coordinator Engineer.

In the early 1980s, while working with the Defence Department based at Garden Island, Mr Hutton was offered a traineeship that allowed him to study full-time at the University of Wollongong and gain his Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree.

Originally from southern Sydney, Mr Hutton has lived in Wollongong with his family for several years.

He said he is enjoying the range of opportunities the University presents to him to practise different skills and try out many theories.

Although his position is similar here to other maintenance engineering positions, he said the difference is that at the University the focus is not on industry.

'The rules are the same but there are some adjustments to be made to fit the University environment,' he said.

Mr Hutton said since returning to the University after graduating in 1983, the changes he has seen to the campus are 'unbelievable' and he looks forward to being part of the working environment that helps the University to be recognised for its beautiful campus and facilities.

Mr Hutton began at the University in April and is responsible to the Manager, Building and Grounds for maintenance, landscaping and site services.
The Environment Research Institute is continuing its collaboration with Vietnam on environmental issues and recently hosted a visit by six academics from the University of Hanoi.

This university is Vietnam's oldest and now is a component of their National University.

The group included a Vice-Rector (provice-chancellor), three deans, the professor, and a senior lecturer in Environmental Science.

The delegation was a follow-up to the successful visit to Vietnam a month ago by Wollongong academics working in association with the Environment Research Institute.

As well as discussions with appropriate people on campus, Director of Wollongong’s Environment Research Institute, Professor John Morrison, organised an extensive series of visits to sites down the South Coast and in Canberra, BHP, waste sites in Sydney and the Science Centre at Campus East.

The visitors were interested in inspecting teaching facilities for Environmental Science with the view to upgrading their own limited facilities, and to explore Australia’s response to environmental management and problems that may have relevance back in Vietnam.

Professor Morrison said: ‘The facilities for teaching in Vietnam are basic, although they do an impressive job with them.

‘By becoming aware of what we have here, they can select what to aim for back home.

‘One of their first priorities is to develop environmental legislation – which is nonexistent at the moment – so they can have some control of development.

‘Professor Martin Tsamenyi from this University’s Faculty of Law is looking at having some collaborative involvement in this process.’

It has been only recently that academics in Vietnam had opportunities to travel especially to countries such as Australia.

Professor Morrison is on the hunt for funding to extend linkages and staff and student exchanges with Vietnam.

‘Surfing the Intemet’ is a hot topic at the moment.

Nearly every paper and magazine on newsagents’ shelves has an article or comment, often inaccurate, about e-mail and the Internet.

A common theme in many of these articles is the fear that the Internet is male dominated, and that women may be too intimidated to get into this new communications network.

The Office of the Status of Women recently approached Professor Joan Cooper of the Department of Information and Communication Technology for statistics about the number of women using the Internet.

Unfortunately, Professor Cooper didn’t have any such information. Nobody does.

However Professor Cooper was intrigued enough to want to find out.

‘I got fed up with all the hype in the media about women not using the Internet, and being intimidated by it, when there was no evidence at all that this was true,’ she said.

‘We knew that many academic women were at least using e-mail, so not all women are turned off."

Professor Cooper and colleague Carole Alcock put together a small survey to get an idea of who was using the Internet, their background and age, and what they used it for.

Women and the Internet

This was posted electronically on several bulletin boards in various newsgroups in early May.

The survey was directed to women (although some men responded) and restricted to Australians.

They were surprised by the number of replies.

‘Within the first week we had more than 200 replies, and they are still pouring in,’ Professor Cooper said.

‘Unfortunately we made the mistake of not cross-posting it. This meant that some people got multiple copies and many of them responded, often quite rudely, to point out our error.

‘We did notice a big difference in the way that males and females responded.

‘Males were far ruder and often quite offensive, while women were more likely to respond politely, although still pointing out errors.

‘Although we haven’t quantified this difference yet, if men commonly reply so aggressively I can see why some women might feel intimidated.’

Many of the women who responded have requested information and feedback, commenting that they felt they needed some support.
Community support for top Geology students

The first School of Geosciences Prize Night on 28 April was a significant event. Apart from being the first prize night for the school which was formed this year through the amalgamation of the Departments of Geology and Geography, the support, in the form of the prize donations, received from industry and community organisations was tremendous.

The function was attended by staff, industry representatives and undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Geology Prize Night has been held every year since 1980.

The prizes were awarded for meritorious academic performance during the 1994 academic year.

Head of Geology at the Australian National University in Canberra, Professor Richard Arculus, gave an address on 'Secrets from the oceans revealed by the Ocean Drilling Project'.

Professor Arculus is an internationally recognised geochemist who has been a member of the Australia-Canada consortium for the ocean drilling project.

Australia contributes approximately $US1 million annually to the project and Professor Arculus gave an account of several examples of the major scientific benefits realised by being associated with the project.

Prizes were as follows:

• AIMM (Illawarra Branch) Geology Prize, Sabine Holt. This is awarded to the student with the best result in Geology. Presented by Mr Gary Gibson, Chairman of AusIMM (Illawarra Branch).

• Prospectors Supplies Prize, Sabine Holt. Awarded to the BSc student with the most meritorious performance in first year Geology. Presented by Mrs Allison Mc Ard.

• The Illawarra Prize in 1st Year Geography, David Jones. Awarded for best overall performance in 100-level Geography. Presented by Associate Professor Gerald Nanson.

• Foundation Prize, Stephen Barry. Awarded to the student with best overall performance in 200 level Geology. Presented by Dr Alan Cook.

• Ian R. McDonald Prize in Geology, Trevor Brown. Awarded for the best performance in 200 level Geology mapping. Presented by Dr John Pemberton.

• The Illawarra Prize in 3rd Year Geography, Suzanne Fyfe. Awarded for the best overall performance in 300-level Geography. Presented by Associate Professor Gerald Nanson.

• Geological Society of Australia (NSW Division) Prize in Geology, Craig Sims. Awarded for best overall performance in 3rd year Geology subjects. Presented by Dr Graham Carr.

• A.J. & I. Waters Prize in Geology, Craig Sims. Awarded for best overall performance in 3rd year Geology subjects. Presented by Dr Adrian Hutton.

• The CRAE Mapping Prize in Geology, (joint) Mark Murrie and Matt Imber. Awarded for the best 3rd year Geology mapping project. Presented by Mr John Terrill.

• The Illawarra Prize in 4th Year Geography, Sarah O’Brien. Awarded for the best overall performance of an Honours student in 1994. Presented by Associate Professor Robert Young.

• Merit Prize, (joint) Narelle Irvine and Jenny Hitchen. Awarded for commendable performance in Geology subjects. Presented by Associate Professor Tony Wright.

• The BHP Engineering Land Technologies Division Prize for Geographic Information Systems, Ingrid Wootton. Presented by Mr Craig Setter, BHP Engineering Land Technologies Division.


• The Spot Imaging Prize for Remote Sensing, Stephen Grabner. Presented by Mr Carl McMaster, Managing Director, Spot Imaging Services.

• BHP Steel Collieries Prize in Coal Geology, John Winterbottom. Awarded for the best academic performance in studies relating to aspects of coal or coal mining geology. Presented by Mr Phil Eade, Manager, Mining and Geo Technology Division, BHP.

National arts conference in Wollongong

A major national conference for staff and volunteers working in small public galleries will be held at Wollongong City Gallery from 6-8 July.

The organisers invite interested Campus News readers to attend.

The conference aims to assist arts professionals and volunteers working with their communities to achieve a clearer visitor focus and, in the long term, to offer a better, more relevant community service.

The key note speaker is the well known and much admired Professor of the History of Art at Sussex University, Tom Crow.

It is quite a coup to get this refreshing and controversial figure to Australia. His first appearance will be in Wollongong.

During the conference, six Australian artists will produce site-specific artworks throughout the CBD that will offer different focal points for discussion of Wollongong's history, industry, architecture, religion and environment.

For registration or further details contact Fiona McIntosh, conference Coordinator, RGANSW on (02) 358 2433 or Gina Fash, Public Programs, Wollongong City Gallery (042) 287 500.
Ron Pretty, from the Faculty of Creative Arts will be on the management committee of a new venture that puts readers of poetry in touch with writers. Called The Poetry Book Club of Australia, it will be in operation this year.

This organisation was set up in January as a new strategy for improving the promotion and distribution of poetry in Australia. The basic concept is very simple: four times per year, an experienced judge will select the best book of poetry to have been published in the previous three months. This book will then be mailed to members along with a newsletter letting them know what else has been published, along with reviews and interviews with winning poets.

The club – and the first book to be selected – will be officially launched in October at the Victorian Arts Festival. The club will be a non-profit organisation whose primary function is to promote Australian poetry and support Australian poets. The management committee also includes: Judith Rodriguez from Penguin Australia, Andrew Wilkins from Hyland House and representatives of literary magazines and poetry organisations.

Cost of subscription will be approximately $60 per annum. This will include a new book of poetry each quarter and a newsletter.

The book of poetry will be selected by an experienced writer or critic; varying the judge each time to ensure that all tastes in poetry are catered for. Books chosen will have significantly increased circulation and exposure.

The newsletter will list and promote other titles submitted, and carry interviews and information about the poetry scene.

Publishers have been invited to submit manuscripts of poetry books intended for publication before 30 September. All books of contemporary Australian poetry are eligible.

Readers wanting to join the club should send a cheque for $60, made out to the Poetry Book Club of Australia, PO Box U34, Wollongong University 2500.

Lorraine Davis and Jim Cotter have been named joint 1994 Sportsperson of the Year for the University of Wollongong at a Recreation and Sports Association Awards Dinner.

Lorraine, a runner, is ranked fourth in Australia over the half marathon and fifth over marathon distances. She is the NSW Distance Runner of the Year.

Jim is an ultramarathon and multisport events international champion.

Sporting Blues, awarded by University sporting organisations all over the world to recognise sporting achievement by students, are the most prestigious awards bestowed on outstanding university sports people.

For the 1995 Sports Awards, the committee decided to award Blues awards to: Leanne Wilford (athletics); John Forrest (cycling); Gaye Kolsky (hockey); Lucas Molloy (cross-country skiing); Brent Wilsmore (hockey); Bradley Wilsmore (hockey); Steve Webb (golf); Jeremy Smith (surf-riding); and Jenny Swainson (tennis).

Often referred to as Half Blues, Colours awards denote a high standard in sport.

This year, Bradley Kane (rugby) and Andrew Westwood (touch) were honoured with the award of Colours.

Club of the Year went to the Rugby Club who set high standards for success on the field and achieved these through a great deal of hard work and dedication by the players backed by a very proficient administration.

They have raised more than $25,000 in the last three years to assist in their dream of a club room and new change facility, and have been active with charity and community events.

Following the Rugby Club’s success, Club Person of the Year was jointly awarded to Paul Webb and Canio Fierravanti of the Rugby Club.

Teams who won gold medals at the 1994 Australian Universities Games were also recognised – women’s tennis, women’s hockey, men’s hockey, men’s touch and men’s soccer. The triathlon team were also 1994 AUC Champions.

The RSA could not function without the assistance of the University and its major sponsors.

Some of these were represented on the night. They included Mr Phil Diprose (NAB), Ms Mavis Smith (IMB) and Mr Oliver Tams (Student Travel Aust.).

The University was represented by Vice Principal (Administration), Mr Ken Baumber, and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Bill Lovegrove.
General

The Campus Alumni Bookshop will open on the second and fourth weekends of each month. Come and browse through a wide selection of preloved textbooks and fiction. Campus East, Cowper Street, Fairy Meadow (opposite Science Centre). All proceeds directed towards Campus projects. Donations of material are invited. Enquiries to Alumni Office, phone 213 249 or 291 951.

What's On

Long Gallery

Exhibition program for 1995:
Until 25 June: Mumblings – Patricia Prociv, Fiona Davies, Davida Wiley.

Scholarship for education student

Melinda Brown graduated Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Primary Education at the ceremony on 17 May and received the University Medal.

On the same day she was awarded a scholarship from the Australian College of Education (ACE) NSW Chapter which is awarded to outstanding graduates in pre-service education.

The award was presented at a ceremony in the Faculty of Education.

Stop Press

CONCERT

16 June
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Exquisite music and visual delights

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