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inside:

tricky toolmaking
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nanotechnology

planning ahead

scholarships target
skills shortages

UNE

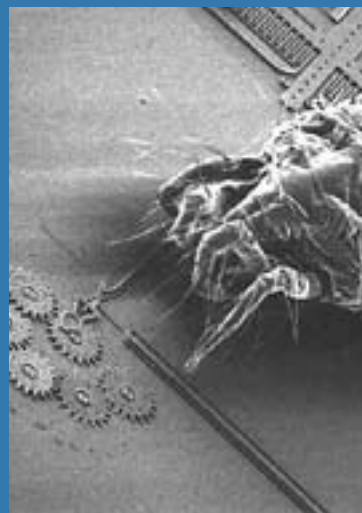
THE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW ENGLAND

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Planning ahead

A new scholarships program at The University of New England is targeting national skills shortages in nursing, law and town planning, among other fields

It's a familiar story in country towns across Australia. Kids grow up, move away for study and work, and as often as not don't come back. The slow exodus of young people from smaller towns to regional centres and big cities has left many rural areas with a desperate shortage of skilled workers. Nurses, teachers, lawyers, engineers and town planners are all in short supply in country areas.

A scholarships program at The University of New England is set to lure them back.

The program is part of the UNE Country Scholarships program, which every year provides more than thirty new students with a stipend of between \$5000 and \$10,000 to assist with their studies. The scholarships, which were introduced in 1999 by Vice-Chancellor Professor Ingrid Moses, are set aside for high-achieving students from country areas.

What makes these new scholarships unique is that they are mostly funded by rural and regional councils, and target specific courses in nursing, law, natural resource management, and urban and regional planning—the areas where rural towns are finding it particularly hard to recruit qualified staff. Some of the scholarships are given only to local students; others are available to students from country areas right across Australia.

The idea, according to UNE Fundraising Officer Lynn Briggs, is that students educated in rural and regional areas, such as New England, are more likely to return to those areas when they've finished their studies. According to Ms Briggs, the best way for rural communities to get suitably qualified people into those hard-to-fill positions is for them to "grow their own".

"Statistics show eighty per cent of those educated in regional institutions return to work in regional areas," Ms Briggs says.

"Our goal is to provide educational opportunities to kids in rural areas, which will then be an incentive for them to stay. We're providing loyalty to local employers and helping these kids to forge friendships and ties in the area."

A total of 16 donors are funding targeted Country Scholarships in 2006, several of

them two or three. Donors include Armidale Dumaresq Council, Inverell Shire Council, and the Vincent Fairfax Foundation, which is providing a total of \$1 million over 10 years.

Dubbo Council is another donor; it wants to grow its own town planners. Despite high salaries and attractive fringe benefits, 16 per cent of planning positions nationwide are going unfilled. The situation in rural areas is even worse.

"The problem is that town planning just isn't a very sexy job," says Ashley Albury, Dubbo's town planner.

"Nobody wakes up in the morning and says, 'I want to be a town planner.'" The problem, he says, is exacerbated in country areas, because council planners are being poached by private firms from the city.

Dubbo Council is funding two scholarships in urban and regional planning, each worth \$5000 per year for the duration of the degree. Mr Albury says he suggested offering the scholarships through UNE because of its excellent reputation for external studies and because, as a UNE alumnus, he knew the scholarship recipients would be getting a sound education.

"We hope that if we can find someone good we can get them down here and working before they've even finished their degree. That way they can finish it externally, while working at the same time."

Inverell mayor Barry Johnston is another who has high hopes for the targeted scholarships program. His council is sponsoring scholarships in a number of areas, including nursing.

"We're aware that Inverell is below the state average for populations of young people aged eighteen to thirty-eight," he says. "These are the years when people tend to complete their tertiary education, and these are the ages we're

BIG PLANS: Second-year urban and regional planning student Sara Acker examines the lay of the land



endeavouring to build up, rather than allow to drift. The council sees these scholarships as a way to provide training opportunities to local young people, who will then hopefully stay in the area."

Amber Henry, a second-year nursing student at UNE, is the grateful recipient of a scholarship funded by Inverell Council. She says the program is "awesome", and that it "really takes the edge off buying text books and paying college fees and stuff."

"I am so for rural scholarships for rural kids. There should be more of them," she says.

So is she keen to return to Inverell after she graduates?

"Definitely. I already did a prac at the hospital here, and it was great. I'll definitely come back here when I finish."

Although the targeted scholarship program is still young, Lynn Briggs says donors are already seeing results from it, with many of them increasing their contributions as a consequence.

"The statistics themselves show us that kids educated in regional areas are more likely to stay," she says. "This program bolsters that, and convinces them that it's worthwhile for them to stick around."

The spirit of giving

Fundraising Officer LYNN BRIGGS describes the work she does for the UNE Foundation, and the benefits it brings to the university community . . .

Each year The University of New England receives sponsorship or donations from major corporations, regional businesses, industry bodies, local government areas, trusts and foundations, our alumni, and other individuals who are interested in supporting the work of the university.

In 2005 the UNE Foundation Ltd. received over \$500,000 in such gifts.

The Fundraising Officer, who is a part of the Development Office at UNE, works with these sponsors and donors, the volunteer board members of the UNE Foundation, and other interested parties in stewarding their gifts or setting up new programs that facilitate giving to UNE.

This is done in a number of ways. Each year the Development Office sends the University's Annual Appeal to its alumni and friends. This year we received many wonderful gifts. Some donations were larger (over \$1000), others smaller (one gentleman sends a \$5 note in a nice card). Regardless of the amount, each gift is important to the donor who sends it. We receive cheques with wonderful letters filled with memories of college life, or a favourite lecturer. Occasionally we receive photos taken 15, 20 or 30 years ago. Some donations come from

employees of the university who've quietly asked payroll to deduct an amount for deposit into the university's trust fund nominating an area that's important to them. Letters arrive without cheques, but to tell us that the sender is remembering the university in their will. There are those who write to say they wish they could give, or give more, but want to change their address details so that we'll continue to stay in touch with them.

We also steward the university's donors. There are events held in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and in our local communities. Donors and sponsors are invited and recognized. Each also receives regular reports or updates about their sponsored student or program. The Scholarship Award ceremony held on campus every Autumn is an opportunity to say congratulations to scholarship winners and it is also an opportunity for sponsors and donors to meet the recipients of their gifts. They travel to meet our new scholarship holders and join the celebration.



HELD IN TRUST: Fundraising Officer Lynn Briggs

As the holidays approach the Development Office would like to say thank you to those sponsors, donors, and volunteers who give so much to our university. We are grateful that the good work of our university is appreciated and remembered generously by our graduates, our co-workers (current and former) and our friends who have no connection other than their wish for UNE to continue and to prosper.

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Smoko for groundskeepers

Staff from the Schools of Professional Development and Leadership and the School of Education gave a morning tea in honour of several of the university's groundskeeping staff, who are leaving after many years of service.

Dr Bob Boughton, a Senior Lecturer in PDAL, said: "most of us over the years have come to know what a great job you do. You keep our grounds looking beautiful, making our working environment extremely pleasant. The parks and gardens are a credit to those of you who do the work. You also look after our buildings, help us when things break down or go wrong. The service we get is always friendly and it's a pleasure to have you as our colleagues and co-workers."

Falkus lecture on Thai terror

The Thai government's hardline suppression of a Muslim insurgency in the country's south has exacerbated the problem instead of solving it, a University of New England professor has argued.

Malcolm Falkus, Emeritus Professor in the School of Economic Studies at UNE, addressed the current wave of violence in Thailand's southern Malay-Muslim provinces at the university's annual Asia Centre Public Lecture, where he argued that the root causes of the unrest in the south have been largely misunderstood by the Thai government. The real causes, he said, were rooted at least as much in social and economic change as in an organized separatist movement or in radical Islamic fundamentalism.

First-year students published in international journal

Three first-year education students have demonstrated meritorious achievement by having their work published in Curriculum Leadership Journal, an e-journal with a readership of approx 25,000 in Australia and New Zealand.

The students were Sharon Lalor, Melissa Howarth and Louise Davidson.

The articles can be viewed online at <http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/>.



ALLIES: HR Director Kristin Adair, Vice-Chancellor Professor Ingrid Moses and NTEU Branch President Dr Rhonda Forrest sign the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter

Allies in the workplace

UNE has made a commitment to tackling bullying and homophobia

The University of New England has renewed its commitment to tackling bullying and homophobia through the launch of two initiatives at Booloominbah on Tuesday, December 6.

The Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter aimed at combating bullying and the establishment of an Ally Network to create awareness and equity for the university's homosexual community were the two initiatives introduced to the 60-plus people in attendance.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Ingrid Moses, who put the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter into motion by being the first to sign the document, also attended the launch, which included speeches by Catherine McConaghy and Don Hine.

The Ally Network initiative relates to both students and staff of the university, with the basic concept being that a student or staff who is informed about and sensitive toward issues affecting gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) staff and students identify themselves as an Ally and use this role to affirm the experience and rights of GLBTI people.

UNE's Senior Equity Officer Lyn Tucker believes that the Ally Network is a positive step for the workplace relations of the university.

"We know that there's a high suicide rate for young gays and lesbians," Ms Tucker said. "UNE, particularly in its role as a regional university where

minorities can feel isolated, needs to be inclusive and welcoming. I believe that the Ally network, which has already been successfully implemented in the United States as well as Australian universities including UWA, UQ, and ANU, is a step in the right direction."

Ms Tucker is also pleased about the launch of the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter, which seeks to stamp out bullying through education and legislation.

The Charter outlines types of bullying behaviour and managerial actions to be taken when bullying occurs.

This clear and definable literature is a step that Ms Tucker believes will have an impact on people who may be 'workplace bullies' without even knowing it.

"People are very busy at work and communication can suffer," Ms Tucker said.

"This can very easily lead to people not treating each other courteously."

"The important thing that this document does is outline what constitutes bullying and provides a legislative base for managers to draw on."

Posters that contain the literature for the charter are set to be distributed around the university via OH&S work groups.

"I would encourage all managers and staff to sign and display the charter," Ms Tucker said.



GOOD MEDICINE: Academics from Naresuan University, with Dr Jeanne Madison, Dr John Fraser and David Briggs

Thais get taste of Australian medicine

A delegation of Thai academics from Naresuan University has made a visit to UNE's School of Health

A group of eight Thai health academics has visited The University of New England for a three-week study tour. The purpose of the visit was to give the group a first-hand look at the Australian medical system, and to share strategies for rural health education, administration and practice.

The academics attended seminars at UNE and visited a number of rural health centres, including Tamworth Base Hospital, the Northwest Slopes Division of General Practice, and general practices in Manilla, Barraba and Bingara. At the conclusion of their tour, the Thai academics gave a presentation to a delegation of local hospital registrars and general practitioners about what they had learned.

The visit was the latest in a series of exchanges between UNE and Naresuan University. Earlier this year, two UNE academics visited Thailand to meet with academics and health officials, and to tour Thai health facilities. Last year, UNE hosted a visit to New England by 14 senior Thai health officials to discuss how the establishment of rural medical schools in Thailand is staving

a haemorrhage of doctors and health workers from rural areas to the city.

The experience in Thailand has been that doctors educated in rural areas stay in rural areas. Academics at UNE are keen to replicate that success with a rural medical school of their own, according to David Briggs, the organiser of the latest visit, and the Coordinator of Health Management and Gerontology Programs at UNE's School of Health.

"We're very interested in Naresuan University because they've demonstrated an innovative approach to rural health care with their rural medical school," Mr Briggs said.

"We believe that while the city-based medical schools offer good programs, the real success in the retention of rural medical professionals is achieved through rural medical schools. It's something we think Australia needs to be looking at very seriously."

Mr Briggs said, "From our point of view this visit is about promoting the programs of UNE and giving [the Thai academics] a look inside the Australian medical system. For them, it's a chance to look at what we've got here. In

addition to primary medicine, they're interested in health care management—which is an area in which UNE has a good deal of expertise—to address some of the challenges they face in their system."

Mr Briggs acknowledged the involvement of local health services in the visit, and said the success of the project had been made possible by the contributions of Dr John Fraser of Hunter New England Health and the New England Area Training Service (Dr Fraser is also an Adjunct Professor at UNE).

The leader of the Naresuan delegation, Professor Boonchob Pongpanich, said he and his colleagues had found the tour enlightening, especially the chance to see how Australia recruits and trains general practitioners.

"The medical system in Australia is far more advanced than Thailand in respect to family practice. At home, most young graduate doctors want to become specialists. They don't want to become GPs, but what we need is more GPs. We want to learn how the GP system works in Australia, in terms of the training, recruiting and retention of medical students and GPs."

PhDs struggle with caveman technology

A group of UNE academics was caught “knapping” at a recent stone toolmaking workshop

The “primitive” stone tools of our ancestors apparently required a lot of brain power to make.

A group of academics at The University of New England struggled to reproduce even the simplest stone tools at a workshop organised by the university’s multi-disciplinary Language and Cognition Research Centre. They were attempting to establish what sort of cognitive abilities were required to produce basic stone tools of the type used by *Homo floresiensis*, the hobbit-like hominid discovered by UNE researchers on the Indonesian island of Liang Bua. Some scientists have suggested that making such tools requires little more skill than that possessed by the average ape.

This was not the experience of those academics who participated in the workshop, however.

“It looks easy, but once you have the lump of stone in your hands, it’s very hard,” said Dorothea Cogill-Koez, a postdoctoral fellow at UNE’s School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures.

Holding up a jagged sliver of quartz, she said, “I’m really proud of this piece, for instance. It mightn’t look like much, but it’s actually quite sharp. It can even cut meat and noodles.”

Many of her colleagues – linguists and psychologists, PhDs all – were less successful, and managed to produce more bashed thumbs and sliced fingers than usable stone tools.

Their instructor, archaeologist Mark Moore, said it had taken him about eight years to master the art.

“You have to have a good understanding of geometry,” Mr Moore said. “You have to know where to hit, how to hit, how hard to hit, and you have to know which stones to use.”



ROCK SOLID: Archaeologist Mark Moore

“The people who have come to that conclusion [that stone toolmaking is not cognitively intensive] tend to be people who have never actually tried it for themselves.”

The hobbits of Flores were experts at striking flakes from stones, he said, and artifacts recovered from Indonesia showed they had “all the essentials of stone toolmaking down pat”. Comparisons with chimpanzees seriously underestimated the hobbits’ cognitive abilities, he said, as demonstrated by the difficulty today’s humans had in reproducing their tool kit.

“The people who have come to that conclusion [that stone toolmaking is not cognitively intensive] tend to be

people who have never actually tried it themselves,” he said.

Mr Moore has received an Australian Research Council grant to compare the stone tools of *Homo floresiensis* with those of Australian Aboriginals. Australia was only ever colonised by modern humans, giving him a benchmark against which to gauge the cognitive abilities of the hobbits.

So does he hold out any hope for our struggling academics?

“*Homo floresiensis* was much better at making stone tools than any of the academics that attended the workshop,” Mr Moore said.

“If they applied themselves, then maybe they could reach the level of *Homo floresiensis* in a couple of months. But they still have a ways to go, despite their PhDs.”

Looking back on the challenges

UNE's improved financial status, enhanced academic reputation

In her last ever Vice-Chancellor's Perspective, PROFESSOR INGRID MOSES looks back on some of the successes, and challenges, UNE has faced over the past eight years . . .

Over the past years I have frequently written about the challenges facing UNE in an ever changing higher education environment, and I have offered scenarios for discussion. With a new Vice-Chancellor coming in three months, no doubt his preferred scenario will be discussed, and the Strategic Plan 2006-2010 can be finalised.

With retirement now very close, I am frequently asked how I feel about my time at UNE. Despite disappointments, frustrations and the continuing financial struggles, I feel very positive. From the low in 1997 UNE has recovered and now

- Has a vastly improved financial position
- Has regained its academic reputation
- Implemented significant organisational change
- Made significant achievements in academic and research area, and
- Has a coherent and mutually supportive senior management team

Allow me to indulge in recapitulating some of the many changes which have taken place. Many of you were here, of course, and some of you were active participants.

Rationalisations and improvement of efficiency and effectiveness

Asked by Council in 1997 to slash \$7 million off the next budget, we immediately set to review all of our administrative areas, leading to downsizing, relocations, new organisational arrangements and appropriate budgeting.

The Faculty of the Sciences had already started combining small departments into multidisciplinary schools, and I asked all other faculties to follow suit.

They did, and on their own initiative, made more changes later on. The Faculty of the Arts never managed to integrate Music into one of the Schools – a task still on the agenda.

We started a review of all policies – most were too long, contradictory, or incomplete. This task needs to be done every few years, and recently our HRS undertook another review. We reviewed the committee system, organising them into Academic Board, University and Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committees. We more than halved the number of committees, changed the terms of reference, reduced the membership and made them more accountable. Again, this needs to be a regular exercise and our first review and reshaping has been followed by other adjustments.

We changed the relationship between the Senior Executive and Academic Board with responsibilities allocated to Senior Executives in their portfolio area.

UNE was like a small town and FMS needed to outsource much of the work in order to be cost effective. We supported this and it has worked well. More controversial was the phasing out of engineering. The Institution of Engineers Australia had been concerned about the viability of our courses and when they asked for substantial additional resources, the then Dean advocated closure. With the financial support of DEST students were relocated to other universities and we were able to phase out the courses in an orderly way. Modern Greek a few years later, equally unviable, and again with DEST financial assistance, was transferred to the University of New South Wales.

Early on we established a Low Enrolment Unit Policy and implemented it. In view of rising workloads this was necessary, and, indeed, we were years ahead of many other universities in this. This was part of our annual examination at the Vice-Chancellor's Committee of the viability of all units, courses, disciplines and schools.

Quality Assurance and Academic Initiatives

UNE used to have reviews, but they had fallen by the wayside. I initiated a policy for regular reviews of units, courses, Schools and Faculties, and we set to implementing it. Since then the policy has been modified, updated and will be changed soon again to ensure that what we hope to achieve through such reviews is achieved in a cost-effective way. We have tried, through Academic Board committees and policies, to embed quality assurance in our academic activities.

With many of my initiatives I used the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, first Sue Johnston, then Denise Kirkpatrick to draft policies, and Academic Board committees took them on board.

My concern that UNE add real value to students' experience at UNE prompted the development of Graduate Attributes of UNE Graduates and the WorkReady Program, the Vice-Chancellor's Student Leadership program, and my support for the New England Award, developed by Robyn Muldoon.

In our 50th anniversary year I established the UNE Country Scholarship Scheme for meritorious students from our region. With thirty new students each year, and funding of \$5000 for the whole course of study, it has become our flagship scholarship scheme and is widely known and appreciated in the schools.

In the teaching area we established a Teaching Development Grant Scheme for academic staff and teams and supported the activities of the Teaching and Learning Centre.

With Federation Fund money we established the National Marine Science Centre in Coffs Harbour, in partnership with Southern Cross University, and we have spent much time and energy on making it work. Our special thanks there are due to Garry Nehl, then member for Cowper, for getting the money, and to Professor Rod Simpson, the UNE academic initiator and founding director of the NMSC.

Challenges and successes

Innovation and efficiency sources of pride

We developed jointly two Strategic Plans, the first was over-ambitious, based on hopes in the first half of 1997, the second ambitious. We are able to chalk up many achievements, but other goals are only partially met.

The ranking for the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund demonstrates the soundness of the academic endeavours. But you will also have heard the warnings, and about the initiatives, of the Pro Vice-Chancellors (Teaching and Learning) and (International and Entrepreneurial). The Academic Renewal Program, led by Professor David Rich, will be supporting the endeavours of Professor Robin Pollard who is working with the Faculties in ensuring that we have relevant, attractive and challenging courses which are administered in a consistent way to be offered to international students.

Research and Research Training

The greatest challenges for us are in research and research training. Our contribution to the national research effort is very small, our research student numbers are declining.

In order to position UNE well, I used my Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Initiative Fund in the past five years for the establishment of Strategic Chairs. These were offered to all faculties and we have made some excellent appointments of professors who are providing leadership in their area.

The Institute of Rural Futures is the outcome of many months of discussion on how to strengthen UNE's position on rural and regional issues and to galvanise the expertise in various parts of the University. The Chair is being funded from my SIF.

In anticipation of changing government funding we concentrated research in research centres and changed internal funding, begun under Professor Brian Stoddart and refined and developed under our current Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development), Professor Peter Flood. Peter, when Dean of the Sciences was also instrumental in getting successful CRC

applications up – we have a proud record for the Beef CRC which has gone through three re-iterations, a new Sheep CRC, a new Poultry CRC, renewal of the Cotton CRC and our minor partnership in a few others.

Much research is carried out by PhD students and postdocs. We reviewed guidelines for PhD supervisors and for students, established minimum entitlements for students, and supported UNEPA in moving into the Black Rose. As we had hardly any postdocs, I established a Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme, and again, a dozen or so first class young researchers were appointed.

Outreach

UNE had had a wonderful reputation in New England, but much of it was lost during the amalgamation and dis-amalgamation period.

I therefore tried to connect with local governments and schools in the region. We established a UNE Tamworth Centre, followed by DEST funded access centres in the region. We received a lot of money from the Commonwealth, and a lot of kudos for this. The centres in the region, and in Taree are variably used, but all are well equipped. The original concept paper for DEST funding was drafted by Dr John Kleeman, and Mike Quinlan and his team did a wonderful job in fitting them out. We appointed a community liaison officer and co-ordinator to ensure we have our finger on the pulse of community concerns and needs.

Several times I have visited the schools in our region and spoken to students in grades 10, 11 and 12, their teachers and principals. On the last trips I was accompanied by UNE Country Scholarship students from the area and a School Liaison Officer – we have appointed three very competent people.

UNE was not, so I found, represented on Speech Days in schools, and so we started offering prizes in regional schools, and senior staff regularly attend these presentation days.



To you, who will need to meet these challenges, my very best wishes. And my sincere thanks to all of you who are committed to UNE . . .

With the appointment of a fulltime Alumni Officer we have been able to hold alumni meetings in a number of Australian cities and establish chapters overseas. On the occasion of overseas visits I have met with alumni in London, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Vietnam and Suva.

Our international relations are important, and I established scholarships for students going on international exchanges, and gave financial incentives to our academics spending time at a partner institution.

We formed new partnerships: with the South Ocean Group in Wuxi, China, with Shafston International College in Brisbane, the Workers Educational Association in Sydney, with JMC and MIT in Sydney, the UNEIA in Sydney, and, of course, with TAFE.

We started fundraising in a serious way and established the UNE Foundation. Fundraising is a slow process, but we are making progress.

Particularly in the earlier years, I held regular strategic meetings with stakeholders in Armidale and Tamworth and with distinguished alumni in Sydney. My annual Town and Gown Garden Parties continued those interactions in a

social way. Through my weekly column in the Armidale Express and Northern Daily Leader I tried to portray to the public what we do, how we do it, what we value and celebrate, and our concerns.

Staffing Matters

We have survived two Enterprise Bargaining rounds and conditions and salary levels are competitive as I had promised they would be.

The EEO Committee has played an important role in the promotion of UNE as an exemplary employer, and indeed we received the award of Employer of Choice for Women. We supported and launched many new policies, most recently the Ally program and the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter.

At the suggestion of Steve Griffith, CEO of Sport UNE I funded the initial Healthy Lifestyle Program for all staff.

One of my Advisory Committees, the Indigenous Australians Access and Participation Committee supported an Indigenous Employment Strategy and the adoption of a Reconciliation Statement by Council, as well as faculty initiatives in the development of courses.

UNE already had a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and one for Research. I added an Award for Excellence in Service, available to general staff, and

an Award for Excellence in Equity for any staff. The latter two awards are presented in an Open Forum for all staff.

We revitalised Inaugural Lectures and invited the wider community to hear our Professors. While attendance has been mixed, I believe it important to have these lectures in town.

We all learn from our experiences, and so I copied good practice from elsewhere and started the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Directions Forum, held every semester for all Heads of Schools, Deans, PVCs and Directors. With a backlog of unresolved issues we started with two day meetings each semester and are now at one day. Each semester, too, I hold an Open Forum for all staff. These have been valuable sessions for me in terms of feedback, questions and suggestions, and I trust for the University community.

Again, copying my experience from the University of Queensland where I was an elected member on Academic Board, I host every year a Garden Party for Members of Academic Board at Trevenna.

Infrastructure

Our infrastructure was in great need of attention. Mike Quinlan produced plans on how to deal with huge deferred maintenance issues and costs both in the residences and on campus. We revised the master plan and, as the first project,

changed the central courtyard into the beautiful new area it is now.

We decided to sell Smith House and Lindsay House, which were deteriorating. But we resurrected the Newling Building and created with the help of the Friends of the Old Teachers College, a modern university and community music and arts centre.

My greatest pride, however, is Boolominbah – we managed the restoration with very little external funding and it is, once again, the centre and pride of the University, and indeed a tourist attraction. With the Booloominbah Collection opened soon after, there is now a beautiful and central place for various celebrations – graduations, scholarships, book launches, welcomes and farewells. The frequent weddings on the lawn are evidence of community appreciation of the building and its surroundings.

Less spectacular but very necessary was the upgrade of broadband and various computer systems. Graeme Dennehy can take much credit for this.

There is, of course, much more.

What counts is that we are in better shape now than in 1997, prepared to meet the challenges of the future. To you, who will need to meet these challenges, my very best wishes. And my sincere thanks to all of you who are committed to UNE and what it stands for.

Outstanding service recognised by V-C

HR manager, practicum coordinators and executive officer were among those to receive service awards

Professor Ingrid Moses has presented her annual Awards for Excellence in Service for the last time as Vice-Chancellor of UNE. Among this year's awards was a special one to her Executive Officer, Jenny Edmunds.

Professor Moses, who will retire from UNE in early January (when she will become Chancellor of the University of Canberra), said when presenting the award last week: "In my eight years plus as Vice-Chancellor of UNE, Jenny has been of invaluable assistance and has provided outstanding and exemplary service. She assists, prompts, encourages, sympathises, organises, supports, protects, troubleshoots, and mothers me."

"She is tireless in her pursuit of organisational efficiency and effectiveness, and of high standards in the

Vice-Chancellor's Office and in customer service," Professor Moses continued.

Debbie Wilkinson, Establishment and Recruitment Manager in Human Resources, also received a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Service at last week's ceremony. "Debbie has spent her entire working life loyally serving the University in a most dedicated and impressive way," Professor Moses said. "She is someone who has responded very well to the changes which the University has faced over the years – as evidenced by her willingness to take on different types of work during her time with the University."

"She is highly committed to her work, she is an excellent team player and leader, and despite a heavy workload, she is always willing to provide assistance,"

Professor Moses continued. "The loyalty and support she gives to her fellow workers is invaluable. The service she has given over the years to the University, and the goodwill this has created, are without measure."

The third of the Vice-Chancellor's Awards went to the three members of the Professional Experience Office team, which is responsible for organising and monitoring the "practice" placements of more than 1,000 student teachers each year. The three team members are Sue Haydon, Jenny Sauer and Kim Vallance. "Sue and Jenny have been working together as a team in the Professional Experience Office for almost 15 years," Professor Moses said, "and, with Kim Vallance's help in recent times, have given exemplary service to the University."

Campus hero receives award from governor

Earth Sciences technician David Keith received an award for heroism after saving a man's life last year

David Keith, a member of staff at the Earth Sciences Department at The University of New England, has received an award for saving the life of a man last year.

Mr Keith resuscitated an unknown man at Rockvale Road in Armidale in August last year.

Mr Keith, along with another man, received the Royal Life Saving Society's Certificate of Recommendation at a ceremony at Government House on December 6. The

Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, presented the award to Mr Keith. He, along with two guests, was also invited to attend afternoon tea at Government House.

Of the man he rescued, Mr Keith said, "I still don't know what happened to him, whether he lived or not. I'd love to find out."

"When I got there" he said, "there were people standing around, and they'd already had time to go to a nearby farmhouse and call for an ambulance." Mr Keith and another man worked on the victim for about half an hour before the man was taken to hospital.

Mr Keith learnt CPR in 1995 and had never performed it in a real-life situation

before. "It was just a case of getting on with it" he said, "I didn't have time to get nervous."

Mr Keith said that he knew the man was flown to hospital in Brisbane, where he apparently emerged from a coma and recognised his wife. Mr Keith has since heard that the man survived without brain damage and is doing well.

Mr Keith is a Technical Officer at the Earth Sciences Department at UNE. His work involves operating the X-Ray Laboratory at UNE. He is also the curator of the university's Mineral, Rock, Fossil and Drill Core Collection, which has more than 75,000 specimens, most of which come from the New England region.



HEROIC: David Keith

Giant veges invade UNE

UNE's annual vegetable growing competition is on again

The University of New England's Agronomy department has thrown down the gauntlet to other departments at the university and Armidale's general population to show them up in their own field of expertise by competing in the Annual Agronomy Vege Growing Competition.

The competition, which involves pumpkin, sunflower and zucchini growing, is set to breathe new life into vegetable patches around Armidale, ending with the weigh-in of pumpkins and zucchinis and the measuring of the sunflowers at the end of February.

The competition, which began as an in-house agronomy project in 2003, has opened up to the university and the wider Armidale community for the first time this year, and is expected to create some fierce competition and some suitably impressive vegetables by the competition's end.

John Stanley is the co-ordinator of this year's competition and expects it to attract a record number of entrants.



JACK 'O LANTERN: Agronomy's vegetable growing competition

"For the past couple of years the competition has basically been an all-agronomy affair and has had 15-20 entrants," Mr Stanley said.

"This year we've opened the competition up [to the public] so we expect it to be the biggest yet."

The idea to open the competition to the public has already created some interest with the Steiner school expressing their interest and requesting some pumpkin seeds to get started.

This interest is expected to grow, with the only rules of the competition being that all vegetables must be grown

in gardens within 50 kilometres of Armidale's centre.

An extra dimension to add to the excitement of the vegetable growing competition is its timing. The competition's completion is at a similar time to the Armidale show, so growers will have the extra incentive of entering their vegetables in the show on top of bragging rights around town for the competition's winner.

"Ideally, to get the biggest pumpkins possible by the end of February, you need to plant at the end of October and hope that you get no frosts," Mr Stanley said.

headlines

Science teachers needed

Some Hunter schools are seriously underperforming compared with their city cousins because of a lack of teachers, a national conference heard yesterday. A national survey of regional primary and high schools by University of New England researchers found teachers who taught maths and science were among the most needed.

Newcastle Herald, 09/11/05

Sociology under fire

Steven Thiele, convenor of the discipline of sociology, University of New England has published an article on the problems of the discipline of sociology in the October issue of Quadrant Magazine. Thiele says the common definition of sociology is the attempt to explain social life. He says most sociologists have actually been engaged in the study of something else: moralism. He says postmodernism, feminism and other disciplines have discredited major theorists, yet they remain prominent in the textbooks. He says sociologists are reluctant to remove these figures as they fear they will have to create a whole new approach to sociology.

Radio National, 07/11/05

Report: the other kind of country women's club

A total of 20 women contributed to a pioneering study of rural sex workers by Dr John Scott, from The University of New England's School of Social Science.

The report has opened a window on a world that still operates in the shadows but is growing strongly. Brothels have existed in many country towns for a long as anyone can remember, but Scott says a study of the classified ads in country newspapers over the past few decades show the mobile telephone and now the Internet have changed the nature of the world's oldest profession.

Sydney Morning Herald, 08/12/05



REDUCE, RE-USE AND RECYCLE: Environmental Officer Gavin Inglis

Getting our hands dirty

A waste audit has identified a number of ways UNE can get greener

Did you know that 15 per cent of the waste UNE sends to landfill each day is paper that could be recycled? Also that by recycling this material would divert 13.8 tonnes or 340m³ of waste each year from landfill?

A recent 'health' check of the general waste stream at UNE organised by the University's Facilities Management Services and supported by the Talloires Declaration Implementation Group (www.une.edu.au/talloires) showed that, overall, the University waste stream was in 'good shape'. The audit of the University's waste stream was conducted in August and provided a snapshot of the waste UNE sends to landfill each day.

The audit identified some opportunities where UNE could improve its current recycling system to increase the overall amount of waste going to landfill. It also showed other ways we could reduce waste to landfill by re-using material we sometimes throw out and by composting organic waste.

The table shows a breakdown of material collected during the audit by weight and volume. Some of the key points the waste audit highlighted are that:

- 29% of material (including cardboard, paper and glass), ending up in landfill, could be recycled
- 26% of material (including computer equipment) could be re-used
- 17% of material such as food waste could be composted
- Only 27% of waste material thrown out is non-recyclable/re-usable.

The university will now aim to:

- Reduce waste to landfill
- Improve its recycling system;
- Set procedures for waste disposal (general, green, hazardous, etc.)
- A university-wide education program
- Ongoing monitoring of the waste stream
- Communication of progress

| UNE Waste Stream | % by weight | % by volume |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Recyclable – cardboard | 4.5 | 9.9 |
| Recyclable – paper | 15.4 | 22.5 |
| Recyclable – co-mingled | 6.9 | 4.9 |
| Recyclable – other | 2.3 | 0.2 |
| Reusable | 26.6 | 8.6 |
| Compostable | 17.1 | 10.5 |
| Other | 27.2 | 43.3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Nanotechnology: good or goo?

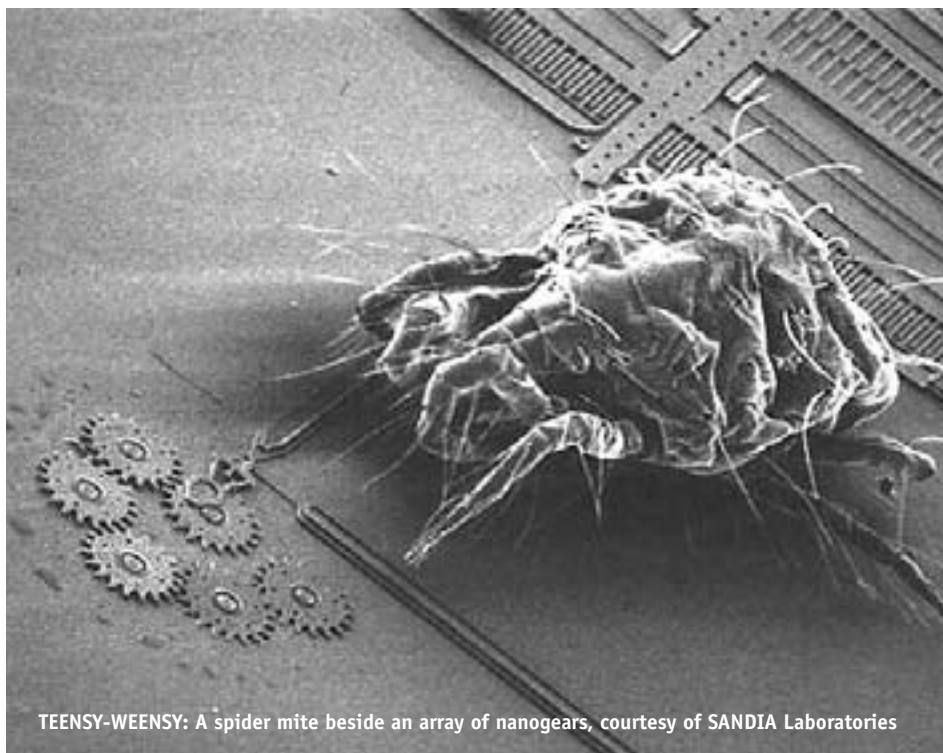
The pros and cons of nanotechnology were examined at PROF MAX GUNTER'S lecture

Some have claimed it will one day cure cancer, others that it will destroy the universe in a mass of grey goo. It is called nanotechnology, and Professor Max Gunter, a chemist at The University of New England, was talking about it at a public lecture held at the Armidale Town Hall.

In the lecture, titled "Molecular Machines and Nanotechnology: Hype Challenging Reality", Professor Gunter discussed the potential benefits – and pitfalls – of the emerging science of nanotechnology, which involves creating tiny, working machines only a few thousandths of a millimetre in size.

Professor Gunter said he chose the topic because while many people had heard of it, few understood what it was about, and that uncertainty had led to fear in some quarters. He attempted to explain nanotechnology in his lecture, and describe some of its positive and negative aspects, while also dispelling myths, including the "grey goo" doomsday scenario.

"Right now there are two trains of thought on the matter. One approach is very gung-ho about developing nanotechnology. The other side is worried about issues such as self-replication and this virus-like capacity to expand and somehow take over the world."



TEENSY-WEENSY: A spider mite beside an array of nanogears, courtesy of SANDIA Laboratories

Professor Gunter said that, despite these fears, nanotechnology had many positive uses, and was already being used to develop treatments for certain diseases.

"In biological systems great advances are being made in the ability to send 'nanobots' [tiny virus-like robots] into the bloodstream, that will home in on specific diseases, and can be programmed to seek and destroy specific cells," he said.

Such treatments might one day be used to fight cancer and AIDS, Professor Gunter said. This same technology could be used for evil, however, if it were to fall into the wrong hands, he said.

Professor Gunter and his students have been conducting their own research into nanotechnology at UNE, creating

nanoscopic components such as switches and "tiny motors, complete with wheels spinning around an axle". These components constituted a "shopping basket" of tools that could be used by nanotechnologists in their research, he said. He described some of this research in his lecture.

Professor Gunter completed a PhD in chemistry at The University of New England in 1975. After some years of postdoctoral positions in the UK, he spent seven years as a research fellow at the Research School of Chemistry at the Australian National University, before returning to UNE in 1984. He was head of the Department of Chemistry from 1994 to 1998, and has been the Convenor of Chemistry at UNE since 2001.

Disaster drill finds UNE well prepared

The disaster management plans of UNE and the Armidale region were put to the test in November

Staff were evacuated from Dixon Library as part of an emergency management drill designed to test the university's readiness in the event of a real disaster.

The drill involved university staff, as well as local police, firefighters and ambulance officers. A simulated gas explosion on the roof of Dixon Library provided the basis for the drill. Once the building had been evacuated, police cordoned off the area around the library

while firefighters entered the building to test for hazardous chemicals.

The drill, which was conducted in conjunction with Armidale Dumaesq Council, was designed to test the university's disaster management plan, as well as the council's local area disaster management plan.

The director of Facilities Management Services (FMS) at UNE, Mike Quinlan, said the university was well-prepared to deal with a real-life emergency.

"We've got a solid plan to back up the university in the event of any disaster," Mr Quinlan said. "Staff from FMS and other areas of the university performed very well."

Inspector Matt Lynch, from the Armidale Police, said the exercise had been an effective test of both UNE's and the local area's response to a potential disaster.

"We feel all the agencies worked well together, and that the operation was a success," Inspector Lynch said.

Services UNE competitions unearth new talent

UNE's annual writing and photography competition succeeds with help from United Campus Bookshops

The Services UNE Short Story and Photography Competition has wrapped up with the discovery of some great talent within the UNE ranks.

First prize in the short story competition went to Leon Braun for "Five Finger Discount". Second place went to Cate Darcy for "In a Bottle of Bourbon", and William Bennett picked up third place for his story "Marple? Marple? Not at St Helena".

The competition was sponsored for the first time this year by United Campus Bookshops. Ms Chris Hietbrink, manager of the bookshop, said that they were

delighted to support the event because it was "in support of what UNE is about".

United Campus Bookshops provides a number of vital services for all students and staff of UNE. Besides an extensive range of specially-priced textbooks and regular bookshop services, books can be ordered by phone, fax and over the web.

Students receive a 10 per cent discount on cash purchases at United Campus Bookshops at UNE, and an eight per cent discount on other purchases. UNE staff, meanwhile, receive a 15 per cent discount on all purchases.

The Armidale Express sponsored the photography competition, in which there were more than 40 entries.

"Green Angel" by Chris East was awarded first place, with "Washed Ashore" by Rebecca Henderson winning second place. Grant Winkler achieved third place with his photograph "Still Life" and also received the People's Choice Award for "A Man's Gotta Have a Shed".

Next year's competitions will start around second semester next year, with details to be found on the Services UNE website and in advertisements around campus.

in print

Out of the Silence

by Wendy James, Random House, \$32.95

A part-time lecturer in The University of New England's English department has published her first novel to glowing reviews.

Wendy James's *Out of the Silence* was described by Sydney Morning Herald reviewer Mindy Laube as a "stunning debut" and "that rare novel in which a gripping story is underlaid by a fully realised ethical framework".

"James has a rich appreciation for the depth and breadth of feminine sensibility, which she conveys in transparent, naturalistic prose," wrote Ms Laube. The novel "flows ever so gently, its deceptively smooth surface powered by a compelling narrative".

The Australian Book Review called it "an informative and beautifully written fiction".

The passion and suffering of Australian women at the turn of the last century provided the inspiration for the novel, which was written as part of the author's PhD thesis. It tells the story of three very different women: Maggie, a servant girl who finds herself unmarried and pregnant; Elizabeth, a middle-class Englishwoman; and Vida Goldstein, a famous real-life suffragette. At the centre of the story is a terrible crime, based on actual events.

Ms James said the story was about "art and motherhood", and dealt with issues including childcare, domestic service, contraception and infanticide. She said it was also about "the compromises people make in their private lives in order to have a political life, and vice-versa."

"A lot of stuff people were thinking about in the nineteenth century are still issues today," she said.

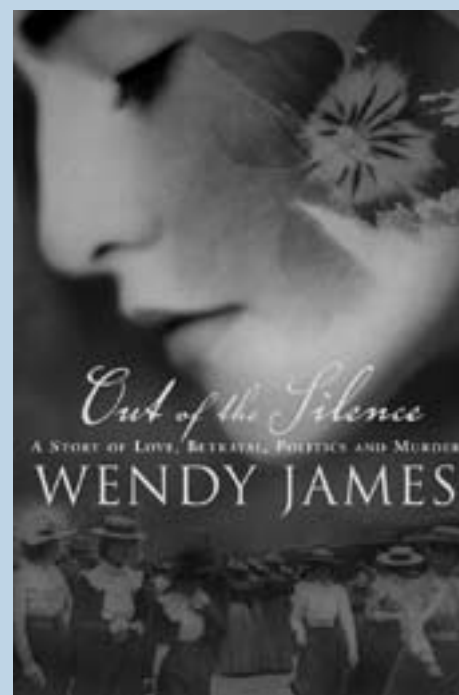
The book took five years to write, and required extensive research, but selling it didn't turn out to be nearly so hard. On the strength of the finished manuscript Ms James secured an agent; the fourth publisher who read the book bought it. Her publisher, Random House, has also contracted her for a second book, already underway.

Before *Out of the Silence*, Ms James had had about a dozen short stories published in anthologies and journals. She had also had an unpublished manuscript longlisted for the Vogel Award.

Ms James, who has four children, said she wrote "when I can", and that "with kids it's hard to find time to write".

"Motherhood is my full-time job.

"I'll procrastinate all the way until the last moment, and then have a burst of



inspiration, and then it's time to go and pick up the kids."

Ms James said she was delighted with the reviews critics had given the book, and that she "couldn't have wished for more for a first novel". Even more satisfying, she said, were readers' comments.

"I've had really good feedback from people who read it. People say they cry. That's always good."

Out of the Silence is available from United Campus Bookstores at UNE.



UNRESERVED SUPPORT: Professor Peter Flood; the Hon Teresa Gambaro MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence; and the Hon John Jobling OAM, Chairman DRSC NSW

funding

Eight UNE researchers have been successful in obtaining ARC grants for 2006 . . .

This year, the Research Council of Australia awarded eight research grants to researchers at The University of New England.

The research enabled by these grants will focus on a diverse range of topics, from Macromolecular Chemistry to Psychology.

One of the research grants was awarded to Dr Sarah Pearson for her research into revolutionary new ways of diagnosing and tracking breast cancer. The project involves the development of an automated diagnosis of breast cancer and the training of regional scientists to operate equipment. This method will hopefully also be useful in the fight against other diseases such as bone cancer, prostate cancer and arthritis.

Dr Pearson said her research "will help eradicate cancer and give people with cancer hope".

She also said that it could save lives and help women in rural areas where there is a shortage of specialists.

Mark Moore, a postgraduate at the university also received a grant for research on the cognitive abilities of the *Homo floresiensis* species (the 'hobbit') discovered recently in Indonesia by a team led by UNE palaeontologists.

By comparing their methods of tool-making to those of modern humans, Mr Moore hopes to track the interactions between modern humans and 'hobbits' as well as the first colonisation of Australia by modern humans.

Topics of other research projects to be funded by the grants included couples counselling, macromolecular materials design, pedagogy in rural Australia, migration and literacy.

The timeframes for the research grants range from one to five years duration, and have varied budgets. Recipients of these grants are set to begin their research next year.

National employment award

UNE has been recognised for its support of "weekend warriors"

The University of New England has won a national award for its support of Defence Force reservists.

UNE was one of five organisations recognised for their support of reservists at the Defence Reserves Support Council's (DRSC) National Employer Support Awards, held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. UNE shared the award in the government category with Edith Cowan University in Perth.

Earlier this year UNE was named NSW's best employer of Defence Force reservists at a ceremony at Victoria Barracks in Paddington.

UNE was nominated for the awards by several reservist members of staff.

UNE offers good leave conditions to Australian Defence Force members to allow them to undertake military activities. This includes paid leave for short periods of military service and unpaid leave for lengthier deployments. The Federal Government helps fund leave for UNE's reservists through its Employer Support Payment Scheme.

UNE-employed reservists have undertaken a wide range of military duties, ranging from two-week combined-forces exercises to extended deployments. In 1990, Andrew St John Brown, a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy Reserve, took 18 months off from his job as Assistant Registrar at UNE to support the Navy's Gulf War operations

in Sydney. More recently, Tony Bock, a Warrant Officer in the Army Reserve, gave up his job in the university's Finance Directorate for three months to serve in Operation Gold, the Australian Defence Force mission to support the Sydney 2000 Olympics. He later received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service in the Army Reserve.

David Campbell, a programmer in UNE's Information Technology Directorate, and part-time crew commander with the 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers in Armidale, said the university had always been "extremely supportive" of his military career.

"The leave provisions at UNE are great," Mr Campbell said. "They've allowed me to attend courses, including promotion courses, as well as exercises, like the combined forces exercise my unit did with the US Marines at Shoalwater Bay two years ago."

Iain Spence, an Associate Professor in UNE's School of Classics, History and Religion, and a Colonel in the Army Reserve, said the award was a "great mark of recognition" for the university's support of its reservist employees.

The university's flexible policies allowed staff to meet their requirements to the Defence Reserves, while also meeting their requirements to the university, a situation that reflected well on both the university and the military, he said.

PARTING SHOT: At her last official function as the Vice-Chancellor of UNE, Professor Ingrid Moses (left) receives the gift of a painting by Dr Cuncun Wu (right) at the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences annual book launch. The inscription, an 11th century poem by Su Shi, reads in part: "In this world perfection seldom comes. I only hope that we can live long and both enjoy the moon's beauty, though a thousand miles apart".

