Editor's welcome

My greatest joy in working in the region this year has been to get to know more about the story of the proud Gunditjmara people. For me this was through working on a project run by Global Sustainability at RMIT University for the Windamara Corporation. The Hamilton Centre flew the Aboriginal flag during NAIDOC week as an expression of the University's support for local Indigenous people. We did this as a mark of respect to the local first nation people in the Hamilton region. Indigenous elder John Lovett did a great job of hosting 60 Advanced Diploma of Justice students on a field trip to the region – this will now be an annual event.

RMIT University also continues its proud tradition of providing work integrated learning in Hamilton mainly through our Nursing program. The Bachelor of Nursing program is now in its ninth year and has provided training for over 100 graduates. The link to RMIT as a global university of technology has its advantages and earlier in the year our nursing coordinator accompanied a Hamilton nursing student on a visit to RMIT Vietnam as part of the university's 120th birthday celebrations.

The other areas of work relevant learning included the training provided for real estate practitioners in property – Agents’ Representatives. Our partnership with the Combined Pre-Schools of Southern Grampians continues and culminated in a very successful 6th early childhood conference. Our professional development program for teachers carries on.

RMIT University’s research in Hamilton has an applied focus in the fields where we have built a strong reputation and breadth of expertise, in particular - community sustainability and regional development. This research was showcased at a successful research day held in Hamilton and is summarised in this publication. The Local-Global Community Sustainability Program continues to publish and research on key issues such as climate change and international food and thought. The Regional Development Program has expertise in regional economic development and is conducting a number of evaluations for local partners, in particular, the Go for Your Life program and Sheepvention. RMIT University is a signatory to the Glenelg Southern Grampians Youth Commitment and our researchers are working with young people as action researchers, to investigate how global issues such as sustainable consumption and the explosion of information technology affect their lives in the Hamilton region.

Thank you to all RMIT staff who contributed to the work of research, learning and teaching and community engagement in Hamilton. Thank you also to our Community Advisory Group and other industry and community partners who continue to make a contribution to the life of our University. We congratulate the 2007 and 2008 graduates and thank the many organisations which support our nursing students on clinical placements, in particular, the Western District Health Service for sponsoring nursing student awards. We also acknowledge the continued support of Geoff Handbury, especially in regards to the very real interest he continues to take in the Geoff and Helen Handbury Fellowship program and for his generosity in funding the further development of the Potter archives.
Introduction to Colin Fudge

RMIT Hamilton welcomes the appointment of Professor Colin Fudge as the new Pro-Vice Chancellor for RMIT University’s College of Design and Social Context, which comprises nearly 1,000 staff and 22,000 students over nine Schools.

A senior academic, architect, urban planner, Professor Fudge has been in academia, government and the private sector.

He has previously worked at four universities: Bristol University (School for Advanced Urban Studies); University of Cardiff (Architecture and Town Planning); Chalmers University, Sweden (Royal Professor of Environmental Science); and the University of the West of England in Bristol.

At UWE Bristol, he was Dean of Built Environment before becoming Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Property Services).

He has worked in government in London, Melbourne (State Government of Victoria), Bath, Brussels for the European Commission and Stockholm for the Swedish Government.

He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 2001 and the title of Royal Professor of Environmental Science by the Swedish Academy of Sciences in 2002 for his work on urban sustainability and urban design.

RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Margaret Gardner AO, said: “I’d like to welcome Professor Fudge to the University.”

“His wide-ranging skills and very broad experience make him an ideal leader for a diverse and exciting college like DSC.”

While Professor Fudge is new to RMIT, he is more than familiar with Melbourne and the Hamilton region – he visited the region when he was Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Planning, Environment and Aboriginal Affairs under John Cain’s State Government in the 1980s.

Professor Fudge is relishing the challenge of giving further strategic direction to the College of Design and Social Context and providing the appropriate leadership and support to each of the Schools with the intention of raising ambitions and performance, celebrating achievements, and lifting the college as a whole, nationally and internationally. He also takes on the role of Vice Chancellor’s Representative in Hamilton.

Professor Fudge will be looking to lift the college’s research capabilities further, alongside maintaining and improving the student experience and strengthening engagement with industry, government and communities.

“I understand the college has a long research history in this region - especially in the areas of regional development and local-global community sustainability and I look forward to building our research partnerships with local industry, government and community partners.”

“This I believe fits well with RMIT’s original and enduring focus on providing the learning, teaching and research that fits the needs of industry and the community.

Bachelor of Nursing

The Bachelor of Nursing Program at RMIT University Hamilton continues to go from strength to strength with another 19 students graduating at the end of 2007.

The 120 Birthday Celebrations of RMIT University enabled one of the students from the Hamilton Bachelor of Nursing program to take a sponsored trip to Vietnam early in 2008. Kerry McMullan, Program Coordinator of the Bachelor of Nursing Program at Hamilton, accompanied this student and others that were selected to go on this trip and while in Vietnam Ms McMullan presented at conferences and seminars targeting Vietnamese nursing and medical personnel on research and critical care based topics. She was also able to visit RMIT International University Vietnam located in Ho Chi Minh City.

Over the course of the year the Bachelor of Nursing program has been boosted through obtaining large amounts of new equipment for the nursing laboratory. This new equipment ensures that students train with diverse and current technology.

In June a Nursing Graduate Expo was held for Year 3 students to expose them to local Graduate Year programs at various hospitals and health services in the area. This Expo aimed to help the students narrow down the fields in which they want to pursue their nursing career and offer an insight in to what is available locally.

An Open Evening was held in August with over 60 people attending to find out information about the Nursing Program in Hamilton. The 2008 ball was held on 14 November and gave students a chance to celebrate the ending of their three years of University study. The RMIT University graduation ceremony will take place on 10 December with Hamilton students taking part in the huge ceremony and celebrations in Melbourne.

Bachelor of Nursing awards from 2007

In 2007 the following students received awards. RMIT University Hamilton congratulates them on their achievements and thank and acknowledge the sponsors of the awards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Eliza Sharaf</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Learning Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Karyn Allan</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Learning Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Christine McArthur</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Learning Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Shane Hammond</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Simon Goggin</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Chloe Deans</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Jeannette Membrey</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Improved Student</td>
<td>Kate Algar</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching & learning

Our new leader

RMIT Hamilton welcomes the appointment of Professor Colin Fudge as the new Pro-Vice Chancellor for RMIT University’s College of Design and Social Context, which comprises nearly 1,000 staff and 22,000 students over nine Schools.

A senior academic, architect, urban planner, Professor Fudge has been in academia, government and the private sector.

He has previously worked at four universities: Bristol University (School for Advanced Urban Studies); University of Cardiff (Architecture and Town Planning); Chalmers University, Sweden (Royal Professor of Environmental Science); and the University of the West of England in Bristol.

At UWE Bristol, he was Dean of Built Environment before becoming Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Property Services).

He has worked in government in London, Melbourne (State Government of Victoria), Bath, Brussels for the European Commission and Stockholm for the Swedish Government.

He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 2001 and the title of Royal Professor of Environmental Science by the Swedish Academy of Sciences in 2002 for his work on urban sustainability and urban design.

RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Margaret Gardner AO, said: “I’d like to welcome Professor Fudge to the University.”

“His wide-ranging skills and very broad experience make him an ideal leader for a diverse and exciting college like DSC.”

While Professor Fudge is new to RMIT, he is more than familiar with Melbourne and the Hamilton region – he visited the region when he was Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Planning, Environment and Aboriginal Affairs under John Cain’s State Government in the 1980s.

Professor Fudge is relishing the challenge of giving further strategic direction to the College of Design and Social Context and providing the appropriate leadership and support to each of the Schools with the intention of raising ambitions and performance, celebrating achievements, and lifting the college as a whole, nationally and internationally. He also takes on the role of Vice Chancellor’s Representative in Hamilton.

Professor Fudge will be looking to lift the college’s research capabilities further, alongside maintaining and improving the student experience and strengthening engagement with industry, government and communities.

“I understand the college has a long research history in this region - especially in the areas of regional development and local-global community sustainability and I look forward to building our research partnerships with local industry, government and community partners.”

“This I believe fits well with RMIT’s original and enduring focus on providing the learning, teaching and research that fits the needs of industry and the community.

Bachelor of Nursing

The Bachelor of Nursing Program at RMIT University Hamilton continues to go from strength to strength with another 19 students graduating at the end of 2007.

The 120 Birthday Celebrations of RMIT University enabled one of the students from the Hamilton Bachelor of Nursing program to take a sponsored trip to Vietnam early in 2008. Kerry McMullan, Program Coordinator of the Bachelor of Nursing Program at Hamilton, accompanied this student and others that were selected to go on this trip and while in Vietnam Ms McMullan presented at conferences and seminars targeting Vietnamese nursing and medical personnel on research and critical care based topics. She was also able to visit RMIT International University Vietnam located in Ho Chi Minh City.

Over the course of the year the Bachelor of Nursing program has been boosted through obtaining large amounts of new equipment for the nursing laboratory. This new equipment ensures that students train with diverse and current technology.

In June a Nursing Graduate Expo was held for Year 3 students to expose them to local Graduate Year programs at various hospitals and health services in the area. This Expo aimed to help the students narrow down the fields in which they want to pursue their nursing career and offer an insight in to what is available locally.

An Open Evening was held in August with over 60 people attending to find out information about the Nursing Program in Hamilton. The 2008 ball was held on 14 November and gave students a chance to celebrate the ending of their three years of University study. The RMIT University graduation ceremony will take place on 10 December with Hamilton students taking part in the huge ceremony and celebrations in Melbourne.

Bachelor of Nursing awards from 2007

In 2007 the following students received awards. RMIT University Hamilton congratulates them on their achievements and thank and acknowledge the sponsors of the awards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Eliza Sharaf</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Learning Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Karyn Allan</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Learning Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Christine McArthur</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Learning Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Shane Hammond</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Simon Goggin</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Chloe Deans</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Clinical Excellence</td>
<td>Jeannette Membrey</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Western District Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Improved Student</td>
<td>Kate Algar</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate Diploma in Midwifery for 2009

RMIT University is committed to undertaking a Graduate Diploma in Midwifery in 2009. The Graduate Diploma in Midwifery prepares Registered Nurses to enter midwifery practice leading to endorsement as a midwife with the Nurses Board of Victoria, and fosters the development of leadership and scholarship in the discipline of midwifery.

This program will run subject to numbers and aims to give local Registered Nurses an opportunity to study locally and further their nursing career.

Learning Community Partnerships

Under the leadership of Dr Leone Wheeler, Learning Community Partnerships within the College of Design and Social Context brokers learning and research opportunities in Hamilton. LCP is responsible for overall Centre operations such as co-ordination/brokerage, planning, linking with ITS, Property Services, marketing and development, management, administration and community engagement. The activities are diverse and projects and programs include brokering new courses such as real estate, organising a teacher professional development program, the early childhood conference, a computer club and a range of community forums as well as managing research programs such as 10MMM and OtherWISE. The group also manage community partnerships such as the Southern Grampians Youth Network.

Our 2008 staff:

• Jenny Bell - Resources Manager
• Dr. Kaye Schoffield - Manager, Community Partnerships and Projects
• Marilyn Lyons - Learning Centre Coordinator
• Fiona Upstill - Community Engagement Officer
• Dinah Hallam - Communications Project Officer
• Quentin Curcio/Carol Burger - Administrative and Student Information Officer
• Joanne Brown - 10MMM Project Officer
• Dean Bantfield - 10MMM and computer club trainer
• Megan Irving – School-based trainee (administration)

Teacher Professional Development

Professor Dianne Siemon from the School of Education at RMIT University conducted a full day professional development workshop for Year 5, 6, 7 and 8 teachers from the district in early May. “Scaffolding the Key Ideas and Strategies in Number in the Middle Years” focused on the key ideas and strategies that underpin the VELS Number Strand in the middle years of schooling.

On May 13 Dr Michael Crowhurst, Lecturer in Teacher Education from the School of Education led a training workshop “Conversations with Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Secondary School Students” for teachers, youth workers, nurses, and community workers. This workshop aimed to raise awareness around sexual and gender diversity issues that might impact on young people in secondary school and youth sector settings.

A two day Grammar and Punctuation workshop was held in late May for a wide range of professionals who write and edit documents as part of their work roles. Presenter, Penny Johnson, Lecturer in Professional Writing and Editing from the School of Creative Media helped participants consolidate and further develop their understanding of grammar and punctuation.

Early Childhood Conference

RMIT University Hamilton in conjunction with the Combined Pre-School of Southern Grampians Inc conducted the 6th Annual Early Childhood Conference with the theme of “Proactive Strategies for Challenging Children” on 22 August 2008.

Keynote speaker, Colleen DeVeyrac, highlighted the skills and strategies required to increase resiliency and school readiness in preschool children along with specific strategies for educators and parents to decrease their stress levels and reactions to challenging situations.

In addition, the 60 practitioners that attended were given the opportunity to attend two of the four interactive workshops, led by local presenters. The four workshops covered child protection, food for thought, musical beginnings and circle time.

Real Estate

As a result of considerable consultation with the local community, the first Course in Property (Agents’ Representatives) was delivered by the School of Property, Construction and Project Management from RMIT University in Hamilton beginning in late April.

The 70 hour program designed to provide people with the knowledge and skills required by law to be eligible for employment in real estate as an agents’ representative was delivered by Vincent Raso and local industry practitioners.

Ron Thies, Program Co-ordinator, Real Estate in conjunction with Vincent Raso are looking to hold a further Course in Property (Agents’ Representatives) and an initial Certificate IV in Property (Real Estate Agency Practice) in Hamilton in early 2009.

Hamilton.

Themed workshops on research planning in the afternoon were chaired by RMIT researchers and key local leaders. These workshops provided local stakeholders with an opportunity to help RMIT researchers to identify potential topics of direct relevance to the region in the key areas of natural resource management, economic development, health, ageing and social development and youth and education.

The research day was an important initiative and an opportunity to build on the close relationships already developed between the University and the community. The University is keen to engage the local community in potentially exciting future projects.
Current and prospective regional development research projects include:

- The effectiveness of local economic development strategies;
- Explanations and impacts of the increasing trend towards deferral of university study by young people;
- Drivers of in-migration to, and out-migration from, the Southern Grampians Shire; and
- Collaborative research with US experts in regional development on the decline and survival of rural communities with a focus on youth retention strategies, amenity migration and rural entrepreneurship.

More generally, ongoing issues of research interest include:

- Rural community sustainability
- Drivers of regional performance
- Australia’s regional development policies
- Rural economic diversification and social change
- Rural population trends
- Rural youth issues

Sheepvention

The Regional Development program has undertaken a survey of visitors to Sheepvention 2008. This follows a similar survey undertaken in 2003 with the aim of gathering data about the socioeconomic impact of a major event in a rural area, to provide the organizers with qualitative and quantitative data for planning the event in the future, and to provide some measure of the impact of the event on the region’s economy. The data will contribute to knowledge of the socioeconomic impacts of events and festivals in rural communities, and their contribution to regional economic development. The study will draw on data gathered in 2003 as a comparison.

Go for Your Life

The Go For Your Life (GFYL) program is a project sponsored by Western District Health Service, Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership and Southern Grampians Shire and funded by VicHealth.

The Regional Development Program at RMIT Hamilton is undertaking an evaluation to examine whether, and the extent to which, individual and organisational behaviour in relation to healthy lifestyles changes over the life of the program, in order to help measure the extent to which the objectives of the program have been met and to evaluate the process undertaken during the local project.

The project evaluation will attempt to provide a robust and useful assessment of the local project that can form a solid evidence base for further policy development by the Victorian Government and Victorian communities in relation to healthy lifestyles. A number of interview and focus groups have been held with participants, which together with measurements and survey data gathered from participants at the outset of the project is being evaluated for presentation to the project partners.

Regional Development Program Teaching

Dr. Paul Collits, Research Fellow with the Regional Development Program, has developed two on-line short courses targeted at practitioners directly involved in economic development, professionals who work at the edges of economic development and for anyone with an interest in the field. The courses are equally relevant for both city based and rural practitioners, and have both been offered in Semester 2, 2008. They have attracted students from all over Australia.

The development of these courses has been undertaken at the instigation of Economic Development Australia (EDA) and supported by a grant from DEEWR. Further courses will be developed as part of a planned post-graduate qualification in economic development.

Theory and Practice of Economic Development

The course provides an overview of the core aspects of economic development theory and practice. It outlines the economic and political contexts in which practitioners operate and provides a review of the best and most recent thinking in economic development. It unpacks explanations of regional growth and decline and sets out the elements of good practice in economic development.

The Regional Development Policy Environment

The course addresses the central elements of how “regional” and “economic” development policies are done in Australia. It provides a detailed explanation of policy processes, the key government players at each level of government, some historical background, and approaches overseas.

The course is about both process and the content and purpose of regional policies.

Publications/Presentations

Book Chapter


Refereed Conference Paper

The Learning Practitioner, Paper presented to the Sustainable Growth in Regional Australia (SEGRA) Conference, Albury August 2008

Other


Regional Development: Future Policy Options, Discussion Paper, Page Research Centre, August 2008
Research Students

**Current PhD students and their area of study:**

- **Cathy Wagg**: A study of an on-farm natural resource management (NRM) intervention.
- **Mary Johnson**: A study of “A discourse analysis of civil society, a regional agency and government relationships in natural resource management”.
- **Adele Kenneally**: A study of “Community – the heart of local government; a case study of the Glenelg Shire Council”.

**Current Masters’ Degree students and their area of study:**

- **Julia Schlapp**: “Modelling Phosphorus Fertiliser Use in the Hopkins River Basin”.
- **Bill Hamill** (supported by a Helen and Geoff Handbury Fellowship) “Sustaining Young People in Agriculture” focusing on the Red Meat and Wool sectors in western Victoria.

Research Award

Dr Paul Collits, Research Fellow with the Regional Development Program at RMIT University Hamilton has been recently awarded an $8,000 grant from the RMIT Emerging Researcher Grant Scheme.

Dr Collits was awarded the grant for a research project titled The Heartland Project. This project aims to establish a collaborative research network of Australian and American rural/regional development researchers who will investigate the key drivers of rural community survival and decline in “Heartland” regions in the two countries.

The grant will allow Dr Collits to travel and undertake a three week study tour to the United States of America in November. It will also allow employment of a Research Assistant to investigate demographic changes in the Southern Grampians Shire, in particular, what motivates people to move people into the Shire and what motivates people to leave the Shire.

Dr Collits’ study tour will see him visiting Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas where similar studies on population movement have been undertaken. He will also look at building a collaborative research project to look at the similarities and differences of population movement in Australian and North American rural communities. The Heartland Project will finish in mid 2009 after which Dr Collits will present his findings.

**10MMM**

The latest phase 10MMM has broadened out to focus more on research, and to include the rural communities Merino and Casterton. It extends opportunities to enthusiastic young people to embrace leadership and multimedia training – and to include their voices in the research being conducted by RMIT and the Action Group of young people based at YouthBiz.

This year has seen lots of activity. The Action Group has been busily involved in learning new creative, communicative and research skills at YouthBiz.

The YourSay survey was launched in late 2007, using the ‘Survey Monkey’ research skills young researchers learned in workshops at RMIT. The survey canvassed rural young people’s views on technology use and incorporated questions the Action Group wanted investigated. The next phase of YourSay will focus more closely on themes of hopes and dreams and ideas of wellbeing.

In addition to the research, 10MMM has been delivering multimedia workshops. In January, young people in Merino produced a film ‘Murder on Text Tree Hill’ which was showcased at a national conference in Newcastle. The conference, called ‘Fringe Voices’, was attended by two young people from Merino.

Workshops during the school holidays have delivered training in comic book, digital storytelling, and Action/Adventure Games. Recently, students from SGAE’s youth program have been developing digital stories about hopes and dreams, with the very energetic Reverend Peter Cook sharing some insights and music.

A highlight for this year was the Action Group camp, with fifteen young people from Merino, Casterton and Hamilton travelling to Melbourne. This allowed them to bond as a team, gain some insight into the world of technology and some new experiences in an urban environment.

10MMM were highly commended in the Victorian Health Care Awards announced on 10 September 2008. Congratulations to 10MMM!

**Potter Farmland Plan Project**

Between 1984 and 1988, the Ian Potter Foundation invested in an on-farm demonstration project on fifteen farms in western Victoria. These became a platform for promoting ideas of environmentally sensitive farming, generating intense interest amongst other farmers, academics, extension officers and the media. The Potter Farmland Plan (PFP) became an ‘iconic’ project, locally, nationally and internationally. It put the Hamilton region soundly on the map as ‘leading the pack’ when it came to the trialling, extension and communication of what we now tend to accept as LandCare works.

The question arises though – what was the PFP’s legacy?

2008 has been a year for investigating this legacy and developing research directions. In scopeing the research potential of PFP this year, it was clear from hearing from some of the farmers that they wanted their knowledge and experience not to be lost. It was felt that today more than ever, the ideas and work to revitalise the land, are important for a new, younger audience. Therefore the question being investigated is ‘how relevant is the Potter Farmland Project in an increasingly uncertain future?’ How much can we learn for the future by looking back twenty years or so over this project which at the time demonstrated such vision? How can we manage the farm better in an uncertain environment?

A challenge to further research is that the project was set up as a demonstration with limited baseline scientific data established. The tension between maintaining on-farm environmental works and farm viability – ‘you can’t be green if you’re in the red!’ - is another concern.

Another factor was that the PFP took place in a relatively short time-frame – how much can actually be attributed to ‘Potter’?

Julia Schlapp at RMIT University in Hamilton is currently undertaking a “before and after” comparison of on-farm works amongst the Potter properties to gain an understanding of what changes did take place. In terms of a legacy, there
Research

are some things we can measure and some that we can’t.
The Potter Farmland Plan archives are currently housed at RMIT University Hamilton. An assessment of their heritage value is currently underway.

We acknowledge the generosity of the Ian Potter Foundation for enabling this year’s research development phase. We also gratefully acknowledge the gift from Mr Geoff Handbury to support the archive assessment.

The Local-Global research program

The two main events organised by the Local-Global research team in the Hamilton region for 2008 were a Climate Change Scenarios Workshop and the 2nd International Food and Thought MELA. Once again, these events are linked into the Global Cities Institute Research program and as a result are linked to other international research of a comparative nature.

Hamilton Climate Change Scenarios Workshop Update

As part of the ‘Community Sustainability’ and ‘Climate Change Adaptation’ programs, RMIT’s Global Cities Institute held a Scenarios Mapping Workshop in February. Facilitated by scenarists Sally Jones and Jodi-Anne Smith, the 41 participants worked for two days to create scenarios of the future of the region in the face of looming environmental and social change.

Participants were split into small groups and taken through a process for identifying and discussing the many factors likely to affect their community’s development in the future. They explored what they felt were the most significant risks and uncertainties facing their community. These were used to generate their scenarios which focussed on the adaptation challenges facing their region and the likely impacts of these.

As a result of participants could see a range of implications that they as a community needed to consider and plan responses for. They saw a need to find ways to influence individuals to take action to reduce their carbon emissions and adapt their homes and lifestyles now as well as the opportunity to learn from other cultures and those who have already taken action. Participants recognised that their current mental health and community welfare services were not sufficient to cope with the increased demand predicted in many of the scenarios and therefore saw a need to undertake activities to build community cohesion and support each other through tough times.

Two local writers have been given the task of working on the further development of the scenarios and stories that were initiated by workshop participants.

2nd International Food and Thought MELA

On Saturday June 21, around 70 participants gathered at RMIT Hamilton for the 2nd International Food and Thought MELA. A Sanskrit word meaning “gathering or festival,” the MELA provided an opportunity for community members, researchers and special guests to engage in critical discussion and mutual learning about important social and ecological challenges facing the contemporary global world.

The day began with a breakfast of locally sourced produce, and was followed by presentations exploring how mushrooms can help communities respond to climate change and challenges to biodiversity and food security. The keynote address by Carlos Zorrilla, was a moving and inspiring tale of a small community in the cloud forests of Northern Ecuador; their struggle against powerful global mining interests and their search for sustainable alternative livelihoods. In a later session, speakers addressed the changing nature of community in the contemporary world, as they struggle with the local impacts of ecologically destructive development, ancient social structures and globalisation.

The day also featured workshops that involved participants with practical experience related to food, energy and community action discussing ways in which local communities are responding positively and creatively to the challenges explored during the day.

The last panel presented the audience with some possible future scenarios for the Hamilton region - stories which emerged from a community based Scenarios Mapping Workshop held at RMIT Hamilton in February. The serious work of local and global sharing of knowledge ended with a formal dinner, with participants being entertained by legendary comedian Rod Quantock.

Where possible, food for the event was sourced from within the Hamilton region. For further information regarding this event, please refer to: http://www.communitysustainability.info/events/FoodandThought2.html

Community engagement

OtherWISE

OtherWISE is a project, a movement, a network, to create more sustainable communities through inspirational supportive partnerships between young Australians, community leaders and organizations. The ‘otherWISE’ leadership training course is designed to develop skills needed to make changes in young people’s resource consumption and for them to become a catalyst for change within the wider community.

Learning Community Partnerships in Hamilton saw the potential of this project and agreed to fund the project for a period of 7 months, commencing in February 2008.

From networks in the local area, 15 community members and youth leaders were recruited and trained at a facilitator workshop. The skills gained enabled local people to co-facilitate the youth workshops and lead the project in the future.

One such community project was “Swap ‘til you Drop”. The clothes swap event involved young people bringing along clothes and accessories they didn’t wear anymore and trading it in for something different at no cost. Left-over items were donated to the Uniting Church.

The ongoing implementation of otherWISE gives a focus, structure and direction to the enthusiasms and concerns local people already have.

Financial commitment or in-kind sponsorship has been acquired from Wannon Water, Timbercorp, Glenelg and Southern Grampians Local learning Employment Network, Jigsaw Farms, Iluka Resources and the Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning.
Community engagement

Go For Your Life at RMIT

**Challenging the Stereotypes** is a local project delivering the messages of the ‘Go for your life’ campaign. The project seeks to encourage better health and lifestyle outcomes among working adults in the Southern Grampians Shire. Initially the focus has been on workplace initiatives to increase healthy behaviours, specifically healthy eating, increased water intake and increased physical activity among adults. It is hoped that lessons learned from implementing strategies in workplaces can be applied to other workplaces, community groups and other organisations.

RMIT University in Hamilton was pleased to be one of the local workplaces to commence the pilot program and allocating a staff member to concentrate on this role has ensured the success of the workplace initiatives and outcomes.

Field Trips

The Justice, Youth and Security Studies of the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning conducted a Cultural Diversity field trip with around 60 second year students of the Advanced Diploma of Justice Program to Hamilton and surrounding districts for two days in May.

Georgy Dumas, Program Manager and Irene Pagliarella, Program Co-ordinator planned to provide students with a variety of outcomes including the opportunity to obtain knowledge on the origins and nature of Australia’s multicultural society including Australian rural communities and to understand first hand, the problems and difficulties indigenous groups have faced in relation to Australian laws.

The students met for a briefing session at RMIT University Hamilton with the Mayor of Southern Grampians Shire, Cr. Marcus Rentsch, RMIT Hamilton managers and indigenous elder John Lovett and stayed overnight in local accommodation.

Day two involved organised visits to selected local relevant locations in Hamilton and surrounding districts including a guided tour to Lake Condah owned by the Gunditjmara tribe.

Community Forums

RMIT University Hamilton provided the following forums for interested community members throughout 2008.

- The great questions of regional development presented by Dr Paul Collits.
- The Ageing Athlete presented by Dr Stephen Bird.
- Regional Australia Tomorrow: the importance of envisioning the future presented by Adjunct Professor Tony Sorensen.
- Sheep and the Australian Cinema presented by Associate Professor Deb Verhoeven.
- ‘Study Locally and Think Globally’ presented by Dr Bill Vistarini and Dr David Hodges. Including short presentations by Dr Kaye Schofield and current postgraduate students; Mr Bill Hamill, Ms Adele Kenneally and Ms Davarone Kittiphanh.
- ‘The Small Town Debate Five Years On’ presented by Gordon Forth and Trevor Budge.

Computer Club

RMIT University Hamilton started up a computer club for secondary school students in the Hamilton area. The club meets twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4pm to 5.30pm at RMIT University Hamilton.

The aim of the computer club is to provide students with opportunities to pursue interests involving computers and software, leading to an increase of skills and knowledge. Students can learn how to create comic book drawings, animation, digital stories, fantasy art drawings, computer games, desktop publishing and digital photo manipulation. The students are encouraged to participate in self-directed learning under the guidance of Dean Banfield.

Anderson Training

Anderson Training Services Building Skills Centre have rented an area at the back of RMIT University Hamilton to undertake apprentice training in building, plastering and painting for local first year apprentices.

Two small bungalows are quickly taking shape as the apprentices hone their skills. It is planned that one bungalow will be for sale and the other will be donated to the Hamilton Lions Club to be auctioned in a fundraiser.

Southern Grampians Youth Network

Southern Grampians Youth Network (SGYN) is now in its fourth year. Meeting regularly at RMIT University in Hamilton, SGYN gains strength and purpose with each passing year. Partners forming the SGYN Steering Committee include Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnerships, Glenelg Southern Grampians LLEN, and RMIT University’s Learning Community Partnerships.

Membership this year has grown with regular meetings of up to 25 service providers and community organisations coming together to develop local solutions to issues concerning the youth sector.

An important development this year is the ‘Transition Support Team’. The TST, working cross-sectorally, workshops real-life scenarios where young people are at risk, to solve gaps in knowledge and services through developing closer working relationships and familiarity of services amongst professionals.
Paul Collits
RMIT Hamilton welcomes Dr Paul Collits as Research Fellow in Regional Development.

Paul has worked in regional development for over 15 years. For over 10 years he was a regional policy adviser to the NSW Government, working in the Department of State and Regional Development. While in the Department, he developed the Community Partnerships Program, bringing regional universities and communities together to drive local economic development.

In 2002 he completed a PhD at the University of New England in geography and planning, in which he examined regional policy change in Australia since the 1960s and the decline of decentralisation as a policy objective. Paul has presented and written extensively on such topics as the role of government in regional development, small town decline and survival, community economic development, regional leadership, professional development for regional development practitioners, the creative class and rural youth out-migration. He is currently working on a book of essays on Australian regional development.

Paul has also been involved extensively in teaching, having taught courses on economic development and spatial policy in the planning program at the University of New South Wales.

He is currently undertaking research into why young people leave rural areas, how effective local economic development efforts are and what drives regional economic success. He is also developing an international collaborative research and community learning project examining rural community decline and survival in "heartland" regions in Australia and the United States.

Cathy Fenton
Cathy Fenton joined the RMIT University Hamilton staff early this year when she took up the position of Clinical Nursing Educator / Lecturer with the Bachelor of Nursing Program that was left vacant by Peter Francis. Cathy has an extensive background in multiple nursing specialties including midwifery, paediatric nursing, general surgical and perioperative nursing. Over 20 years of nursing, 14 of which have been at the Western District Health Service, has positioned Cathy well to excel in her new role which encompasses general student support, career advice, clinical support and on site clinical skill acquisition.

Invigilation Services
RMIT University Hamilton continues to provide invigilation services to students studying TAFE and University courses through other education providers. In 2008 the staff at RMIT University Hamilton Centre have invigilated on behalf of 8 different education institutions for over 100 hours of exams for local students.

Dean Banfield
Dean Banfield has joined RMIT University Hamilton in a casual role to assist Computer Club students and teach multimedia workshops for the 10MMM program.

Dean is a graphic artist with 13 years of experience in both traditional and new graphics techniques, and also works as a secondary school teacher in the area of Visual Communication.

Megan Irving
Megan Irving joined the staff at RMIT University Hamilton in April to begin her school-based traineeship through Westvic Workforce. Megan is studying Senior VCAL at Monivae College and Certificate II in Business (Office Administration). Megan has been on site at RMIT University Hamilton one day a week to get a hands-on prospective on how a University works and the office administration procedures involved.

During her time in the front office she has gained a sound knowledge of office administration principles by undertaking various types of work with different staff.

Megan has worked hard which has resulted in her winning a Monivae College Principals award for her efforts and has been recommended for other awards with the results of these applications pending. Megan has been a great asset to RMIT University Hamilton, and staff wish her well in the future.

Contact us
RMIT University Hamilton
PO Box 572
200 Ballarat Road
Hamilton Vic 3300
Tel. 03 5572 0500
Fax. 03 5572 0555
email. RMITHamilton@rmit.edu.au
www.rmit.edu.au/hamilton