Welcome to the August issue of ‘School News’. This is a bi-monthly newsletter for the School of Property, Construction and Project Management (PCPM), covering all staff achievements and staff announcements, program news, international news, new policies and procedures, committee information and any key dates/events. If you would like to contribute to ‘School News’, please send your submissions to ben.bucknall@rmit.edu.au by the 27th of September.

**Staff news**

Dr Nick Blismas, Discipline Leader of Construction Management, will be absent from the School for the period 17 June to 5 October, 2009. During his Research Leave, he will be undertaking research at Virginia Tech (US) and Loughborough University (UK).

During Nick’s absence Tony Mills has agreed to be Acting Discipline Leader, Construction Management.

This month we welcome Dr Malik Kalifan and Dr Frank Boukamp to the School.

Malik joins us from Faculty of Business, Law & the Built Environment at the University of Salford, UK.

Frank joins us from Civil and Environmental Engineering, Construction Management, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, US.

**Dates for your diary:**

- **9 Aug**: RMIT Open Day
- **9-10 Sep**: Green Building and Design Conference
- **20 Oct**: PG Info Session
- **21 Oct**: Industry Awards Night
- **21-23 Oct**: CIB W099 Construction Conference

Geoff Outhred and Kath Robson are attending and presenting papers to the COBRA conference on September 9 – 11 in Cape Town, South Africa. Hosted by RICS, the conference is for academics and professionals in design, construction and property areas.

Geoff will be presenting a paper entitled ‘Dual Sector teaching: A method for optimising university resources to facilitate better learning & teaching’. The topic addresses the School of PCPM’s delivery of dual sector teaching via the resources of the VET School of Design.

Kath is presenting a paper titled ‘Satisfied Students, “I’d like to see that”: A discussion of strategies introduced in the classroom with the aim of improving student satisfaction.’ The study uses Property and valuation students to examine the concept of student satisfaction, engagement and expectations of the learning process.

Simon de Garis recently attended the European Real Estate Society Conference from 24 to 27 June at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. Simon presented his paper “Market Rental Valuations for
Rural Leasehold and Licensed land in Victoria, Australia” as part of the conference, and enjoyed a holiday with his wife afterwards. The seafood in Bergen, Norway, comes highly recommended!

International news

Reid Senescu, PhD student from Stanford University has visited the School over a period of 7 weeks. His PhD focus is on Building Information Modelling and Design and Project Information and Communication Flows.

Seeking the advice of Dr. Guillermo Aranda-Mena, they have both conducted case studies in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane to compare with current design and construction documentation practices in the USA.

A number of Journal publications are expected as a result of this research collaboration, and will continue to build on the School’s research strength in ‘Building Information Modelling’.

The Construction Management program, held at Singapore Institute of Management will see 88 students graduate in 27 August. The ceremony will be attended by Ian McBean, Kath Robson and Ron Wakefield.

Events

RMIT Open Day

It’s that time of year again! Across RMIT’s three Melbourne campuses, prospective students and parents will come and meet staff and students, visit displays, join information sessions, hands-on workshops, take tours and more.

Open Day is a fantastic opportunity for the School to engage and talk with prospective students and answer questions, explain study options, different disciplines and career paths.

Thanks to all those who have agreed to volunteer on the day. We expect it to be a busy, but fun and fulfilling experience!

CIB (International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction) W099 Conference

Training materials developed by the School of PCPM and the Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation for Engineers Australia will be launched at the industry training day at the CIB W099 Conference in October.

As part of the launch, National President of Engineers Australia Peter Godfrey will chair a panel of senior industry leaders such as Peter Verwer, chief
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executive of the Property Council of Australia and Bill Wild, chief operating officer of Leighton Holdings. Their discussion will provide the opportunity to further develop a shared vision of OHS in the construction industry.

Student Lounge Launch

This informal learning space was designed for students and teachers to network, share ideas and experiences, and to study and relax together.

At the launch, students from all year levels, and academic and general staff, all enjoyed conversation, refreshments and even a little bit of singing and dancing.

Head of School, Professor Ron Wakefield, said the lounge was just the first of many exciting developments around the School in the coming years, including redesigned and refurbished classrooms.

Green Building and Design Conference 2009 - Green Materials

The 7th Annual Green Building and Design Conference – Green Materials – will be held on Wednesday, 9 September, and Thursday, 10 September, at the Melbourne Convention Centre.

Designers, manufacturers and regulators have been called upon to explore various options for green materials: be it those produced from renewable or recycled materials or be it innovative high-tech products – evaluating the alternatives can be a real challenge for all concerned.

This conference will provide practical guidance on how to assess building materials.

In addition, this year attendance at the conference may be extended into a single course and used towards gaining a postgraduate certificate at RMIT University. Participants of the two-day conference may choose to participate in four two-hour workshops before and after the conference and complete assignments as directed. There will be two assignments and a reflective journal. This extension then forms an elective subject worth 12 credit points towards postgraduate studies at RMIT. The postgraduate discipline is related to the fields of engineering, environmental, architecture, construction and planning.

Register online or phone Short Courses on 58111. View details or contact nicole.mcgrath@rmit.edu.au
Program News

Two exciting Study Tours depart Australian shores this month.

Heading to Dubai and Singapore, Mark Vines, Judith Callanan and Jenny Balzan will be leading a group of students to discover issues facing large-scale construction and project management from August 10 til August 21.

Also travelling to warmer climes will be the study tour to Fiji, escorted by Matt Myers, Nicole Gillard and Dr. Guillermo Aranda-Mena. The tour will introduce property related issues in a developing small island country with an orientation towards property valuation, investment and development particularly with consideration to social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability.

The School continues to be supported by a range of leading professionals.

In the Advanced Valuation courses a number of presenters have provided invaluable support again in 2009. Outstanding contributions to the Advanced Valuation programme in first semester were made by director Brian Dudakov and senior valuer Peter Volakos from Urbis, Steve Simpson from Simpson Forsyth, John Marshall from Rogers Milne, and David Leggatt, a Partner with DLA Phillips Fox. They have all been contacted with a view to repeating their presentations in the second semester to the graduate group, and again have willingly donated their time to do so.

Two TAFE programs that offer pathways into PCPM programs have recently merged. The Advanced Diploma of Building Design and Project Administration and the Diploma of Building Design and Technology have now become the Advanced Diploma of Building Design (Architectural).

Please keep this in mind for future communications and publications. Students currently enrolled in these programs are still eligible for pathways.

Research

Postgraduate students Agustin Chevez successfully presented his PhD completion seminar to the School on 12 June. His research thesis, titled “Evolution of Workplace Architecture as a Consequence of Technology Development” was attended by over twenty academic and industry guests.

Agustin’s PhD was sponsored by the CRC for Construction Innovation over a period of five years and has been supervised by Dr. Guillermo Aranda-Mena and Dr. Peter Edwards.

David Higgins has joint-authored a refereed research paper with Boon Ng from the Royal Bank of Scotland, titled “Australian Securitised Property Funds: An
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*Examination of their Risk-Adjusted Performance*. The paper was published in the Journal of Property Investment and Finance, a grade 1 research journal, in July.

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**Industry News**

The school is in the process of launching its Employer of Choice program. More information regarding this program will be available soon.

Abigroup is seeking our graduates for employment, as a Junior Estimator and for Construction Management positions. The positions are also open for 3rd or 4th year students, if they can demonstrate capabilities, and can cope with almost full time work. David Jarman is the contact at Abigroup, but anyone who knows of interested graduates or students should contact Geoff Outhred.

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**New school policies**

There are current RMIT branded templates for documents, presentations and reports available online for you to download. Please ensure that you are using the correct and most recent templates for all your communications.

A compressed folder with all of the templates can be downloaded at [www.rmit.edu.au/policies/templates](http://www.rmit.edu.au/policies/templates)

You will need to log in to view this page.

The 'V' in our RMIT post box number has not been needed for 10 years now, and should not be included in our postal address. The correct address is:

RMIT University  
GPO Box 2476  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
Australia

Please update any instances of "GPO Box 2476V" in your email signatures and web pages. By contacting dscweb@rmit.edu.au you may request a change of contact details on your staff profile page.
Items of interest

› **Albury Wodonga Scholarship** - Property and Valuation student Bridgett McMahon was awarded a scholarship prize of $3000 at the annual conference of the Albury/Wodonga Valuers Group on July 24. Bridgett submitted a short essay discussing her understanding of the US sub-prime crisis and credit crunch and the implications for Australian property markets, and conducted an interview before being selected to win the prize. The scholarship also involves guaranteed work in Albury-Wodonga in the summer.

› **Industry Awards Night** – Please note that the date of the annual Industry Awards night has changed. It will now be held on Wednesday 21 October, not on 5 October as previously announced.

› **Alumni** – The School is keen on connecting with its alumni students. If you are in contact with alumni, or have stories of graduates, please pass this information along to Marsha Lamb or Ben Bucknall. We hope to hold some exciting events in the future for alumni, staff and students to reconnect and network.

If you would like to contribute to RCPM’s ‘School News’, please send your submissions to: ben.bucknall@rmit.edu.au by the 27th of September.