



## From the Vice-Chancellor



Welcome to the new academic year and to the first edition of Openline for 2002.

This is the first of a regular column I will be preparing for Openline. I am pleased to have this opportunity to share with you each month some of my thoughts and ideas about RMIT and where we are heading.

However, I am also interested in what you're thinking. I want this column to respond to real issues across the university. Therefore, I need your input. If you have some comments you would like to make in response to this column, or if you would like me to address a particular issue please e-mail me at [vice-chancellor@rmit.edu.au](mailto:vice-chancellor@rmit.edu.au).

In this first column I would like to focus mainly on what we expect the year to bring. Clearly it has begun with a focus on the new AMS and while everyone understands the potential benefits this investment will bring, there remain issues of implementation. This will require continued focus to realise these benefits during 2002 and I would like to acknowledge

and thank all those who are working to bring this about.

In January the new Federal Minister spoke of reforms within the Higher Ed system. These included increasing diversity within the system and specialisation

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within and across institutions. This will have implications for RMIT and we expect that these will reinforce the policy direction begun with the White Paper on Research and the Research Training Scheme.

The strategic priorities we announced before Christmas anticipated these sorts of reforms

and thus we will continue to move toward new strategies.

For example some of our priorities include:

- Overhead analysis, reduction and reallocation;
- The development and implementation of a reformed profile process;
- Further quality work, particularly preparation for AQUA and AQTF, and program improvement in line with the Teaching and Learning Strategy;
- Enhancing and tailoring our learning and academic support processes; and
- Improving our research grant application outcomes.

We will also focus our efforts on developing RMIT Vietnam.

At the same time the Victorian Government's Corporate Governance Review has commenced focusing on the relationship between universities and their communities and in particular the most appropriate forms for their governance and accountability in the light of their diversified funding bases.

In conclusion, the results for RMIT performance in 2001 are currently being collated. Consistent with my commitment, these will be presented for the first time in Triple Bottom Line. But overall these results were another year of showing the significant commitment by RMIT staff to our mission.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your dedication to RMIT and I offer you my best wishes for 2002. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate my commitment to an open and consultative approach to building RMIT's future.

*Ruth Dunkin*

## Recent visitors

By Rose Paolozza and Silvia Romanic

During December, visitors to RMIT included:

- Mr Shijin Zhang, President, Jinjili Enterprise Group.
- The National Natural Science Foundation of China delegation, a group of administrators from national laboratories in Chinese universities, who explored national policy on science and technology, the government system supporting research and development, and various aspects in laboratory management including operation, research, management, result and performance evaluation and maintenance.
- A delegation from the NTA Ministry of Education, Japan who obtained information on management and maintenance

of facilities, looked at planning, space utilisation and allocation, budgets and overheads, and explored the relationship between RMIT and other Japanese universities.

In January:

- A delegation from the Huazhong University of Science and Technology visited RMIT to explore potential relationships between the universities and to learn more about RMIT's programs on the NextEd platform.

Visitors expected during February include:

- A Chinese vocational and training delegation who will study the general principle of the VET system within RMIT, particularly competency based training/curriculum/traineeships, enterprise training partnerships and VET teacher training.

## Media star of the month



The usual suspects, Tricia Caswell, Dr Kerry Hempenstall and Con Stavros have been at it again, contributing to media debate and discussion in January.

To see your name here in 2002, contact the university's publicists with topical issues and events you are happy to discuss in the media.

If you have something interesting to say in the media, contact the university's publicists for assistance:

- ▶ Eliza Anderson, tel. 9925 2807 or 0419 528 1010, e-mail [eliza.anderson@rmit.edu.au](mailto:eliza.anderson@rmit.edu.au)
- ▶ Andrew Yee, tel. 9925 3176 or 0417 592 398, e-mail [andrew.yee@rmit.edu.au](mailto:andrew.yee@rmit.edu.au)

RMIT University has experts in many areas. Our *Experts Guide for Media* is available on-line to help journalists and editors:  
<http://www.ca.rmit.edu.au/expert/>

## Quote/Unquote

*"The retirement of Yves Saint Laurent marks the passing of a grand couturier. Many young [fashion] houses are growing but he will be a difficult name to replace, even if it's possible."*

—Sue Thomas, Fashion Postgraduate Coordinator, Department of Fashion and Textile, speaking to Radio 3AK presenter Terry Laidler on the retirement of international fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent.

## Osteopathy Unit receives research funding

By Ray Myers

The Australian Osteopathic Association (AOA) has donated \$22,000 to the Osteopathy Unit in



the Faculty of Life Sciences to provide seed funding for research projects for staff and eligible postgraduate students.

Associate Dean (Research) Professor Mike Hill accepted the donation from the AOA President Dr Michael Mulholland-Licht.

Professor Hill believes that it is important for areas with low levels of research to encourage industry and professional bodies to support research within the University. RMIT Life Sciences is facilitating this by matching the grant for osteopathic research project.

Traditionally there has been low uptake of research within the osteopathy profession due to the high employment rates of graduates leaving the program into well paid positions in private practice.

It is hoped that this donation is the beginning of many such collaborative activities between the Australian Osteopathic Association and RMIT Life Sciences.

*Mike Hill (left) receives donation from Michael Mulholland-Licht, President of the AOA. Photograph supplied by the Faculty of Life Sciences.*

**Aurora—RMIT**

*From page 1*

and co-chair of the Aurora Vehicle Association. "They are showing the general community the progress made in solar energy, and giving remote and outback communities a better understanding of its potential."

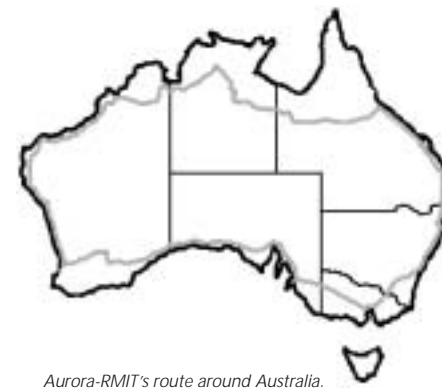
Behind the project is the Aurora Vehicle Association Inc, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing highly efficient vehicles which address two of the world's most pressing problems – global warming and diminishing fossil fuel resources. Aurora formally joined with RMIT University in 2000 to jointly design, develop and build the 2001 Aurora-RMIT solar race car.

Aurora-RMIT has found backing among Australian industry and research groups keen to encourage innovation and the refinement of existing technology. The international law firm Minter Ellison, car manufacturer Ford Australia, Bosch, and the Victorian Government are foundation

backers of the project; CSIRO developed the in-wheel electric motor, which drives the vehicles front wheel, and RMIT University has researched optimal design for the car and the aerodynamics technology.

The next challenge for Aurora-RMIT is the annual Sun Race from Adelaide to Sydney to be held this month. "We'll be aiming to perform at our best and achieve another win," Prof Bates said.

*Further information can be found at [www.aurorasolarcar.com](http://www.aurorasolarcar.com). Photograph supplied by Aurora Vehicle Association.*



*Aurora-RMIT's route around Australia.*



## The latest on intellectual property transfer at RMIT and the RMIT Technology Estate



By Neil Furlong

It's difficult these days to pick up any article about university R&D without coming across chapter and verse on how best to ensure the capture of intellectual property (IP) and its exploitation for the benefit of a university's supporting communities. Such conversations are most often couched in terms of technology-based R&D and exploitation via commercialization. However we should always bear in mind that IP comes in many forms and the success of modern communities will often depend on 'social' and other know-how as much as it might on technical wizardry.

At RMIT we aspire to contribute to the triple-bottom line: recognizing that economic, environmental and social advances all go towards community well being. Models for IP transfer abound: independent companies (often set up to cope with the perceived cultural schism between academics and the 'real', ie commercial, world), consortia to provide 'economy of scale' (for example Biocomm of which RMIT is a member), Co-operative Research Centres for close everyday connections between university researchers and potential users of their R&D (RMIT participates in 9!), in-house R&D sections bringing dedicated support (RMIT of course has a boomer!) and so on.

What is increasingly clear (to me at least) is that

- the viability/value of any given mode is probably a project-by-project decision
- the extent of "deal flow" from a university like RMIT (at the current stage of development of our R&D base at least) renders some modes very costly and ineffective

- strong connectivity to the researchers in the university underpins the viability of any model, even if it is accepted that the researchers are not bringing the mix of 'tech transfer skills' essential to do exploitation/commercialisation right.

The Council of RMIT University recently decided to cease efforts and activities to develop and implement RMIT Technology Estate (RTE) as a separate facility on the Janefield site at Bundoora. The RTE is a project with a bold and strong vision around connectivity between new technology business enterprises and the innovation base at RMIT and has a long term aim of growing a high tech facility bordering the east and west parts of RMIT at Bundoora. The decision on the RTE was based on a comprehensive review during 2001 which concluded that the RTE was likely to take a long time to contribute significantly to the university's core strategies. Potential participants in the RTE also saw few real incentives for their co-location at the separate Janefield site, or investment in, the RTE—both key components of the RTE plan.

The wind-back of the Janefield plan is however not an abandonment of much of the vision that underpinned the RTE—far from it. The review also concluded that there are substantial opportunities for its innovation vision to continue to support and enhance our R&D, T&L and other strategies and to build our interactions with industries, enterprises and communities. One clear focus for 2002 and beyond will be the growth of such interactions 'within' our existing campuses—an inside-out approach if you like—with Bundoora a prime candidate (personal bias!).

In time we would hope to see more merging of R&D projects with partners in our facilities leading to co-location on our campus of new facilities involving close and high level collaboration (did I hear the whisper 'incubator'?). Might we aim for Bundoora to become a real R&D/'IP exploitation hub' for RMIT and partners—leading to a distinctive R&D flavour that leads partners/collaborators to want to be part of the action? Of course, we would also seek to make such progress wherever we operate, in the city and through our regional and community partnerships.

On a people note: Professor Leigh Peterson (CEO) and Kathryn Thomas of the RTE recently

## Virtual Research Institute funding

By Michael Walsh

Over \$200,000 in funding has recently been allocated to support small-scale research projects associated with RMIT's Virtual Research Institutes (VRI). The VRI small grants scheme was designed to encourage collaboration across faculties, therefore only projects involving staff from more than one faculty were considered.

Successful applicants for funding commencing in 2002 are:

Project Title	Chief Investigators	VRI
• Development of a reaction water turbine for low head reservoirs	Prof A. Akbarzadeh, Prof J. McGovern	Advanced Manufacturing
• Broadband electro-optic polymer modulators: development of polymer materials and processing technology for broadband integrated electro-optic applications	Prof M. Austin, Dr A Mitchel, Prof R. Shanks, Dr G. Amarasinghe	Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing
• Developing a sustainable forestry enterprise with indigenous stakeholders: a social impact analysis	A/Prof B. Banerjee, Dr I. Thomas	Social Policy and Urban and Regional Development, Enterprise Development and Entrepreneurship, Environmental Sustainability
• Cervical cancer data analysis	Dr S Bevinakoppa, Dr K. Kumar, A/Prof J. McGovern	Biotechnology and Drug Technology
• Organometallic strings for electronic devices	Prof S. Bhargava, Prof D. Sood, Prof M. Bennett, Prof N. Furlong	Advanced Manufacturing
• Oxide formation and oxide repair mechanisms associated with inert metal anodes in an aluminium reduction cell	Mr G Biddle, A/Prof D McCulloch, Dr L Ward	Environmental Sustainability, Advanced Manufacturing
• Melbourne's housing market	A/Prof B. Kam, Prof M. Berry, A/Prof J. Jackson	Social Policy and Urban and Regional Development
• EMG of lumbar paraspinal muscles	Dr D Kumar, Dr B Polus	Biotechnology and Drug Technology
• Product sustainability assessment tool using a triple bottom line approach	Ms H Lewis, A/Prof B. Banerjee	Environmental Sustainability
• Evaluation and determination of angiogenesis inhibitors/promoters in Chinese medicinal herbs	Dr C Li, Dr C Xue, Prof P Marriott, Dr I Darby, Prof M Hill	Biotechnology and Drug Technology
• Financing sustainable development in low-income countries	A/Prof M McGillivray, A/Prof S Davidson	Social Policy and Urban and Regional Development
• Implications of changing metropolitan form and socio-demographic characteristics of Melburnians for transport infrastructure requirements for the future	A/Prof J Morris, Prof M Berry, Dr F McGinley	Social Policy and Urban and Regional Development
• Developing a technology to produce concrete of low deformability	Dr S. Setunge, Dr I. Patnaikuni, Prof S. Bhargava	Environmental Sustainability
• Performance evaluation of e-commerce in Australia	Dr M. Singh, Dr K. Geiselhart, Dr N. Morelli	Information Technology
• Applications of numerical modelling and shape optimisation to percussion musical instrument design	A/Prof P. Trivailo, Mr K. Nigjeh, Dr N. McLachlan	Advanced Manufacturing
• Headlining heroin: newspaper reporting of the experience of heroin users in Melbourne, 2000-2001	Prof R. Watts, Mr M. Ricketson, Dr B. Engels	Social Policy and Urban and Regional Development

transferred to R&D Section, bringing a kaleidoscope of experience to help us build the initiatives discussed above. Prof Peterson's activities will be varied around the establishment of R&D partnerships including the evaluation of pre-incubators and incubators that have been successful in some Australian and North American universities. Kathryn has taken on a new role in R&D communication—I would suggest communication is something we can never have too much of.

PS : If you have not yet come across the new 'RMIT Research Highlights 2001 Brochure' try looking at : <http://www.rmit.edu.au/departments/rd/highlights/>

## New appointment in R&D

By Michael Walsh

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (R&D) is pleased to announce a new member of staff, Dr Eric Kingston, who is based at the Bundoora West office.

Eric works in the Research Partnerships Group with the title Coordinator Intellectual Property and Contracts. As his title suggests, Eric will concentrate on defining and improving the processes associated with IP, patents and contractual issues surrounding RMIT's R&D activities, particularly as they concern involvement with companies and

industry. He will also assist individual Researchers, Department, Schools and Faculties with support and advice on contractual and IP issues.

In general, as part of the Research Partnerships Group, Eric will assist building relationships with industry and government, and support the achievement of commercial returns from the University's research efforts.

Eric can be contacted by e-mail ([eric.kingston@rmit.edu.au](mailto:eric.kingston@rmit.edu.au)) or on extension 57750.

## Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) projects shortlisted

By Michael Walsh

Staff from RMIT University are involved in five projects shortlisted for the State Government's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) infrastructure grants. The grants program supports the development of new private and public sector infrastructure in Victoria in priority industry sectors and strategic

technologies in a competitive process.

Funding under the STI program is highly competitive with only 22 projects shortlisted in round two following the assessment of over 130 preliminary applications. Over \$60 million of funding is available for the current round.

Staff from RMIT University are involved in the following shortlisted projects:

- Joint project on nano bioengineering (Professor David Mainwaring)
- Victorian Institute for Chemical Science (Professor Philip Marriott)
- The Australian Pharmaceutical Consortium (Professor Harry Majewski and Professor Michael Hill)
- Joint project on waste management (Associate Professor Barry Meehan)
- The virtual science carousel: A tool for the promotion of science (Mr Norbert Nimmervoll)

## Special Research Projects funding

By Michael Walsh

In early 2001 a Special Research Project Fund was established within RMIT to fund excellent cross-discipline research outside the usual funding programs, where an opportunity has arisen with a short time frame or where funding has been unsuccessfully sought externally.

The following projects received support under this scheme, which is now discontinued.

Project	First named applicant	Allocated
Soundscape Project	Mr Lawrence Harvey	\$12,500
ANU Chemistry research collaboration	Prof. Suresh Bhargava	\$12,000
Western FC Health Club	A/Prof Peter Kell	\$10,000
UCLA Environment Workshop	Dr Nira Jurisuriya	\$10,000
Neural Networks for Acoustic Modelling	Dr Dinesh Kumar	\$9,900
Northern metropolitan exercise	A/Prof Jeffrey Walkley	\$2,500
Ecotourism project with Parks Victoria	Mr Colin Arrowsmith	\$10,000
RadioWorkx	Mr David MacKenzie	\$6,000
Instrumentation for real-time Multi. PCR	Prof. Mike Hill	\$20,000
Bio-active compounds on platelet function	Prof. Andrew Sinclair	\$10,000
Temporal data and GIS	Dr Francisco Escobar	\$9,500

## Technology is the new environmental crusader

By Eliza Anderson

More and more environmentalists, land managers, agriculturalists and even tourism operators are turning to technology to help develop methods of controlling problems such as bushfires, salinity, threats to biodiversity, droughts, forest management issues and poor crop yields, as well as benefiting eco-tourism.

Melbourne company, Spatial Vision, established in 1999 with the assistance of RMIT University, is helping to pioneer the use of technology in these non-traditional areas and is experiencing significant success.

Using geospatial data sets, Spatial Vision recently undertook a vehicle arrival time analysis for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's fire management department. This resulted in a plan

that allows resources to be better and more quickly deployed in fighting bushfires.

In the significant issue of salinity, Spatial Vision applied geospatial technology to analyse data, helping to develop a system that can measure salinity and enable regional land managers to decide on the best method of control.

During this last year of operation, Spatial Vision secured three contracts with Victorian water authorities to better manage their water resources through the use of technology. The Coliban, Gippsland and Southern Rural water authorities contracted Spatial Vision to develop geographical information systems that will increase their capacity to respond to water supply problems such as pipe bursts or leakages.

Other resource and environment areas where Spatial Vision is proving technology can play a significant role

## Young researchers organise chemistry conference

By Ruby Ong

The Royal Australian Chemical Institute together with RMIT University's Department of Applied Chemistry hosted the 9th Annual Research and Development Topics Conference 2001 at RMIT's city campus in December.

About 80 interstate delegates, as well as lecturers, research supervisors and industrial sponsors and local delegates attended. This is the second year that the conference incorporated an environmental division, with an equal distribution of analytical and environmental presentations.

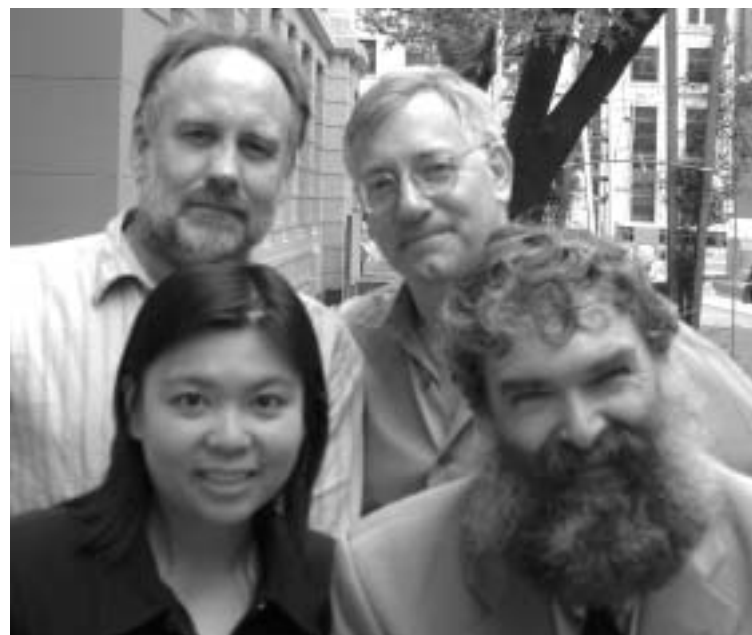
The R&D Topics Conference was organised by RMIT research students Ruby Ong, Robert Shellie, Robert Western and Sally Harrison with support from the administrative staff of the Department of Applied Chemistry as well as the Molecular and Chromatography Group/ Separation Science Group.

Professor Geoffrey Scollary of Charles Sturt University was awarded the RACI Analytical Division Medal for 2000. He also presented a plenary lecture.

Industry representatives Kelly Scientific Resources, GlaxoSmithKline and SGE presented to delegates on industry expectations of graduates and employment prospects.

Prize winning conference presentations were:

- Anthony Chariton (University of Canberra)—Community responses of estuarine benthic invertebrates to trace metal contaminated sediments: linking chemistry to ecology
- Jason Costin (Deakin University)—Chemiluminescence determination of amino acids



- Christian Lindholm (University of Southern Denmark on exchange to RMIT)—Metabolism of the oestrogenic chemical bisphenyl A in fish
- Alan Sweeney (University of Western Sydney)—Studies towards the development of a two-dimensional HPLC system with cold temperature trapping
- Carol Conway (University of Canberra)—Reactivity of organic carbon under

anaerobic conditions and its role in the nutrient dynamics of freshwater and estuarine ecosystems

- Robert Western (RMIT University)—PTV large volume injection—the use of GCxGC for increased sensitivity and matrix isolation.

*Royal Australian Chemical Institute members, clockwise from rear left: Bill Maher, Philip Marriott, Brynn Hibbert and Ruby Ong. Photograph by Andrew Yee.*

## Researchers eye multi-million dollar aircraft contracts for Australia

By Eliza Anderson

A consortium of researchers and industry are hoping their developments in producing better, lighter and cheaper aircraft components will position Australia among the world's best in the design and manufacture of parts for commercial aircrafts and lead to multi-million dollar contracts.

RMIT University, Hawker de Havilland, Hexcel Composites and the CRC for Advanced Composite Structures Ltd are involved in the project that has its sights firmly set on winning an export order for control surfaces.

To limit the financial effect of a worldwide industry decline, the need to produce more cost-efficient aircrafts that meet high safety standards is increasing. The researchers have designed highly competitively priced and efficient control surfaces—the parts of the aircraft that allow it to manoeuvre—and are confident of receiving much interest in the technology from international aircraft manufacturers.

The Australian aerospace industry has long been considered world class and researchers believe the inroads they are making in this niche market will help strengthen this reputation, increase the role the aerospace industry plays in

Australia's economy and provide more employment opportunities.

Many innovations have been demonstrated in this research program. New design and manufacturing concepts can now be fully simulated and optimised using sophisticated computer aided engineering tools, which enable the full potential of advanced carbon fibre composite materials to be realised. These new methodologies greatly facilitate the achievement of the goal of producing better, lighter and cheaper components.

"This technology is still a few years away from being included in the manufacture of commercial aircraft, however consumers may well feel the benefits of it sooner than that. We are confident industry will quickly implement it and will factor it in to their long-term planning, therefore limiting the impact of the current industry downturn," said Professor Murray Scott, Director of RMIT University's Sir Lawrence Wackett Centre for Aerospace Design Technology.

"Our designs were recently taken to the Paris Airshow and they attracted considerable attention. We are also delighted to have been awarded the Business/Higher Education Round Table Award for outstanding achievement in collaborative research involving a CRC," Professor Scott said.

## Moving Outside the Square—the Taiwan Mobility Studio

By Stephen Crafti

The city of Taipei, chaotic, frantic and sporadic, is confronting compared with Melbourne's sense of order. Fourteen architecture students from RMIT University witnessed the sharp contrast first hand, as they completed the Taiwanese Mobility Studio from June to September last year.

The joint project, held by RMIT in conjunction with Taiwan's Tamkang University over a 12-week period, generated a number of important issues and strategies on the subject of mobility.

For Peter Ryan, a fourth year architecture student at RMIT, the experience of working in Taipei was a valuable one. Teaming up with fellow student Alastair Flynn, a set of native urban survival behaviours were identified and studied.

"There was a certain complexity in Taipei. It was a kind of lawlessness. Development just happened," says Ryan. Examining the systems, however chaotic, illustrated the need for flexibility and adaptability in any city.

Student Michael King also valued his time in Taipei. "You quickly realise that your ideas don't necessarily apply in a different



place. Even the simple act of buying bread isn't just a matter of putting your money on the counter. In

space in a densely populated urban environment.

The collective reading of the group of 23 students then became the subject of an exhibition at Taipei's most established gallery IT Park. The curators for the exhibition were the students themselves. Piled up on a trestle table, the student work resembled a stack of plates. The work lined the walls of the exhibition, which was simply attached by Velcro. The work was continually rearranged by the students and visitors.

A similar format of the exhibition is scheduled for Melbourne at RMIT's First Site Gallery in Swanston Street from 26 February until 9 March.

The Taiwan Mobility Studio (the theme for the first Dutch Architecture Biennale) was possible through the Study Abroad Scheme. A grant from UMAP (University Mobility in the Asia Pacific) provided airfares and accommodation.

*Photograph supplied by the School of Architecture and Design.*

## Disabled are technologically disadvantaged: report

By Sarah Miller

People with disabilities have more difficulties accessing information and communications technologies (ICTs) than other groups at RMIT, says a report by the Centre for International Research on Communication and Information Technologies (CIRCI) at RMIT University.

The report, *Equity and Use of Information and Communications Technologies at RMIT: A Pilot Study*, by Sarah Miller, Claudia Slegers and Terry Runciman examined the current distribution and use of ICTs to see if it meets the needs of five equity groups: students of low socio-economic status; students with a disability; students from non-English speaking backgrounds; rural students; and women in non-

traditional areas of study. It compared these patterns with access and use by the general student body at RMIT.

Computers, internet and email are employed on a weekly basis to produce assignments, identify resources on the web, access course notes or learning materials and contact family and friends for all equity groups except students for low socio economic backgrounds. Equity students value these resources and have a strong preference to continue to use them.

However, across each equity group, these students are only slightly more than 'somewhat' interested in using the Distributed Learning System or Online Learning Hub. They indicate a higher preference for more general learning activities such as

## Funding available through University Mobility in the Asia Pacific (UMAP)

By Georgina Douglas

University Mobility in the Asia Pacific (UMAP) was founded in 1993 as a source of seed funding for projects approved by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST, formerly DETYA) and which will develop the capabilities of graduates to operate confidently and competently in an Asia Pacific context.

Projects should be conceived in conjunction with institutions with which RMIT has existing exchange partner agreements. It allows for groups of students to complete study for credit, usually accompanied by the relevant academic staff member, for a period of one or two semesters. A language component is built in prior to or during the course of study if necessary. The UMAP scheme encourages not only building on existing international links but also the establishment of new ones.

Funds of over \$80,000 have been awarded to RMIT University for four UMAP projects in 2002. These include a student nursing exchange in Seoul, Korea, an exchange in International Studies at the Universiti Sains Malaysia and exchanges in Urban Planning and Consumer Science at Ryerson University in Toronto.

Susan Merritt of the Department of Nursing and Midwifery indicated that Professor Chang-ja Byun and Professor Kwuy-Bun Kim from the College of Nursing Science at Kyung Hee University in Seoul had been instrumental in developing strong relations with RMIT Nursing. She said that a reciprocal exchange

through UMAP will provide six students with the opportunity for cultural, language and professional nursing experience as they learn and work in a different health care system. Their enhanced cultural competence for practice will contribute to meeting the health care needs of multicultural Australia and contribute to understanding global health needs.

Associate Professor John T Jackson said that one of the aims of the RMIT-Ryerson Planning Project is to build on a long standing partner exchange agreement with Ryerson University by exploring the possibility of RMIT planning students doing Work Placements in Toronto (Ryerson students can do them in Melbourne). Another aim is to develop a course on Comparative Metropolitan Planning which can be taught at RMIT, Ryerson and RMIT's other exchange partners in England and the Netherlands.

Applications for the UMAP 2003 round are to be completed by the start of August this year, so planning should commence now.

*An information session about UMAP will be held in March however for details concerning applications contact the Education Abroad Unit at any time.*



Susan Merritt. Photographed supplied by Department of Nursing and Midwifery.

## What's on in February

[www.whatson.rmit.edu.au](http://www.whatson.rmit.edu.au)

The "What's on" page of RMIT's website is an excellent, central information board to post or learn about events, social activities, exhibitions, seminars, etc.

### Social activities, networks

Learn to Surf Weekend, Friday 22 February to Sunday 24 February. Departs 4.30pm Friday, returns 5pm Sunday. Phillip Island. This trip includes 3 lessons, equipment, transport, accommodation and meals. There is even an opportunity to visit the Penguin Parade if you choose. For more info call RMIT Union Sport and Recreation on 9925 5568. Cost: RMIT Students \$110, Guests \$130. More info: 9925 5568

Penguin Parade, Tuesday 26 February. Departs 3pm, returns 11pm. A tour of Phillip Island. Witness the amazing phenomenon of fairy penguins returning to Summerland beach at dusk. Cost: RMIT Students \$55, Staff \$70. More info: 9925 5568

*Want to post an event? Simply go to <http://www.whatson.rmit.edu.au> and click "add an event", then type in the details.*

people with disabilities. Students with disabilities, and to a lesser extent, women in non-traditional areas reported the most difficulties with restrictive factors. Students from non-English speaking backgrounds report having the least difficulties with their use of computers.

The report suggests that people with disabilities may need to have targeted training on relevant applications, information on using computers to assist learning, and improved awareness of what technologies and services are available. Hardware and software that is appropriately modified for people with disabilities also needs to be readily accessible.

*For further information on the report, email [pam.seeney@rmit.edu.au](mailto:pam.seeney@rmit.edu.au).*



