UTAS report in fires royal commission

Environment

BY SHARON WEBB

The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission has heard University of Tasmania evidence that breakdowns in communication and coordination in Australia’s complex incident management systems for bushfires are common.

As Victoria prepares for a 2010 bushfire season possibly worse than this year’s when 173 people died, commissioners have questioned representatives of Victoria’s Department of Sustainability and Environment about a June 2008 report by the UTAS Bushfire Co-Operative Research Centre.

The report, Mapping information flows to emergency partners during fire-related incidents, concluded that there was a lack of communication within and coordination of communities and partner agencies affected by fires or those who played an emergency services role.

Report authors Christine Owen, Greg Hickey and Jan Douglas reviewed inquiries into five previous bushfires and interviewed 40 internal and external stakeholders directly involved in the 2006/2007 fire season.

Head of the research project Dr Christine Owen said considerable efforts in Victoria to improve communication and coordination were still not enough.

“In Victoria when fire occurs on public land and in the country the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Country Fire Authority are the control agencies,” she said.

“If the emergency escalates, communities and partners with an interest in the event increase in both number and complexity.

“These partners include firefighters and regional and state centres of emergency coordination, agencies such as Parks Victoria and the State Emergency Services, critical infrastructure such as Telstra and Vic Roads, government ministers, community members and others.

“They have differing information needs and frequently have information critical to the control agencies.

“Our research revealed a need for a more systemic approach to developing emergency management partnership arrangements.”

The Commission is hearing from many sources that the effect of February’s disastrous fires was made worse because even though a number of reports had documented the inadequacy of the coordination and communication paths of the partners involved in bushfires, these flaws still existed.

The UTAS Bushfire CRC’s findings include that internal and external stakeholders had:

- good knowledge of their own role, but little understanding of the ’big picture’;
- limited understanding and sometimes conflicting explanations as to which agencies fulfilled particular responsibilities; and
- different understandings of how various components of the emergency management framework ‘scale up’ during a fire.

“Difficulties of information flow are likely to be exacerbated when the municipal coordination points have not scaled up in time,” Dr Owen said.

“These differences are a risk to the delivery of integrated services, especially in fast-moving fires.”

Crucially, the Bushfire CRC’s report noted that most emergency partners were dissatisfied with the timeliness of information received during bushfires.

The UTAS Bushfire CRC expects more interest in the report later this month when the Royal Commission looks at how incident management systems worked during the February fires.

The UTAS Bushfire CRC will appear on the ABC science program Catalyst later this month, previewing the 2009/2010 Australian bushfire season.

- The Bushfire Co-Operative Research Centre includes full research partners from the Universities of Tasmania and Western Australia, all Australian fire and emergency services agencies, and 10 research institutes including the CSIRO. It is funded jointly by the Australian Government and the fire and emergency services industry.

Journos’ Euro jaunt

A new three-year scholarship program will take 12 UTAS journalism students to study in Britain, Denmark, Greece and Finland, with students from each of those countries coming to Tasmania to study environmental journalism.

Journalism coordinator Dr Libby Lester says the project’s main aim is to foster collaboration between academics and students from all the universities involved – not just those students on exchange.

“This semester students will work online to produce and analyse journalism in a way that would not be possible if they were working in isolation in Tasmania,” she said.

“Tasmanian journalism students will work with students in Denmark during the lead-up to the Copenhagen climate talks, with students in Finland on pulp and forestry issues, and with students in London on river pollution. We’ll also work with students and staff from participating Australasian universities – University of Technology Sydney, Monash University and Murdoch University – to create a database of environmental journalism resources.”

Dr Lester said that environmental risks and policies are increasingly played out on a global stage and the need for journalists equipped to communicate these complex issues to the public has never been greater.

The universities involved in the scholarship program have formed the Global Environmental Journalism Initiative, which has been awarded $1.5 million in funding under the EU–Australia Cooperation in Higher Education and Training Program and aims to internationalise the study and practice of environmental reporting.

The first student exchanges began in September, with students from Finland and Denmark arriving at UTAS and two Tasmanian students on their way to the Danish School of Media and Journalism.

Menzies brain study participants needed see www.healthybrain.utas.edu.au
**Margaret Britz**  
Professor Margaret Britz is the newly appointed Dean of Science, Engineering and Technology at UTAS. Prof. Britz is an internationally recognised microbiologist and food scientist and has conducted research in medical microbiology, human physiology and biochemistry, industrial microbiology, environmental technologies and microbiology, and the physiology and genetics of food-grade microbes. Prof. Britz comes to UTAS from Bioindustry Partners Pty Ltd, where she has been a director since 2008. She has also been an honorary postdoctoral fellow at the University of Melbourne since 2006. Professor Jim Reid will step down as Dean of Science, Engineering and Technology in November.

**Arabella Teniswood-Harvey**  
Associate Lecturer in Music Theory and Classical Piano and Coordinator of ASOJ Chamber Music at the Conservatorium of Music Dr Arabella Teniswood-Harvey has been selected to be one of six members of a new international advisory board for American art initiatives at the Frie Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. The advisory board will comprise two members from America, two from Asia, one from Scotland, and one from Australia. It is supported by funding from the Terra Foundation for American Art. This two-day symposium will explore the complicated interactions between American and Asian artists and visual traditions from the eighteenth century to the present.

**Ruth Frost**  
The Acting Head of Photography at the Tasmanian School of Art, Dr Ruth Frost, was recently awarded one of the highly competitive Australia Council New Work (Established Artists) grants for a body of her photographic artwork. Dr Frost’s art practice focuses loosely on the visualisation and projection. The body of work that won the grant was created in the historic home Oak Lodge, in Richmond, and consisted of large-scale photographic works taken inside the Lodge, with light used as a metaphor for the memories contained within the building.

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**Our people**

**Backpackaging bat safely sent home**

**A bat in the hand:** This Tasmanian Vespadelus vulturnis has come home after a trip to Sydney.

**II TOBY MESTITZ**

A hitchhiker was recently uncovered in a Sydney couple’s luggage after they returned from a trip to Tasmania – a little forest bat, Vespadelus vulturnis. The couple notified Sydney Wildlife Services cases Tim Pearson, who retrieved it and informed the Australian Bat Society, which contacted all of its members in a search for a Tasmanian bat lover willing to help transport the bat back to Tasmania.

Linda Cawthen, a UTAS PhD student in the School of Zoology, replied immediately. The rescue mission appealed to her as a bat lover and also as an opportunity to further her research into the use of bat calls to compare bat species composition, demographics and abundances in forest remnants.

To get the bat home to Tasmania Tim Pearson had to prove its origins to quarantine.

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**Use it or lose it brain study**

**Launching the Tasmanian Healthy Brain Study:** Dr Mathew Summers, School of Psychology, registered participant Trevor Roots; Prof. James Vickers, Co-Director, Wicking Centre; and UTAS Vice-Chancellor Prof. Daryl Le Grew.

**II FIONA HORWOOD & TOBY MESTITZ**

Older Tasmanians interested in enrolling at university are encouraged to take part in a world-first study being conducted by the University of Tasmania and the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, part of the Menzies Research Institute.

The Tasmanian Health Brain Project is investigating whether tertiary education later in life lessens the effects of ageing on memory and potentially protects from the onset of dementia.

The study is hoping to become the largest non-pharmacological intervention trial for age-related cognitive decline and dementia ever attempted in the world.

About 245,000 people in Australia have dementia and this number is estimated to rise to 591,000 in 2030 and over 1.1 million by 2050. Alzheimer’s Australia has estimated that delaying the onset of Alzheimer’s disease by just five months may save $13.5 billion in health care costs in Australia and $67.5 billion by 2040.

Professor Mathew Vickers, co-director of the Wicking Centre and one of the six chief investigators of the study, said because of Australia’s ageing population the project will be critically important for Australia and will have significant implications for population-level preventative health strategies.

Previous studies have shown that tertiary education early in life protects the brain from dementia at later ages. It may be that further education strengthens the brain by enhancing the ‘cognitive reserve’ needed to withstand the effects of age-related pathology in the brain. Prof. Vickers hopes the study will attract a significant number of participants.

“We’re looking to recruit over 1000 Tasmanians over several years,” he said.

“Participants can engage in undergraduate or postgraduate, part-time or full-time, study at any campus of the University of Tasmania.”

To volunteer participants must be aged between 50 and 70 years, be in good health, and have no history of neurological disease or prior brain injury. They will be assessed annually on cognitive and memory skills for up to five years and potentially for up to 10 years.

The Wicking Centre receives major funding from the JO & JR Wicking Trust (managed by ANZ Trustees), the Menzies Research Institute, UTAS (School of Nursing and Midwifery and central funding) and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services.

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**The Tasmanian Health Brain Project is investigating whether tertiary education later in life lessens the effects of ageing on memory and potentially protects from the onset of dementia.**

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**Do you have a tidbit for ‘our people’? Email news snippets on UTAS people to: Media.Office@utas.edu.au and mark your email subject: ‘our people’.”
Humour in the workplace can lead to better productivity and inspired leadership, says PhD student Daryl Peebles, pictured here with the Premier of Tasmania, David Bartlett.

He is surprised that despite recent illustrating, the physiological and psychological benefits of humour, there is comparatively little evidence to support the proposition that humour may be beneficial to an organisation.

With his background in human resource management, Mr Peebles has experienced first-hand the value and benefits of humour in many corporate, government and academic organisations.

“It occurred to me when I was working in human resource management for the ABC that there were pockets of the organisation that were buoyant and productive. People worked unpaid overtime and loved their jobs,” he said.

But there were other pockets where people were inclined to work the bare minimum, get out of there as quickly as possible and pull weeds. As human resources manager I was able to see a pattern; it came down to whether people were having fun at work or not.”

Mr Peebles began unofficial research into these workplace conditions in the early 1990s, but now has begun formal research.

“You know intrinsically what you are saying is correct but it would be lovely to have some empirical evidence,” Mr Peebles said.

Mr Peebles hopes the results of his research will motivate leaders in Australian business to be more adventurous in the management methodology they use.

One of the most historically significant parts of Thompson’s story is his account of the voyage from England to Australia, a feature often missing from other convict narratives.

Thompson confirmed the existence of a punishment tool called a ‘black box’, previously thought to be a myth.

After a brawl at sea, Thompson and his mess captain were put in a rowboat and hung over the side of ship at the mercy of waves. Thompson was then placed in a small, completely enclosed, black box just large enough to fit one person, and dangled over the side of ship at the mercy of waves.

The iconic photo of the 80-year-old convict in his shackles was taken by photographer John Watt Beattie in 1900.

Thompson told Beattie that during the flogging convicts were allowed to scream, shout and say whatever they wanted but once the punishment was over the convict was not allowed to utter a word or they would receive further punishment.

Thompson spent many years working in the coal mines on the Tasman Peninsula and provided the first insight into the underground workings of the mines; previous accounts had only come from above-ground managers.

The Career Of William Thompson, Convict can be purchased from the Port Arthur Historic Site and selected Tasmanian bookstores.

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Future of Dying with Dignity law uncertain

By Sharon Webb

I
f the Tasmanian Parliament passes the Greens’ proposed Dying with Dignity Bill, Dying with Dignity, the Australian Government could try to overthrow the legislation.

Speaking recently at Lawfest, held in Launceston’s Albert Hall for 300 college legal studies students by the UTAS Law Faculty and the School of Government, Professor Margaret Otlowski said the Australian Government could attempt to rely on its external affairs power to prohibit euthanasia nationally.

The Law Faculty’s Prof. Otlowski put the legal case surrounding euthanasia in a debate where national Greens leader Senator Bob Brown and Reverend Professor Michael Tate also put their viewpoints.

The Dying with Dignity Bill, introduced to Parliament by Greens leader Nick McKim, will be debated before the end of the year, Prof. Otlowski told the students.

“This subject area of end of life is not within the Commonwealth’s specified legislative powers under the Australian Constitution and it therefore falls within the domain of the states and territories.

“But after the Northern Territory passed legislation in 1995 there were moves at a Commonwealth level, ostensibly introduced as a Private Members Bill (Euthanasia Laws Bill) by Liberal Member Kevin Andrews, but which had strong government support from the coalition federal Howard government.

“They sought to take advantage in an unprecedented way of their legislative powers in respect of the Australian territories by passing legislation which overrode Northern Territory legislation.

“This was seen by many as inappropriate exercise of legislative power by the Commonwealth, which was tantamount to an interference with internal Territory affairs and a challenge to the Territory’s sovereignty.”

But this could not happen if Tasmania passed its Dying with Dignity Bill, Prof. Otlowski said.

“Significantly the Commonwealth does not have the same power to make laws in respect of the states as it does in respect of the territories.

“That leaves open the question as to whether there might be some other means by which the Commonwealth Parliament could intervene to override a state law permitting euthanasia.”

One option would be for the Commonwealth to seek to implement the so-called ‘right to life’ provision of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Australia is a signatory and which says: Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected against any abuse.

No-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their life. No-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their life.

“If this eventuated it would be likely that any Commonwealth legislation purporting to draw on this as a source of legislative power would be challenged in the High Court of Australia,” Prof. Otlowski said.

She cited the 1993 Tasmanian Dams Case concerning the controversial proposal to construct a dam in south-west Tasmania which would have flooded part of the Franklin River; the Commonwealth relied on its international treaty obligations contained in the World Heritage Convention to axe the plan. But the Tasmanian Government appealed to the High Court.

“The High Court, by majority, upheld the Commonwealth,” Professor Otlowski said.

“Whether the right to life provision in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights could be interpreted to support a prohibition on euthanasia is more debatable and certainly the international jurisprudence surrounding this aspect of the covenant does not provide clear support for such a conclusion.”

Euthanasia facts

• Criminal law in Australia prohibits voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide.
• Doctors can lawfully withhold or withdraw treatment at the patient’s request providing the person has decision-making competence.
• Doctors can lawfully administer pain-relieving medication which may hasten the death of a patient (e.g. morphine) if it is given to relieve pain not to kill the patient.
• Some doctors are prepared to risk of legal liability in respect to euthanasia. A survey of thousands of Australian doctors found that around 30 per cent of doctors have acted on patients’ requests to help them die.
• No Australian doctors have been prosecuted for euthanasia or assisting patients to die; family members and friends assisting a loved one to die have almost invariably been dealt with leniently by the courts, and frequently been given suspended sentences.
• Numerous Australian opinion polls on public attitudes to euthanasia report in favour of a change in the law (typically 70 plus per cent); a Tasmania poll reported 78 per cent of respondents want a change.
Producing art in a magical place

BY CHERIE COOPER

A dilapidated 170-year-old farmhouse in rural Japan has become a magical setting for a Tasmanian artist.

Lucy Bleach, a lecturer in sculpture at the Tasmanian School of Art, created an exhibition for the Echigo-Tsugaru Art Triennial, the world’s largest international art festival, while on a 10-week Asianlink residency.

The triennial is held in the rural rice-farming Echigo-Tsugaru region north-west of Tokyo, a beautiful area known for growing the best rice in the country.

The Australian Embassy in Tokyo and the triennial organisation acquired a beautiful 170-year-old farmhouse. Once renovated, it became “Australia House” as three Australian artists lived there while creating their work for the triennial.

Ms Bleach’s artwork made use of the farmhouse rooms, creating a dream-like interactive space. She worked with the local community to create her artwork, making casts of local people’s ears.

“They were the loveliest people and they really wanted to engage – I made Anzac cookies to swap them for their ears,” she said.

The ears formed part of a shrine in one room. Clustered around warm lights they looked at first glance like moth’s drawn to the light.

Ms Bleach said the ears were about the strength of the tight-knit community’s communication.

“Like moths are drawn to light, these ears are drawn to voices,” she said.

Lucy Bleach casting the ears of villagers north-west of Tokyo.

Lucy’s cloud room in the farmhouse.

Ms Bleach also created a ladder leading through a false ceiling, which led the climber to a fantastical cloud-filled room with mirrors on the walls. “Clouds” were made by pulling the stuffing out of a traditional Japanese shikibuton (bottom mattress).

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Japanese aesthetics please conference crowd

BY JULIUS ROSS

Although medieval Japanese knew extramarital affairs was not the most common of research topics, it held the floor at a research conference at the University of Tasmania’s Cradle Coast campus recently.

Postgraduate history student Matthew Grubits mesmerised his audience and judges on the subject at the inaugural Research on the Edge Cradle Coast Postgraduate Research Conference.

Designed to provide an opportunity for postgraduate researchers and postdoctoral fellows to showcase their work to colleagues, students and staff from across UTAS, the conference was a great success, according to conference committee chair Dr Robyn Eversole.

“We were very pleased with it and overall it was a fantastic day. There were so many comments on the different research presentations and the overall buzz after the conference was amazing,” Dr Eversole said.

Mr Grubits’ presentation explored the extramarital relationships of aristocrats in Heian-period Japan (794–1185 AD).

Dr Eversole stated that Mr Grubits’ presentation was a particular highlight of the one-day conference, earning him the Paper of the Conference prize.

“He was an amazing speaker, and really knew his material, but most importantly he knew how to get it across to the audience, and that is really an art,” she said.

“The speakers were not communicating to academics in their field, but to a diverse range of intelligent listeners, and it really is important to make your content interesting and accessible to all people. Matthew certainly achieved this.”

Currently enrolled in a Master of History, Mr Grubits argued in his paper that extramarital affairs were prevalent in the Heian period because they were aesthetic acts.

“Affairs were a way for aristocrats to express aestheticism – that is, to express sensitivity and taste. Because the Heian aristocracy had a preoccupation with aestheticism, it embraced affairs,” Mr Grubits said.

Mr Grubits has been interested in Japanese history since he took the undergraduate history unit Great Cities of Asia, run by Dr Kate Brittlebank, which examines the pre-modern and early modern periods of history in south, east and southeast Asia.

“During a lecture on Heian-kyo, the capital city in the Heian period, Dr Brittlebank read a portion from The Pillow Book by Sei Shonagon (a Heian-period lady-in-waiting), about male–female relationships in the Heian period. This inspired me to go and read the whole book, and my interest grew from there.”

East Timor consultations general visits UTAS

BY KATHY GRUBE

East Timor’s Consult-General Abel Guterres comparing Tasmanian soils with those of East Timor.

Soil science solutions: School of Agricultural Science PhD student Jorge Martins (left) and East Timor’s Consult-General Abel Guterres visiting Tasmanian soil science solutions: School of Agricultural Science PhD student Jorge Martins (left) and East Timor’s Consult-General Abel Guterres visiting Tasmanian

Mr Guterres said agriculture was an important industry being developed in East Timor and it was vital that the soils were kept in good condition.

“We have not mapped the soils in our country and it is important that we have the knowledge and understanding of how to care for our land as agriculture is expand- ed,” he said.

Bachelor of Business student Maria Castro Alves is the current undergraduate Timor-Leste Scholarship holder and is studying at the Launceston campus.
Inaugural ARC Future Fellowships

By Kathy Grube

Four UTAS researchers have been awarded prestigious ARC Future Fellowships. The inaugural four-year Australian Research Council Future Fellowships – worth up to $740,000 each – were established to prevent Australia losing its world-class researchers overseas and to attract leading international researchers to move to Australia.

Selected for their national significance, the UTAS research projects aim to reduce workplace depression; identify new pharmaceutical drugs and diagnose diseases; analyse carbon dioxide’s relationship with the Southern Ocean; and determine if the evolution of eucalypts is affecting Australia’s biodiversity.

Two fellowships were awarded to current UTAS researchers who are internationally recognised in their fields and the other two fellowships went to USA-based researchers who will move to Tasmania to do research at UTAS.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew said the four ARC Future Fellowships confirmed the university as one of the nation’s leading research institutions.

The UTAS recipients of ARC Future Fellowships are:

- Dr Kristy Sanderson, Monzies Research Institute.
- Dr Emily Hilder, Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science (ACROSS). High-performance chromatography based on nanostructured monolithic polymers
- Associate Professor Pete Strutton, Oregon, USA: Southern Ocean productivity and carbon dioxide (CO2) exchange under current and future climate regimes.
- Dr Joe Bailey, Tennessee, USA: Community and ecosystem consequences of adaptive evolution in eucalypts.

ARC Future Fellowships is a five-year program running from 2009 to 2013 and offers four-year fellowships of up to $135,000 a year. Administering organisations, including the University of Tasmania, receive up to $50,000 a year to support related infrastructure, equipment, travel and relocation costs.

Engineering milestone full of energy

By Cherrie Cooper

At the 50th anniversary: Acting Education Minister Lisa Singh, Aurora Energy chief executive Peter Davis, Head of the School of Engineering Chris Letchford and Dean of Science Professor Jim Reid.

A new world-class laboratory for research into renewable energy systems, along with a new solar research facility, have been opened at the University of Tasmania as part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the School of Engineering.

The new artwork is a large, metallic piece, its surface covered with a mosaic of letters spelling out names of notable engineers and engineering graduates.

Infrared imaging now available at UTAS

A new $210,000 infrared spectrometer with a state-of-the-art infrared microscope at UTAS has the potential to diagnose cancer and help save valuable heritage objects.

The Fourier Transform Infra-red (FTIR) spectrometer is the newest addition to the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) at UTAS.

It measures all wavelengths of infrared light simultaneously and can be used to identify components in solid samples without the need for sample preparation prior to analysis.

The microscopic infrared imaging can be used in a huge range of areas, including physical, life and health sciences, and even in forensics and art restoration.

For example, the machine could be used for identifying and classifying prostate cancer, determining the content of active ingredients in a solid pharmaceutical drug or identifying what chemicals were used during a nineteenth-century restoration of a valuable painting.

This instrument is the first of its kind in Tasmania and, since it is located at the Vibrational Spectroscopy Facility in the CSL, it will be accessible to all researchers within the University as well as local government agencies and industry.

Dr Thomas Rodemann, senior scientist in charge of the Vibrational Spectroscopy Facility, said the spectrometer itself is a high-end research instrument capable of resolution to less than 0.4cm-1 and with a wavenumber accuracy of 0.01cm-1.

For further information on this facility and the applications it can be used for, please visit the Vibrational Spectroscopy site on the CSL webpage or directly contact Dr Thomas Rodemann by email: Thomas.Rodemann@utas.edu.au
Engineering for the future

BY PATRICK CRANNY

From researching some of Australia’s biggest contemporary engineering projects, and explaining sustainable and ethical engineering in an engaging way, through to looking at early Aboriginal and Maori engineering feats, the task of co-authoring a new textbook has been a rich experience for the Australian Maritime College’s Dr Anna Carew.

A senior lecturer in Academic Development at AMC, Dr Carew was invited two years ago to join University of Southern Queensland engineering academic Professor Roger Hodgkin in putting together a textbook for first-year engineering students.

‘The result is the recently released Engineering Your Future: An Australian Guide, an expansive book published by John Wiley and Sons that draws on the combined academic experience of the authors to introduce engineering students to what professional engineers actually do. Dr Carew wrote four chapters for the book, including the daunting first chapter.

‘I had the pleasure, for a non-engineer, of writing the introductory chapter called “What is engineering?”. It was fascinating because, although I have spent over a decade working with engineers, my background is as a microbiologist. I was invited to write this chapter because it really needed an outsider’s perspective to keep it accessible for first years,’ she said.

‘The text is big on local and Australasian examples, which was an absolute pleasure because I got to research some of the most fascinating engineering innovations in Australia and also some of the history of engineering in Australia and New Zealand,’ she said, adding that numerous Aboriginal and Maori examples presented themselves as early and very obvious engineering achievements.

Praise for the book has so far been widespread. It’s been picked up by two universities in Australia, and USQ’s website has reported international interest in the book that could lead to UK and US adaptations.

‘Some of the leaders of the future direction of engineering education in Australia have come out in very strong terms to endorse the book and support what it’s trying to do, which is quite exciting,’ Dr Carew said.

‘Part of what the book is trying to do is to support ways of teaching that are slightly different to the ways engineering is traditionally taught … the text supports teaching approaches that are more student-focused, more problem-based and more authentic to the actual practice of engineering,’ Dr Carew said.

‘Perhaps the best response I’ve had so far was from a colleague I worked with years ago who had trained as an electrical engineer but wasn’t working in that field anymore. She saw the book on someone else’s desk and picked it up and read through it. She emailed me and said, ‘The book is fantastic and I’m going to buy it for my son who is in first-year engineering’. So that was wonderful.’

The book will be officially launched in December.

With the collapse of communism and the rise of globalisation, some experts argued that the ideological debates around the role of government and approaches to economic management had been resolved. However, politics remains important and as pervasive as ever.

Politics for Business Students

by Richard Eccleston, School of Government, Robyn Holland, Elizabeth van Acker and Paul Williams (Pearson Education, 2009)

Politics for Business Students is an introductory text offering a concise account of how political institutions and practices in both Australia and abroad influence business in the 21st century. The global financial crisis of 2008 demonstrates the important links between politics and business. With the collapse of communism and the rise of globalisation, some experts argued that the ideological debates around the role of government and approaches to economic management had been resolved. But politics remains important and as pervasive as ever. This book is an updated edition of the popular 2006 text Foundations of Australian Politics.

My PhD

Shinsuke Matsubara

Australian Maritime College, National Centre for Maritime Engineering and Hydromynamics

High-speed research and romance

From research through to romance, it’s fair to say high-speed ferries are Shinsuke Matsubara’s life.

The 34-year-old from Nara, Japan, has spent the past 15 years in Australia pursuing his dream of playing a role in the high-speed ferry industry.

Shinsuke joined AMC’s National Centre for Maritime Engineering and Hydromynamics in 2006 to examine the effects of wave loads on high-speed ferries. His research project is running concurrently with ongoing industry research with high-speed ferry manufacturer Incat.

“I work with high-speed ferries and we’re looking at the structural loads due to the hydromodynamic force. One of the key issues is how fast a ferry can travel in high waves, so we need to understand the loads we get from big waves. In actual, realistic environments we can’t control the waves and ship speed,” he said.

“The key to success for a high-speed ferry is making the ship as light as possible. That’s the golden rule, so that’s why we need to understand the wave loads. Then we can take that information to the structural analysis stage in preliminary design.”

One of the biggest challenges for the team was the design of a hydroelastic segmented model. Based on Incat’s 112m vessel, Shinsuke and the team spent a year of preparation designing the unique carbon fibre cat.

Moving from the model to the real thing, Shinsuke was invited on the delivery run of the Incat 112m Nakanana Rene to Hokkaido, Japan, in 2017. It was on that trip that he met his wife, Mai. She was an MC on board, hosting some of the city’s celebrations in honour of the new ferry.

“She had a beautiful voice but I never expected we’d fall in love,” he said.

After email exchanges, a meeting in Tokyo sealed the deal and Shinsuke and Mai were married in May 2008.

He expects to finish his PhD in February 2019.

“I have achieved two of my dreams in this project. One was conducting the towing tank experiments and the other was, after I was introduced to the high-speed ferry industry in Australia, I wanted to contribute to a project that took a high-speed ferry back to Japan. Having the opportunities that I’ve had, I’m very thankful to the people who have supported me.”
The work

Christiana Szczerba (1982–) is currently completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart. She has been mentioned on the Dean’s Roll of Excellence several times.

Christiana was born in Queensland and grew up in Hobart. While much of her work in the past has related to film noir and was realistically painted, her current work relates to fairtales and folklore and has an illustrative aesthetic.

Christiana exhibits in Tasmania and in other states of Australia.

“There are sensations of both speed and meticulous slowness in the brushwork to create an image overlaying another,” she said.

2010 Summer School program heats up

2009 Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School Wildness and Natural Environment participant Lincoln Randall sketches during one of the workshop’s field trips.

A boriginal history and culture will be a feature of the fourth annual Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School, to be held 13–22 January next year.

The event is an initiative of the UTAS School of Visual and Performing Arts and continues to gain momentum, with new program partners bolstering the Summer School’s capacity to reach broader audiences and offer interdisciplinary learning opportunities within a stimulating and creative atmosphere.

For the first time the School of Philosophy will offer their Aboriginal Philosophy unit in the 2010 program.

The unit will be delivered by Dr Linn Miller, lecturer in the School of Philosophy and Research Fellow of the Community Engaged Aboriginal Research Initiative; Patsy Cameron, Aboriginal historian, cultural geographer and elder from the islands of eastern Bass Strait; and Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Fiona Maher.

This workshop exposes students to Aboriginal heritage and culture in a Tasmanian context. Participants will be introduced to elements of Aboriginal philosophy and will explore the significance of Aboriginal connections to country, in both theory and practice. Field trips to significant sites within north-east Tasmania will offer unique opportunities for students to experience the region and to gain a deeper understanding of how the landscape inspires the works of contemporary and traditional Aboriginal cultural expressions.

Field trips to significant sites within north-east Tasmania will offer unique opportunities for students to experience the region and to gain a deeper understanding of how the landscape inspires the works of contemporary and traditional Aboriginal cultural expressions.

The event is open to the general public as well as current students, so there will be a good mix of participants from different backgrounds and areas of study. This will hopefully make for wonderful opportunities for participants to learn from each other and make new friends and professional associations.

For further information please visit the Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School website: www.acadarts.utas.edu.au or call the Academy of the Arts, (03) 6224 4423.

2010 Summer School program heats up

T his mixed media work on canvas by Christiana Szczerba is the winner of the University of Tasmania’s inaugural Birchalls Art Prize.

It was chosen by the prize judge, noted Australian artists Wilma Tobacco and David Keeling, from 25 selected works exhibited in the NEW Gallery at the Newnham campus.

They described it as an ‘enigmatic work that suggests but does not explain narrative. It’s like Little Red Riding Hood back-to-front. ’ Ms Tobacco said.

‘She’s almost as threatening as the wolf; there are no answers — it’s a work that raises a lot of questions.’

Mr Tobacco described the painting’s brushwork as ‘energetic and applied in a confident manner.’

Christiana Szczerba (1982–) is currently completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart. She has been mentioned on the Dean’s Roll of Excellence several times.

Christiana was born in Queensland and grew up in Hobart. While much of her work in the past has related to film noir and was realistically painted, her current work relates to fairtales and folklore and has an illustrative aesthetic.

Christiana exhibits in Tasmania and in other states of Australia.

What’s on

LECTURES/SEMINARS

16 OCTOBER
School of Government seminar
The science—policy gap in ocean governance
Speaker: Dr Peter Cobron
Business School Time: 11 am
Venue: Level 5, 33 Salamanca Place, Hobart Information: (03) 6226 7366

28 OCTOBER
Asian Languages and Studies workshop
A national workshop for early career researchers and postgraduates working in the field of Asia and Pacific Studies. The workshop will feature both keynote speakers and panel sessions of established researchers.
Information: Mandi Finh, (03) 6226 2790

27 OCTOBER
CALT 2009 First-Year Teaching Forum
This year’s forum focuses on implementing a transition pedagogy, following on from Professor Sally Kirb’s keynote address to the FYTF in 2008 on the principles of first-year curriculum design.
Time: 10 am – 3.30 pm Venue: UniCentre, Sandy Bay campus

06 NOVEMBER
Faculty of Education lecture
Reflections on trends and emerging issues in outdoor experiential education in Canada and beyond
Speaker: Dr Tim O’Connell (Brock University)
Time: 3:10 pm – 4 pm Venue: Faculty of Education video conference rooms (Cradle Coast B159, Launceston A221 & Hobart H235)
Information: Jesse Lundba, (03) 6324 3645

06 NOVEMBER
School of Sociology and Social Work Seminar
Thinking with the head: For a secular understanding of ethics of race and human being
Speaker: Prof Kay Anderson, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney.
Time: 2.30 pm Venue: Room 319, Arts Building, Sandy Bay campus
Information: Adrian Franklin, (03) 6226 7241

06 NOVEMBER
Australian Innovation Research Centre seminar
2009 Research Seminar Series
Speaker: Anthony Arcand, ARC.
Time: 11 am Venue: Level 5, 33 Salamanca Place, Hobart
Information: (03) 6226 7366

12 NOVEMBER
School of History and Classics free public lecture
The intriguing history of Antarctic civilisation
Speaker: presented by Prof Tom Griffiths (ANU) and chaired by Tony Press, Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems CRC
Time: 6 pm Venue: Hadley’s Regency Room, Hobart Information: Lyn Richards, (03) 6226 2298

14 NOVEMBER
Southern Cross Soloists
Paul Dean, Tanja Frazier, Livena Dean, Margaret Schnridl, Peter Luff and Kevin Power
Time: 7.30 pm Venue: Conservatorium Recital Hall, 5 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart
Tickets: $30 adults, $20 concession. Available at the door 30 minutes prior to concert or by phoning concerts office. Information: Conservatorium Box Office prior to show or by phoning Academy of the Arts.

19 NOVEMBER
Performer’s talk
Performer: presented by Caryl Churchill
Time: 6 pm Venue: Venue: Conservatorium Recital Hall, 5 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart
Tickets: $30 adults, $20 concession. Available at the door 30 minutes prior to concert or by phoning concerts office. Information: Conservatorium Box Office prior to show or by phoning Academy of the Arts.

21–24 OCTOBER
Graduation Production directed by Peter Hammond
The Skriker by Caryl Churchill
Time: 7 pm Venue: Annexe Theatre, Inversen Railways Tickets: $12 adults, $8 concession/UTAS staff/student. Available from Annexe Theatre Box Office prior to show or by phoning Academy of the Arts.
Information: Cultural Activities Office at the Academy of the Arts, (03) 6324 4450

24 – 26 OCTOBER
School of Visual and Performing Arts event
The School of Visual and Performing Arts Masters Theatre students present four performances by Laura Bishop, Travis Hennessey, Jonathan Liew and Chris Jackson.
Time: 6 pm Venue: Annexe Theatre, Inversen Railways Tickets: $15 adults, $8 concession/UTAS staff/student. Available from Annexe Theatre Box Office prior to show or by phoning Academy of the Arts.

Information: Cultural Activities Office at the Academy of the Arts, (03) 6226 4450

25 OCTOBER – 10 NOVEMBER
Conservatorium of Music performance examinations
Performance examinations are open for members of the public to attend. A full list of dates and times is now available. Entry by gold coin donation.
Venues: Conservatorium Recital Hall, 5 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart
Information: Conservatorium Box Office, (03) 6226 7306

13 NOVEMBER – 04 DECEMBER
Visual and Performing Arts exhibition
The Best of the 2009 School of Visual and Performing Arts Honours, MCA, MFA and PhD student art work.
Information: Malcolm Bywater, (03) 6226 4410

For a complete list of, or to contribute to, What’s on/Classifieds, visit: www.utas.edu.au. Contributions are free but may be edited.