Headbanging’ tests to cut playground injuries

University of Adelaide researchers are calling for a more responsible approach to the placement of “soft” surfacing around playgrounds, to reduce the risk of serious head injuries to children.

Each year about 1300 South Australian children require hospital treatment because of injuries caused by a fall from playground equipment — almost the same as the number of children hospitalised as a result of car accidents.

Although playground accidents do not cause as many deaths as road accidents, they are responsible for just as many non-fatal cases. Recent figures show that of those injured in playgrounds, 19% sustained a head injury and 5% sustained a brain injury.

If a child falls from play equipment to the ground, the “soft fall” material in place around it is designed to absorb some of the impact, thereby reducing the chance of serious head injury.

Mr Carl Howard and Mr Ian Brown from the Department of Mechanical Engineering’s consulting arm, MechTest, are conducting research into the impact-absorbing properties of various types of playground undersurfacing, such as pine bark chips, rubber mats and plastic tiles.

Using a specially designed simulated head (nicknamed “Oscar”) wired to a computer, the researchers have been able to get a clear picture of how well the undersurfacing works.

The “head” is dropped onto the soft fall material. Sensors inside the head relay data to the computer about the forces involved at the point of impact, and this information is then used to determine the effectiveness of the undersurfacing.

Repromed celebrates a decade of bringing hopes to life

For the past 35 years University of Adelaide reproductive medicine researchers have run a clinical service to help infertile couples realise their dreams of becoming parents.

During this time many ‘firsts’ have been achieved in the development of reproductive medicine and the service.

Playing an instrumental role in that over the past 10 years has been the University of Adelaide’s company Repromed, which is this year celebrating a decade of “bringing hopes to life.”

Repromed Pty Ltd, based at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, was established in 1987 at the instigation of the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Donald Stranks.

A commercial operation with formal links between ‘town and gown’, Repromed is a wholly owned subsidiary of the University’s commercial arm, Luminis Pty Ltd.

The company’s aim was to meet the growing demand for fertility programs such as the IVF (in-vitro fertilisation) program, providing clinical services to couples in need.

About one in seven couples have trouble achieving pregnancy. There can be many reasons for this — age, lifestyle, or because the male partner is infertile, either through a low sperm count or inability to release sperm from his reproductive organs.

The solutions to these problems are many and varied, ranging from the low-tech (such as simple lifestyle advice) to the hi-tech (such as the latest in IVF technology and micro injection).

A self-supporting non-profit company, Repromed reinvests surplus funds into research, enabling it to remain at the cutting edge of reproductive medicine techniques and technologies.

Repromed’s many achievements, in close collaboration with the University’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, include:

- introducing the revolutionary single-sperm injection procedure to Australia
- achieving Australia’s first (and the world’s third) micro injection pregnancies
- achieving Australia’s first (and the world’s sixth) pregnancy from pre-implantation diagnosis
- establishing the donor egg program in 1987
- conducting Australia’s first scientific study into weight control for fertility
- establishing centres in Darwin and the Adelaide CBD
- training embryologists from around the world in the latest reproductive medicine techniques
- enabling more than 3000 babies to be brought into the world over the past decade.

“Repromed has proven an extremely successful venture,” said the company’s general manager, Mr Roger Stables.

The first 1997 Elder Hall Concert on 17 April not only marks the Conservatorium debut of new Senior Lecturer in Violin, Dr Semyon Kobets, but has also been chosen to commemorate the centenary of the death of Sir Thomas Elder. Dr Kobets is pictured above with the Conservatorium’s David Lockett. Story page 6. Photo: Mark Spaven

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Continued on Page 6

Carl Howard and Ian Brown with “Oscar”, the simulation head used in the playground safety tests. Photo: David Ellis

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The Abbess of Adelaide muses on globalisation

In recent times we have come to think Globalisation is a Good Thing. In all sorts of ways, and for all sorts of reasons, we are exhorted to think Global. For universities globalisation would seem to be something that is happening there. After all, universities are about knowledge and as we are fond of pointing out, knowledge is universal, and universities universal come from the same root.

Despite all the talk there is not a commonly held view of what globalisation really means in universities. Does it mean large consortia of universities working together to do things jointly, to offer joint degree programs, to carry out joint research? In fact we are edging towards this sort of globalisation through our benchmarking agreements. We have such arrangements with two universities, Edinburgh and Nottingham, and are in the process of establishing more. For many universities it seems sensible to benchmark and link with universities which have a similar profile even though they are different institutions.

Perhaps we may learn more and become more truly global as we work with universities that are less similar. This week the State of South Australia signs an education agreement with the State of Baden-Wurttemberg in Germany. This will bring together the universities of South Australia and some of the great German universities – famous names in the universe such as Freiburg and Stuttgart. The Rektors and the Vice-Rectors meet to discuss how we might move the links forward despite issues of language and very different university systems. There is great enthusiasm for making the arrangements work, and I am confident that will be translated into concrete benefits for all involved.

Another exercise in globalisation occurred recently when the Department of Philosophy organised a seminar entitled Mind and World which was a debate about the differences between western philosophical and Eastern (Buddhist) philosophy. Two former abbots (vice-chancellors) of two of the leading universities in exile from Tibet debated the Eastern concept of mind with our philosophers and other philosophers from Australian universities, representing Western philosophy.

I found this seminar raised a number of very interesting questions for me. At one level with my own interest in machine cognition I found the differences between the models deeply fascinating and intellectually stimulating. On another level I could see how the processes of translation both hindered and high-lighted the difficulties we were all experiencing in our attempts to understand Western concepts under discussion. Sometimes translation makes such ideas extraordi-

In answering my welcoming speech one of our visitors speaking in Tibetan thanked me for being present. I had my suspicions, I wasn’t sure that the translation was exact, and on checking afterwards I did discover that a person thanked was the Abbess of Adelaide!

MARY O'KANE

The Abbess of Adelaide muses on globalisation

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Careers seminars capture their audience

The Faculties of Engineering and Science have enjoyed a strong response to a series of jointly organised career seminars, with the first session on Tuesday 25 March attracting around 240 people.

The aim was to give students in Years 9 and 10 the opportunity to speak to the careers and science departments.

The speakers — Dr John Harvey (IVYS), Ms Emma Dyer (Environmental Protection Authority), Mr Geoff Wallbridge (Wallbridge & Gilbert Consulting Engineers) and Dr Anne-Marie Grisogono (DISTO) — were chosen to represent females and males, people who had recently graduated and those who had been in the workforce for a number of years.

Faculty of Engineering Outreach and Liaison Officer Jennie Hayes, who chaired the session, said the speakers talked about their jobs, career paths to date, future plans, and especially, why they chose and enjoy their careers.

“Their enthusiasm for their careers was clearly evident and transmitted itself to the audience,” she said.

Mrs Hayes said the evaluation sheets from the evening were very positive. Parents in particular commented on the variety of career paths available to their children through Engineering and Science degrees.

Two further sessions on 13 and 27 May are booked out, while a fourth on 3 June is filling but still has some vacancies.

John Edge

Guy Lloyd scholar announced

Denise McMillan-Hall is the 1997 recipient of a major scholarship from Adelaide-based aviation company Lloyd Helicopters.

The Guy Lloyd MBA Scholarship is worth $20,000, allowing the recipient to study for a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the University of Adelaide’s Graduate School of Management.

Ms McMillan-Hall graduated from Loughborough University, London, with a BSc (Hons) and a Diploma of Industrial Studies. She has held various management positions in the banking industry in both London and Adelaide, and she hopes the MBA will give her a springboard to attain senior management status in her chosen profession.

Ms McMillan-Hall is the second postgraduate student to be awarded the prestigious scholarship, which is named in honour of the late Mr Guy Lloyd.

A ceremony held at the Graduate School of Management on Tuesday, 25 March, Ms McMillan-Hall was congratulated by Guy Lloyd’s widow, Dr Adele Lloyd, and the chairman of Lloyd Helicopters, Mr Stephen Bond.

The ceremony also saw several other awards presented to MBA students and graduates.

The $400 Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers Ltd Prize in Management Finance was shared by Mr Adrian Smith and Ms Alina Lebed, who was last year’s inaugu-ral winner of the Guy Lloyd MBA Scholarship. Ms Lebed was also presented with the $250 Baron Partners Prize for Business Policy.

The Normandy Mining Group MBA Prize for Best Graduating Student, worth $500, went to Dr Dennis Gurnham. And Mr and Mrs Pender and Mr Paul Siwek shared the $500 MBA Society Prize for Supervised Project Work.

The top five graduating students of 1996 were also honoured for their excellent academic achievement. They are (in alphabetical order): Ms Barbara Deed, Mr Donald Puckridge, Mr Jonathan Russell, Dr David Thompson, and Mr Gregory Touzeau.

David Ellis

Arts program benefits research students

A Faculty-wide Structured Program for research postgraduate students got underway in the Faculty of Arts last month. The first program to be introduced on a faculty-wide basis since the Structured Program concept was introduced across the University in 1994.

The Arts program was launched on 14 March by Professor Purnendra Jain from Asian Studies, who was responsible for setting it up as Associate Dean (Higher Degrees) last year. It is being coordinated this year by the current Associate Dean, Dr Margie Ripper from Women’s Studies.

Under the program, all new research postgraduate students in the Faculty — there are between 40 and 50 this year — are expected to participate in a semester-long series of seminars and training sessions designed to prepare them for the requirements of postgraduate research.

Generic sessions designed for all the students include work on technology skills including use of email and the WWW, techniques of postgraduate research, seminar presentation, teaching skills, the respective roles and expectations of supervisors and students, interpersonal skills, the structure of the Faculty and its student support mechanisms. Additional discipline-specific training will be offered by departments.

The Advisory Centre for University Education and the Information Technology Division are involved in the program as well as senior members of the Faculty’s academic staff.

“The Faculty decided that we were wasting scarce resources duplicating generic work at a departmental level, so we decided to offer Faculty-based core components,” said Professor Jain.

“We also believe this common program will help to overcome some of the isolation that postgraduate students often feel — particularly in the Humanities and Social Sciences, where there is tradition of solitary research.”

The Faculty hopes to consolidate this benefit by organising informal social functions for postgraduates, and establishing support networks among research students, supervisors, postgraduate coordinators and members of its Higher Degrees Committee.

John Edge

Guy Lloyd Scholarship winner Denise McMillan-Hall (centre) with Guy Lloyd’s widow, Dr Adele Lloyd, and the chairman of Lloyd Helicopters, Mr Stephen Bond. Photo: David Ellis

HUBBARD AWARD

Associate Professor David Newble (Department of Economics) has been awarded a major prize by the National Board of Medical Examiners in the United States.

Mr Newble, head of the Clinical Education Unit at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is the 1997 recipient of the John P Hubbard Award.

The award, which consists of a substantial amount of money and a plaque of recognition, is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the pursuit of excellence in the field of evaluation in medicine.

Mr Newble has a strong interest in medical education and clinical competence, and he has played a major role in curriculum development and management, student learning, staff development and continuing medical education both at a local and international level.

DEETYA APPOINTMENT

Associate Professor David Rond from the Department of Economics has been appointed Chair of the Employment Services Regulatory Authority (ESRA).

The part-time appointment will last until December, when ESRA will cease to exist, its functions then being subsumed into various sections of the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs under the Commonwealth Government’s labour market reforms.

COLOURS OF AUSTRALIA

Lovers of the craft of quiltmaking have a rare opportunity to see the latest in contemporary Australian quilt design in “Colours of Australia”, a new exhibition currently on display at The National Textile Museum of Australia at Urrbrae House.

One of the first recorded Australian quilts was made in 1841 by a group of convict women on their way to Tasmania.

More than 150 years later, the 40 contemporary quilts in this exhibition represent the diversity of modern Australia as a new wave of quilters styles ranges from the very traditional to innovative techniques with an increased use of alternative fabrics, surface design and embellishments.

• Colours of Australia is open from 10am to 4pm daily until 20 April.

John Edge

The News

AUTOMOTIVE WORLD

The News

IN BRIEF

ENGINEERING FELLOWSHIPS

Chemical Engineering senior lecturer Dr Anton Middelberg has recently been awarded two prestigious international fellowships.

The first, a Fulbright Fellowship from the Australia-America Education Foundation will enable Dr Middelberg to travel to the United States for six months later this year.

Dr Middelberg will visit the University of California at Berkeley where he will conduct leading-edge biochemical research.

He has also been elected to a Visiting Fellowship at Corpus Christi College Cambridge for three months starting early in 1998.

At Cambridge Dr Middelberg will collaborate with local researchers, examining and modelling new biochemical engineering operations.

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Substitute wine filter identified

University of Adelaide researchers have identified an easily-manufactured product capable of replacing expensive imported diatomaceous earth (DE) as a key filtering agent in the Australian wine industry.

A $30,000 venture capital project run by Luminis Pty Ltd and overseen by Dr Ken Davey from Chemical Engineering’s Food Technology Research Group, has established that the substitute product — whose identity remains confidential for commercial reasons — filters faster and better than DE.

Industry partners in the exploratory project, which is just winding up, were Southcorp Wines Pty Ltd at Nuriootpa and the Melbourne and Sydney-based Quality Sands and Ceramics Pty Ltd.

The research brought together strands of consultancy work which Dr Davey did in 1995 for Quality Sand and Ceramics to find applications for their products, as well as recent collaborative Honours projects with both companies.

Diatomaceous earth is a silica-based aid to filtration which has long been used in the “polishing”, or final filter step of wines — as well as in the clarification of beers.

Essentially, it works as a filter cake through which the wine is forced at pressure to remove particulates.

Dr Davey and his team — including University of Adelaide Honours graduate Jason Pecanek and Jamal Kadir, a chemical engineering graduate from Loughborough University in the UK — built a stainless-steel pressure vessel which enabled them to simulate at bench-scale process conditions used in the wine industry at Nuriootpa.

Working with white wine, they compared the performance characteristics of several possible substitute filter media against DE as a control.

“One of the substitutes gives comparable technical performance with practical realisation of greater flux,” Dr Davey said. “In fact, the flux is statistically significantly greater than DE in our bench-scale processing.”

Mr Larwood said the Project Team had finalised the design briefs for the New Science Building, which is complete.

Project Manager John Larwood says that contract documentation is underway this month with contracts being let for alterations in the Jordan and Fisher Buildings. These spaces will be used as temporary accommodation until the New Science Building is available.

The first physical work on the Lower Level Site Development is getting underway this month with contracts being let for alterations in the Jordan and Fisher Buildings. These spaces will be used as temporary accommodation until the New Science Building is complete.

“After several cost cutting exercises we have a balanced budget and are moving forward,” John Larwood said.

One of the major changes during this process has been the deletion of the proposed underground Stage 1 Engineering/Maths Building.

The Division is now moving to occupy space in the Plaza Building vacated by ITD and Property Services.

Project architects MGT/Hardy have now presented preliminary sketch plans for the proposed New Science Building and the refurbished Benham Laboratories.

John Larwood and Rob Hutson invite anybody interested in the Lower Level Site Development to pop into the Project Office on the Maths Lawns to view these plans or for a chat.

—John Edge
Students well received at perinatal conference

Five Masters and Honours students in the Department of Public Health presented papers on aspects of perinatal medicine at the recent Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand Annual Congress in Fremantle.

Dr Janet Hillier, senior lecturer in the Department, said having five student papers accepted at such a conference, which attracts leading scientists, obstetricians, midwives and others involved in perinatal care, was an outstanding achievement.

Masters student Jan Carter’s paper, which found a slightly increased risk of premature birth among older mothers, was selected for presentation at a plenary session of the conference. Others included:

- Kerri Beckmann (Masters), reasons for mid trimester abortions
- Bo Zhang (Masters), asthma as an increasingly common pregnancy complication
- Elizabeth Griffith (Masters), insufficient calcium intakes for pregnant women in South Australia

Donna Sharp (Honours), women’s satisfaction with medical and other services during pregnancy, birth and afterwards.

The Department of Public health accepts about 20 Masters students and a small number of Honours students each year.

Dr Hillier said whilst finding funds for student conference visits was always difficult, students benefited considerably both academically and in career development.

—Patricia Cree

Forum on Career Paths

Three leading Adelaide personnel consultants provided an up-to-the-minute snapshot of jobs, career development and further study options to some 50 University of Adelaide general staff at a Women’s Professional Development Network lunchtime forum last Tuesday.

Michael McGregor of McGregor Price Consulting Group, Sue-Louise Newman, a former personnel consultant and now Human Resources Manager with North West Water, and Trevor Searle, manager of Drake Executive, presented their perspectives on careers in South Australia, and then fielded numerous questions from the audience.

Issues included the benefits of further study and how to choose the most useful options, whether age is a barrier to employment, job-hunting strategies, and the similarities and differences between public and private sector employment practices.

The WPDN’s role is to foster an environment in the University where women general staff can achieve their personal and professional potential.

Future lunchtime forums, as well as other activities, are scheduled for later in the year. Contact convenor Katie Hurst, ext 33277, to be added to the mailing list, or check the electronic Bulletin Board. Participation is open to all women general staff.

—Patricia Cree
Violinist's debut for Elder centenary

The Elder Conservatorium has chosen the opening concert in its 1997 Elder Hall series to mark the centenary of the death of one of the University’s great benefactors — Sir Thomas Elder, after whom Elder Hall is named.

The six-concert series has a distinct local flavour, focusing on South Australians and highlighting the excellent staff musicians at the Elder Conservatorium.

The opening concert will give South Australians their first opportunity to hear violinist Dr Semyon Kobets, who has left his posts as Concertmaster with the Australian Opera and Ballet orchestras and part-time lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium to join the University of Adelaide as Senior Lecturer in Violin.

Dr Kobets will be joined in his program of Beethoven, Brahms and Franck by pianist David Lockett. Associate Professor Lockett has just returned from a recital, masterclass and lecture tour of Canada and Taiwan.

Semyon Kobets's career has taken him throughout Europe, the USA, New Zealand and Australia. He was co-founder, Music Director and First Violinist of the Leontovych String Quartet in Kiev from 1971-1992, and has won numerous music awards.

Dr Kobets describes the concert as "the first page of the new and exciting chapter in my life book."

*Thursday 17 April at 8pm in Elder Hall. Bookings at BASS.

‘Headbanging’ tests to cut playground injuries

Continued from Page 1

Thanks to a portable rig built especially for this research, “Oscar” has been used for tests in the laboratory and in the field at various playgrounds around Adelaide.

Although the Department of Mechanical Engineering has undertaken research into this area for the past 10 years, it was not until September last year that the first Australian and New Zealand Standard covering the testing of soft fall materials was released.

“It's estimated that if the standard is widely and effectively implemented, the number and, more importantly, the severity of injuries could be cut by half,” said Mr Brown.

“The difficulty is getting the message out into the community that by simply using suitable soft fall materials which comply to the standards, it could mean the difference between a minor fall and a serious head injury requiring hospitalisation.”

“I would urge all organisations responsible for playgrounds — such as schools, day care centres, kindergartens, councils and restaurants — to make sure soft surfacing is in place around their play equipment,” he said.

“Parents should also be aware that serious accidents occur around play equipment at home, and therefore prevent injury to children.”

Because of the Department of Mechanical Engineering’s expertise in this field, companies from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and New Zealand have been keen to have their soft fall products examined by MechTest.

The South Australian Health Commission and local manufacturers are also eager to collaborate with MechTest.

Mr Brown said that this study was an excellent example of how the University of Adelaide could play an important role in the community, by helping to improve playgrounds and therefore prevent injury to children.

He said research had already shown that the new Australian standard was not perfect, and as a result he and Mr Howard would be making submissions to Standards Australia suggesting possible areas of improvement.

—David Ellis

Repromed — a decade bringing hopes to life

Continued from Page 1

“We're always very early to introduce new technology, to utilise and improve on it, and we've provided our services to couples from right around Australia and overseas. For many years now our programs have yielded the best results in Australia and New Zealand. So we have a reputation for excellence that puts us in the top few units in the world,” he said.

Looking towards the next decade and beyond, Mr Stables said he believed Repromed would continue to grow and provide a valuable service to couples from Australia and overseas.

He said research efforts were constantly refining the latest breakthroughs in reproductive medicine, and negotiations were currently underway for an expansion of activities into Asia.

“We feel as though the first 10 years of Repromed is just one milestone in what has been, and what will continue to be, a long history of excellence in the field of reproductive medicine in Adelaide.”

“Hopefully that tradition will continue, and hopefully, thanks to our efforts, many more couples will realise their dreams of having children,” Mr Stables said.

—David Ellis Repromed general manager Mr Roger Stables. Photo courtesy of Repromed
Alumni reception in Melbourne

The Alumni Association held a Reception for graduates and friends living in Victoria on Tuesday 25 March at the All Seasons Premier Hotel, Melbourne. Some 85 alumni attended. The guest speaker was the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mary O’Kane, who spoke about the University’s innovations in teaching and research, which are enabling the University to participate in a much wider field across Australia and internationally.

The alumni who were present represented the full range of Faculties and ranged in age from graduates of the early 1930s to young alumni who completed their studies last year. The Vice-Chancellor remarked that the breadth of experience and knowledge represented by the alumni at the Reception was quite extraordinary.

A Melbourne Chapter will be formed to strengthen the Association’s ties with alumni living in Victoria. This group will be able to assist in organising an annual Alumni Reception and other events of benefit to the University and its alumni.

Readers living in Victoria who would like to know more about this can contact Adrienne Eccles at the Alumni Office: phone 08 8303 3196, email <aeccles@registry.adelaide.edu.au>; or our contact in Melbourne, Mel Yuan (BSc 92).

Economics and Commerce to launch new Chapter

The Alumni Association is establishing an Economics and Commerce Chapter.

The aim of the new Chapter is to foster relationships between the Economics and Commerce faculty, staff, undergraduates, past students and the business community.

The Alumni Association would be pleased to hear from those interested in participating in the Economics and Commerce Chapter.

You can contact Adrienne Eccles at the Alumni Office on 8303 3196 or Christine Evans on 8300 6726.

Alternatively, the Alumni Association is participating in the Economics and Commerce Faculty prize-giving dinner on Monday 28 April 1997.

If you would like to attend, please contact Helen Pountney on 8303 4497, and register your interest in the Chapter at the same time.

—Christine Evans Economics Trustee

Singaore Afternoon Tea

The Adelaide Chapter of Australian Alumni Singapore held a most successful Afternoon Tea on 29 March at the Medical Alumni Centre in Singapore. Some 60 alumni including a few from Flinders and the University of South Australia attended.

It was very pleasing that many of our younger Singaporean alumni attended. Special thanks are due to Victor Lye, Richard Yung and especially “PK” Yap for their hard work which made the afternoon tea a success.

Sarawak Alumni

Rodger Chan (BArch 86) has advised that the Sarawak Adelaide University Alumni is hosting a function in Kuching on Tuesday 20 May next, particularly to welcome Australia’s new High Commissioner to Malaysia. Further details available from the Alumni Office.

Lucky Draw Winner receives tickets

Richard Feasley from Property Services, winner of the lucky draw associated with the Mutual Community promotion, was presented recently with his tickets for a trip to England. The prize was made available by Lifeflight Travel. Richard is pictured (centre) with left Joseph Tolman (Manager, Lifeflight Travel) and right Bill Hovey (State Sales Manager, Mutual Community).
Young designers get community experience...

Thanks to an idea from graduating Architecture students from the University of Adelaide, South Australians have recently been able to experience an entirely new form of cinema.

Acting on the idea, the Take Over youth arts festival created a paddle-boat cinema on the Torrens River. Sitting on a paddle boat, viewers could watch films on a screen erected on the banks of the Torrens.

The idea was one of many produced by 10 Architecture students last year, whose graduating projects involved producing designs for the festival’s central hub at Elder Park.

Architects Dr Sam Akkach said Take Over organisers wanted an exploration of ideas and contributions from young designers, and festival staff worked closely with them.

He said the students generated a wide range of interesting ideas, some of which were adopted including the paddle-boat cinema, a particular form of vertical signage, and the use of recycled materials to create a mural wall.

Students, working individually and in pairs, created integrated designs for the whole festival ground, including performance spaces.

Final presentation of the designs included two and three-dimensional visual materials, a walk-through computer model and a film preview at the finale in Elder Park, in a similar set-up to the paddle-boat cinema.

Dr Akkach acknowledged the assistance provide by the Educational Technology Unit in producing the high quality film.

Students also had to consider broader issues including costs, lighting, environmental considerations and others, to produce a comprehensive range of accommodation models which are on display at Take Over.

Although disappointed that none of the design or ground organisation concepts were adopted, Dr Akkach said the project was a good opportunity for student architects to be involved in a community project of this kind.

In past years, graduating Architecture students have created designs for redeveloping the Glenelg foreshore and Port Adelaide, among others.

—David Washington

Dr Sam Akkach. Photo: David Ellis

and a Willunga challenge

Students of the newly-introduced Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree have been presented with their first challenge — designing a sustainable and ecologically creative master plan for a school in Willunga.

The school is the Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Primary and Secondary School on the outskirts of Willunga.

Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, Dr David Jones, says the school is set on a windswept site sandwiched between an industrial park, an outpost of suburbia and an elderly almond orchard.

"The site comprises a disorganised collection of timber and curiously designed classrooms strongly influenced by organic architecture principles espoused by prominent Melbourne architect Greg Burgess and the theoretically rich Steiner education philosophies,” said Dr Jones.

"The key words shaping the work of the students in the design studio are ‘creativity’ and ‘sustainability’.

"Creativity is the cornerstone of the Steiner philosophy in nurturing students through an alternative educational journey.

"Sustainability derives from the use of timber symbolically in the architectural designs, the need to better harvest and recycle water systems especially a major drainage line that dissects the site, and the need to involve the students, parents and teachers in the design formulation.”

A third key word is “internationalism,” and this too is rich in the studio class, which includes the first group of four exchange students from four countries to come to the University of Montreal to the University of Adelaide together with new students from RMIT and India.

"The Montreal students have already survived the Mackay floods and sunburn in Coober Pedy to join the class in Adelaide.” Dr Jones said.

The project, which concludes in about one month’s time, is being assisted by guest landscape architecture lecturer Graeme Hopkins together with new staff member Jillian Wallis.

"Graeme, a recent emigre from Coffs Harbour, is finding the studio stimulating and enjoyable,” said Dr Jones.

"He is looking forward, as are the Steiner School staff, to the proposed design solutions by the students.”

—Mihajlov Zabukovec

Architecture students at the Waldorf Steiner School in Willunga with Université de Montréal exchange students in the foreground. Photo courtesy of Dr David Jones.

—Mihajlov Zabukovec


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