More Success for CCR in ARC Discoveries

The Centre for Cultural Research has again performed very well in the ARC 2009 Discovery round outcomes announced in September, obtaining a success rate more than double that of the humanities and social sciences sector.

The two proposals selected for funding will be led by CCR members, with several others also participating as second or third named Chief Investigators (CIs) or Partner Investigators (PIs).

Culture in Transition: Creative Labour and Social Mobilities in the Asian Century will be led by Associate Professor Brett Neilson. Professor Ien Ang is a CI on the project, while Professor Meaghan Morris of Lingnan University/CCR joins the team as PI. PIs from other institutions are Professor Ranabir Samaddar of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, Professor Hui Wang of Tsinghua University, and Professor Sandro Mezzadra of The University of Bologna. It is anticipated that Dr Ned Rossiter of the University of Nottingham in Ningbo, China, and CCR adjunct appointment, will be able to join the project as a PI.

Australia was once described as an outpost of Europe ‘floating belly-down in the Pacific with its backside pointing towards Asia’. Those days are gone of course but the relationship with Asia is dynamic.

As the project summary explains: Australia’s role in the Asian region is changing with the rise of China and India.

(continued on page 2)

Vice Chancellor Visits CCR

The Vice Chancellor of UWS, Professor Janice Reid, paid a much anticipated visit to CCR on 14 August 2008 to speak about some of the broad strategic issues facing the University over the next few years, as well as to discuss some topical local matters.

Professor Reid addressed the Centre’s academic and general staff before opening the way for questions from the floor. Among the macro issues that the discussion between CCR people and Professor Reid touched on were:

• The attitude of the group of eight universities to sharing the research pie with ‘Dawkins’ era universities;

(continued on page 3)
Award-winning Actress and Video Editor at Work at CCR

Sally Struthers, who will graduate with a Bachelor of Communications (Media Production) degree from UWS in April 2009, has been putting her artistic flair to work to give CCR’s multimedia public face a makeover.

Sally came to CCR in June 2008 to work on a Careers and Cooperative Education vacation project. CCR’s talent spotters were suitably impressed, and quickly offered her a casual position. She began working two days a week, an arrangement that still stands, and will continue into 2009. Sally had already created an impressive portfolio of productions, which her work at CCR will expand.

‘My graduating work is a 26-minute talk show send-up, “Poo Taboo”, which should be broadcast by TVS in the coming year,’ says Sally. ‘“Poo Taboo” covers interesting facts from the history of sanitation as it is linked to civilisation. It focuses on India’s sanitation crisis and what the Indians are doing to reduce it. The context of the graduation project is that it is an episode aired in the middle of the [mythical] “Poo Taboo” season.’

In June Sally entered her first film competition, the National Youth Week ‘Shoot It’ competition, submitting a two-minute film mixing live action with stop-motion animation on the topic of ‘What could happen if youth were wise with their money?’ Sally walked away with the first prize.

Also in July Sally entered the state-wide ‘Play Now Act Now’ competition with her own film Some Random. Sponsored by NSW Health and Metro Screen, the contest is restricted to those aged under twenty-five. ‘Some Random is a short film about how young men “pick up” ladies whilst protecting themselves from undue baggage,’ she comments. ‘It is a disarming film, but it has an important warning to women that they need to “party smart”’. Sally’s entry again took first prize.

‘Since coming to CCR, the majority of my work has been in editing tapes of the CCR Seminar Series. Filming of them began at the end of 2006, so there is quite a backlog! The full-length seminars will soon be available on the UWS/CCR webpage for download as mp4s. I have also been filming the new seminars—most are now two-camera shoots, as they provide greater viewing variety, and make the edit much more interesting.’

Sally also created a promotional video for display at the UWS Open Day in August 2008. This she describes as a ‘work in progress’. It will form part of a promotional DVD for CCR to distribute to partners and associates. ‘It, and the other multimedia projects CCR has in development, will showcase CCR as a contemporary and technically savvy research centre,’ she confidently predicts.

More Success for CCR in ARC Discoveries (continued from page 1)

This project will benefit Australian communities by increasing knowledge about how the emergence of these nations impacts upon economic growth and innovation, intercultural relations and efforts of social inclusion. The project will develop new media strategies to inform citizens about how labour relations and mobilities are shifting in this regional context. It will also increase public awareness of the changing forms of global urbanism in Chinese and Indian cities and reposition Australian cultural research and policy in ways adequate to the economic and social challenges posed by the so-called Asian century.

This project has been conceived on a large scale, its intention is to tackle big issues of transnational interest—the type of wide-screen blockbuster project that is increasingly to the fore in ARC outcomes. The participants here are all senior academics of world standing, possessing long and productive track records.

CCR’s other new project, The Just in Time Self: Young Men, Skill and Narratives of Aspiration in the New Economy, to be undertaken by Dr George Morgan (first named CI) and Associate Professor Greg Noble, demonstrates that things that matter in Greater Western Sydney continue to be key areas of investigation for the Centre. The project will seek to find ways around roadblocks to opportunities for an increasingly disadvantaged group—the young men from socio-economic backgrounds who, in previous generations, gained most of their employment in now rare blue collar jobs.

‘Employers and policy makers frequently lament the “skills gap”—the shortage of workers with the skills required to perform the available jobs,’ Dr Morgan observes. ‘This problem cannot be solved just by funding more vocational training courses. To improve participation in training it is important to understand how vocational aspirations are formed. In this research we intend to demonstrate how, by involving them in collective creative projects, young men from poor backgrounds can develop skills that might move them beyond the traditional model of manual labour to develop the flexibility required of workers in the “new economy”’.

Both of these new ARC projects will commence in 2009 and will be funded until the end of 2011.

Australian Government
Australian Research Council
CCR Adjuncts are Major Contributors to Success

Crucial to the success of CCR are its adjunct appointments. In 2009 these are Mr André Frankovits, Dr Ned Rossiter, Dr Zoë Sofoulis, and Adjunct Professor Helen Armstrong.

In UWS’s research centres such as CCR, adjuncts are honorary appointments. Apart from the contributions to the Centre’s knowledge base made by their own research, they play an important ambassadorial role for the Centre within the many diverse spheres in which they move. They also perform administrative and supervisory functions. In return CCR provides its adjuncts with associate membership of the Centre and access to university infrastructure.

UWS policy is that: ‘Honorary academic appointments benefit the University by increasing cooperation and activities between the University and leaders and members of academia, professions, business, industry, community, and the public sector, in Australia and overseas…’ Typical areas of contribution by honorary academic appointees include: course and curriculum development and planning; staff and student seminars in the appointee’s area of expertise; supervision of postgraduate research students; research, individually or in teams; staff development activities; and community engagement activities.’

André Frankovits provides an excellent example of the latter at a global level. He is an adviser to the United Nations Development Program, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNESCO. He is now the International Project Director, and formerly (1994-2003) the Executive Director, of the Human Rights Council of Australia Inc, a private non-government organization with ‘special consultative status’ at the UN Economic and Social Council.

André’s activities in 2008 reflect the breadth of his interests. He travelled to Korea at the behest of the Korean Human Rights Commission to take part in a two day symposium in Daegu followed by an intensive two-day course for the Korean NGO Blanket and Sponge Project in Asia (BASPIA) in Seoul. Thereafter he facilitated, on behalf of the Diplomacy Training Programme (DTP) at the University of New South Wales Law School, an eight-day workshop on Trade and Human Rights in Malaysia for NGOs from the Southeast Asian region. He returned to Malaysia at the invitation of the Southeast Asian Council for Food Security and Fair Trade as a resource person for a workshop on food security. Back in Australia he answered a request to lecture to Iraqi foreign ministry officials here on a 30-day sensitization visit on rights-based approaches to their duties, at the Menzies Hotel Sydney. He again participated in the annual training programme of DTP. Finally, he was invited to give a plenary address to a training course for eighty professionals on Health, Development and Human Rights in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at UNSW.

Each of these events provides an opportunity for André to, in addition to pursuing their primary objectives, promote the activities of CCR to an international audience.

CCR’s adjunct corps boasts broad expertise. Dr Ned Rossiter’s work explores the political dimensions of labour and life in informational times, including the exploitation of labour in creative industries and the aesthetics of global finance capital. Professor Helen’s Armstrong’s background is in landscape design and architecture; recently her work has examined the nexus between landscape and culture. Dr Zoë Sofoulis was appointed an adjunct in 2008 soon after her retirement from her salaried position with UWS. Her recent projects have included, for the Sydney Water Corporation, a study of the possibilities for customer water demand management through cultural innovation, and with Penrith City Council, an assessment of whether its public facilities and spaces are not only physically accessible but also culturally inclusive. In her new adjunct position she continues to provide a very significant contribution to the supervision of CCR’s postgraduate students.
Contact Postgraduate Conference an International Hit

The idea for the Contact: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Cultural Studies conference began with a notice that the Cultural Studies Association of Australia was offering funding of $1500 for an event or publication that involved at least two institutions, postgraduates, and that connected with New Zealand.

Inspired by Jayde Cahir and Sarah James’ edited edition of the journal M/C in 2007, which was funded by the same award we decided to use our positions as CCR Postgraduate Liaison Officers to propose a postgraduate conference that would use the stipend to fly New Zealand and interstate Australian students to Parramatta to attend the conference.

To our delight we were awarded the funding, and the Centre for Cultural Research generously matched it. Kylie Sait and Laavanya Kathiravelu from the Centre for Research in Social Inclusion at Macquarie University accepted our offer to join the convening team, and proved a huge asset, particularly in formulating themes and topics, and in writing the initial application. We decided to also apply to the Cultural Research Network for funds, and were gratified to receive nearly $5000 from them towards catering, and for subsidising travel costs. With the idea and finance arranged, we distributed a ‘Call for Papers’ and were amazed at the number of responses from New Zealand, Australia and also Taiwan, China and Hong Kong. We received over 60 submissions. We wanted to be generous to postgraduates and decided to accept the majority of papers, but believed once we only awarded eight New Zealand travel scholarships and four Australian, the numbers would significantly drop. Well…we were wrong…

The conference took place from 25-26 September at UWS Parramatta Campus and more than 50 postgraduate papers were delivered. CCR’s Professor Bob Hodge gave a stimulating and thought-provoking keynote speech, and Professor Meaghan Morris chaired an inspiring student workshop in which all participants discussed the future of Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand. Each panel session included an academic respondent who had received the papers previous to the sessions and offered advice for future directions and provoked discussions with the audience.

CCR Internationalisation Initiatives

The Contact Postgraduate Conference is a good example of CCR’s determination to internationalise its research and teaching activities. CCR recently coordinated these efforts into an internationalisation agenda intended to enhance the world standing and impact of its research.

A key agenda initiative was the creation of CCR’s International Research Collaboration Scheme (IRCS). The IRCS enables members to visit, or be visited by, established collaborators working on applications for funding from Australian or overseas agencies for international research projects that address CCR’s research framing concepts. The scheme attempts to tap the ‘value-added’ offered by an international approach to CCR’s research themes. It invites members to collaboratively develop project proposals—and specifically grant applications—that from their outset are conceived across world regional settings.

Recent examples of CCR’s internationalisation initiatives include:
• Visits to CCR by influential scholars such as Tony Bennett, Sharon Zukin, Sebastian Liao, Sandro Mezzadra, John Eade, Gary Whannel, and Toby Miller. CCR members have paid similar visits to overseas universities;
• Guest international presenters at CCR seminars;
• The Global Citizenship ARC Linkage project, which has several overseas-based partner investigators;
• ‘Sharing’ Professor Meaghan Morris with Lingnan University Hong Kong;
• Professor Ian Ang’s UNESCO-funded cultural diversity digital atlas project with Mumbai- and Singapore-based colleagues;
• The expansion of the exchange program with ACSIS Sweden under new STINT funding;
• The inclusion of a mapped inventory of potential overseas collaborators as an e-resource on CCR’s research server;
• Success in the British Academy/Association of Commonwealth Universities Grants for International Collaboration Scheme for Brett Neilson and Open University, UK colleague Putvika Andrijaevic;
• The Liquid Cities: Berlin and Sydney in Conversation Symposium;
• Kay Anderson’s invitation to become a member of the international advisory board of the new Centre for Geography at the Open University, UK;
• ARC DP Culture in Transition, which has four offshore partner investigators;
• A consultancy conducted in Chile by Juan Salazar and Robyn Bushell.

Future editions of Research.Culture will contain updates on CCR’s internationalisation program.
CCR Gains Offshore Funding for International Exchange Program

The Centre for Cultural Research and its Swedish collaborator, the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS), a unit of Linköping University, have obtained funding for a groundbreaking staff and student exchange program.

The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) will provide the annual substantive funding of 400,000 SEK (Swedish Kroner)—about $AUD64,000 per year—for the program, which commenced in second semester 2008 and will end in first semester 2012.

The title of the programme is Culturalisation and Globalisation: Advancing Cultural Research in Sweden and Australia. It will focus on four areas: cultural policy and cultural production; uses of history and museums; urban tourism; and media and popular culture. Both partners are confident that the program will develop a strong and multilevel collaboration in research and higher education between the two research sites. There is a strong involvement of research postgraduates in STINT activities.

The programme will expand on an existing arrangement between CCR and ACSIS, under which each year one higher degree research (HDR) candidate from both institutions received funding to conduct research at its overseas partner.

In the new programme each exchange will include up to four delegates, including one senior researcher, a mid or early career researcher, and either one or two HDR students. The HDRs will stay on exchange for four to six weeks, while the senior researchers will visit for about one week.

The visits will be organised around a research workshop, and every second exchange will include a doctoral workshop or master class provided by the host institution. The master classes will be led by visiting internationally recognised researchers and scholars.

The Director of CCR, Professor David Rowe, is enthusiastic about the expanded exchange program. ‘STINT grants are highly competitive, with fewer than one in three funded in 2008. The Swedish Foundation was very impressed with the research accomplishments and plans of the research team,’ he said. ‘CCR has been pursuing a vigorous internationalisation strategy over the last two years. It is especially pleasing to see a multi-year programme like this get off the ground, and to develop a deep and extensive research partnership with a Scandinavian university in the field of cultural research’.

The first contingent from CCR, consisting of Associate Professor Brett Neilson, Dr Elaine Lally, and HDR candidates Joanna Winchester and Erika Smith, travelled to the ACSIS campus in Norrköping Sweden in October 2008. CCR will return to Sweden twice in 2010, and for the final workshop in 2012. The Swedish researchers will come to Sydney twice in 2009, and twice more in 2011.

The first report back to STINT and detailing planning and programs for the full four year program, including for the ACSIS visit to CCR in 2009 (during which the first PhD courses and master classes will take place) was completed during this CCR visit to ACSIS. Dr Lally reported that a great deal was achieved at the workshop.
The SBS Story: the Challenge of Cultural Diversity


The completion of an intensive four-year project was marked when Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, launched The SBS Story on Tuesday 28 October at Gallery 4A, the Asia-Australia Arts Centre. Anton Enus, presenter of the World News Australia Bulletin on SBS, provided the opening remarks. Many prominent figures from the Sydney broadcasting milieu turned out for the launch.

The SBS Story provides a ‘comprehensive account of the development and significance of the world’s first multicultural public service broadcaster’. It is the latest in a long line of groundbreaking publications involving Professor Ien Ang, who was made UWS’s first distinguished professor in 2007.

Despite the extent of SBS’s involvement in its publication, the book is far from hagiography. The authors came not necessarily to praise SBS, as is explained in the preface: ‘Our aim is not to take sides [in the debate on its merits], but to consider the successes and failures of SBS as the media organisation that for more than 30 years has been at the forefront of inventing multicultural broadcasting through a unique range of radio and television services.’

At the launch, Ien, speaking on behalf of the three authors, said the text contained both compliments and criticisms of the SBS but overall praise that such an entity, which is unique in the world, happily operates in Australia. She made a point of acknowledging the generosity of past and present SBS staff in providing both their time and candid opinions.

The significance of The SBS Story has been recognised immediately by the Australian press: ‘The SBS Story…is one of the most comprehensive studies of the broadcaster yet undertaken. SBS gave the authors access to its archives and endorsed their research grant application (Rosemary Neill, The Australian, 5 July 2008).

Professor Ang speaking at the launch of The SBS Story

Renovation Nation: our obsession with home


Renovation Nation, written by CCR Research Fellow Fiona Allon, was launched at gleebooks on 22 August 2008. The launch was in the format of an interview conducted by Sydney Morning Herald columnist Annabel Crabb.

In her new book Dr Allon urges Australians to reassess their materialist priorities and to ask themselves whether the ownership of a ‘McMansion’ should be their lives’ overarching ambition. Prosperity has given much of Australian society a surplus of income over essential expenses. But it has also fuelled an obsession with home ownership. ‘Aspirationals’ shovel their rising incomes into mortgage debt. Homemaker shows and lifestyle TV are immensely seductive. One consequence, this book argues, is that Australia, rather than putting its money into infrastructure or investing in new technologies, has ploughed it into real estate. (continued on page 7)
Renovation Nation: our obsession with home (continued from page 6)

Renovation Nation asks why Australians have become so wrapped up in their homes. It explores the ways they are distorting their lives in the pursuit of prestige and tax-free capital gains as they play the real estate game with mindless passion. Fixated on interest rates and surrounded by headlines about housing affordability, Australians remain determined to make their homes bigger and better. The great Australian dream of owning a home seems to have become the great Australian nightmare. But what about the national home? Is Australia’s anxiety about safety and security, about keeping the ‘wrong’ people out of Australia, or off ‘our’ beaches, the flipside of this obsession? (adapted from publisher’s description)

**Review**

Fiona Allon holds a mirror up and shows us what we have become during the past couple of decades - a real estate-obsessed country. [Allon]…brings a sense of passionate urgency to what could be a dry topic. At a time of dramatic global events (9/11, Iraq war, refugee crisis) the nation turned its lonely eyes inward to things it could more easily understand and control, and we closed our doors on the ‘world’s most needy and dispossessed’. The obsession with, not so much home ownership, as risky real estate investment is not just a result of easy bank finance but cultural attitudes. The mirror Allon holds up reveals a culture that is often ‘exuberant’ to the point of recklessness, and what may well be looked back upon as an era of squandered opportunities rather than investment in our infrastructures and collective future. (Stephen Carroll, The Age, 9 August 2008)

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The cultural commons of hope: the attempt to commodify the final frontier of the human experience by James Arvanitakis, VDM Verlag Dr Mueller (ISBN: 978383642974)

On Friday 16 May, James Arvanitakis’s new book, The cultural commons of hope: the attempt to commodify the final frontier of the human experience, was launched at gleebooks Glebe. The extremely well-attended event was hosted by CCR Director David Rowe and the book was launched by Dr Paul Brown, Head of History and Philosophy at the University of New South Wales.

James’s book argues that the world is confronted by a number of crises—global warming, entrenched poverty and the war on terror. While these may appear disconnected, the book examines how they are both interrelated and dominate our experience of modernity. As these crises are often aggravated by the solutions proposed to solve them, this experience of modernity can be described as ‘pathological’.

Pathological modernity is driven by a frontier disposition that encloses and commodifies non-commercial spaces (or commons) and creates a crisis of scarcity. This commodification began with the natural world, moved through societal institutions and the human body, and is now commodifying the final frontier of the human experience: enclosing our hopes, trust and sense of safety.

Despite its dominance, this logic of enclosure is being challenged by resistance movements which are producing alternative visions of society based on hope, trust and a sense of abundance.

This book will appeal to those attempting to understand why many of today’s challenges are so entrenched, as well as those involved in environmental and social justice struggles in both local and international contexts. (adapted from publisher’s description)

**Review**

The cultural commons of hope …explores pathological modernity in the natural world, societal institutions, the human body and the final frontier of the human experience: our hopes, trust and sense of safety. Arvanitakis finds that despite its dominance, the logic of enclosure is being challenged by resistance movements which are producing alternative visions of society based on hope, trust and a sense of abundance. (Centre for Policy Development)
**History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing Volume III: In Our Time.**

by Andrew Lemon. Hardie Grant (ISBN: 9781740664912)

On 27 August 2008 the Victoria Race Club (VRC) sponsored the launch of *The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing Volume III* by Dr Andrew Lemon at ‘Champions’, The Australian Racing Museum, Federation Square, Melbourne.

Dr Wayne Peake, whose book *Sydney’s Pony Racecourses* was identified by Dr Lemon as an important source for the work, represented CCR at the launch and post-launch functions.

The event was very well attended with participants including leading racing administrators, members of the media, racing participants, historians, famous ‘friends of racing’ and ‘prominent Melburnians’. There was an unusually large electronic media presence—the reason for which became apparent later.

Bart Cummings, trainer of eleven Melbourne Cup winners and current ‘Grand Old Man’ of Australian racing—who within weeks was to win his 12th Melbourne Cup with the horse Viewed—launched the book.

The book was the third and final volume in a monumental history of Australian Horse Racing from 1788 until 2005.

The Racing Museum also launched an exhibition, the themes of which related to Dr Lemon’s three volumes.

Volume two in this trilogy was first published in 1990. Readers eager for volume three were required to wait out a ‘Tolkienesque’ interregnum of 18 years.

The second part of the launch provided a remarkable surprise. The cup presented to the legendary horse Pha Lap’s connections for winning the 1930 Melbourne Cup has been missing for several decades. It is regarded as the ‘holy grail’ of Australian horse racing’s material culture.

A few years ago a Port Macquarie car dealer claimed he was in possession of the 1930 Cup. Dr Lemon was asked by the VRC to assess this claim. He undertook a forensic examination that proved the cup was a fake (one giveaway was that ‘Pha Lap’ had been spelt ‘Pharlap’ on the plinth.)

This set Dr Lemon on a quest to locate all Melbourne Cups presented since the familiar loving cup design was adopted in 1919. During that work Lady Susan Renouf, who attended the launch of this volume, donated the 1980 cup of her late husband’s horse Belldale Ball to the Australian Racing Museum.

Dr Lemon learnt that from time to time the VRC has bought back old cups from owners via its commissioned cup jewellers. Lemon, in an extended denouement worthy of Hercule Poirot, revealed that not only was Belldale Ball’s Cup in fact the 1953 cup of Wodalla rebirthed, but that in turn Wodalla’s cup was almost certainly a remaking of the missing 1930 Phar Lap Melbourne Cup. So Lady Renouf has serendipitously returned the mythical trophy to the public estate.

This was a sensational revelation and featured very prominently on evening news bulletins and the front pages of the next day’s press.
CCR’s Internal Grants Focus is on Western Sydney

A primary objective of the University of Western Sydney’s internal grants program is to provide seed funding for scoping and pilot work for research projects that are intended in their maturity to attract major funding from bodies such as the Australian Research Council.

There have been many examples within CCR of the achievement of this goal. A recent example of this is the City After Dark ARC Discovery project, which a UWS Urban Research Initiative funded in its larval stage during 2007.

The promotion of the University’s engagement with community groups, particularly those of western Sydney, is an equally important priority of internal research grants. A survey of CCR’s university-funded research over the last few years identifies the enthusiasm with which its staff has adopted this initiative.

UWS Research Grants Scheme
‘Parramatta Stories’: Values-based Community Development (Associate Professor Robyn Bushell, Dr Russell Staif): The objective of this research was to investigate an alternative approach to strategic planning for community development by local government, using archival material. It examined the relationship between heritage management, community development and tourism product in the context of a culturally diverse community.

UWS Research Partnership Schemes
A Strategic Approach to Cultural Information Resources for Local and Community Development in the Blue Mountains Local Government Area (Dr Elaine Lally): this project investigated how best to bring the diverse community and cultural information sources of the Blue Mountains Council into a common digital framework.

Universal Design and Cultural Context: Accessibility, Diversity and Recreational Space in Penrith (Dr Zoe Sofoulis, Professor Helen Armstrong): What can be done to ensure public facilities and spaces are not only physically accessible but also culturally inclusive? This project investigated possible cultural barriers to such spaces in the Penrith LGA, with the objective of allowing better informed planning by Council in these matters.

Doing the Knowledge: Youth in Transition in Marrickville (Dr George Morgan): this project analysed how education and training policies affected the lives of three generations of people living in an inner western Sydney suburb. It explored the strategies of educators to facilitate the transition from a manufacturing based-to a technology and service-based economy, and whether they met people’s aspirations. It was the precursor of Dr Morgan’s new ARC-funded project.

UWS Sustainability Research Initiative Schemes
Digital Refuge: Urban Narrative Strategies and Sustainable Media in Western Sydney (Dr Juan Salazar): The project involves refugees and newly arrived migrants from Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia and Rwanda living in western Sydney. It seeks to document the diverse histories of these refugee communities, and to equip project participants with multimedia skills via digital storytelling workshops.

Trots Return to South Western Sydney at Menangle (continued from page 12)
Wayne praised the retention of the art deco brick entrance-way to Menangle Park. ‘It is the only extant example of racecourse architecture of this type and era that I am aware of. Unfortunately in the past little consideration has been given to preserving racecourse architecture and infrastructure, even in a virtual form. Sydney’s old Richmond (Londonderry) racecourse, which was used for trotting until 1997, has all but disappeared without a trace within 10 years. But fortunately the Menangle entrance is now protected by a heritage order.’

A new community in Sydney’s west
One undoubtedly positive outcome of the Menangle redevelopment will be the relocation there of many trainers from their current stables in suburban Condell Park, near the Bankstown paceway. Both men and horses are likely to find the rural charms of Menangle a tonic. It is expected that a large trotting community will form around the complex. This in turn will have a beneficial flow-on effect for local businesses and residents and south-western Sydney in general.
CCR’s Current and Pending ARC Competitive Grants

Discovery Grants

Professor Kay Anderson, The Humanities Beyond Humanism: Race, Nature and the Human in Australia from Enlightenment to Federation*

Professor Bob Hodge, Drs Gabriela Coronado, Fernanda Duarte & Gregory Teal, Cross-Cultural ‘Lamkins’ in a Neo-Liberal World: Ideology and Myth in Postmodern Australia, Mexico and Brazil*

Professor Ian Ang, Cultural Research for the 21st Century: Building Cultural Intelligence for a Complex World

Associate Professor Brett Neilson, Professor Claudio Franceschi (Bologna) & Dr Giovanni Lamura, (Hamburg) Anti-Ageing Devices: On the Cultural Politics of Staying Young in a Globalised World*

Dr Cristina Rocha, A Study of the Brazilian Community in Australia and Australian-Brazilian Bilateral Exchange

Professor David Rowe, Handling the ‘Battering Ram’: Rupert Murdoch, News Corporation and the Global Contest for Dominance in Sports Television

Professors David Rowe & Deborah Stevenson, Culture Circuits: Exploring the International Networks and Institutions Shaping Contemporary Cultural Policy

Professor Bob Hodge, Putting Humanities to Work In A Chaotic World: Dynamic Interdisciplinarity and Community Engagement

Professors Deborah Stevenson, Stephen Tomsen & David Rowe, The City After Dark: The Governance and Lived Experience of Urban Night-time Culture

Professor David Rowe & Dr Brett Hutchins (Monash), Struggling for Possession: The Control and Use of Online Media Sport

Dr George Morgan & Associate Professor Greg Noble, The Just in Time Self: Young Men, Skill and Narratives of Aspiration in the New Economy#

Linkage Grants

Associate Professor Gay Hawkins (UNSW) & Professor Ian Ang, Special Broadcasting Services and Australian Cultural Democracy: Evolution, Uses, Innovation*

Professor Kay Anderson, Dr Fiona Allon & Associate Professor Robyn Bushell, Backpacker Cultures, Residential Communities and the Construction of Tourist Spaces and Landscapes: A Regional Study of the Changing Tourist Dynamics in Sydney*

Dr Fiona Cameron, Professors Ernest Edmonds (UTS) & Stephen Garton (Sydney), Reconceptualising Heritage Collections: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Museum Collections and Documentation*

Dr Elaine Lally, Professor Ian Ang, Professor Kay Anderson & Ms Elizabeth Macgregor (MCA), The Art of Engagement: Exploring C3 West, a Contemporary Arts-Business Collaboration Around Western Sydney

Dr Fiona Cameron, Professor Bob Hodge, Associate Professor Brett Neilson, Dr Juan Salazar, Professor Jann Conroy, Professor David Karoly (Oklahoma), Mr Sebastian Chan (Powerhouse), Ms Carolyn Meehan (Museum Vic.), Ms Lynda Kelly (Aust. Museum), Professor Graham Durant (Questacon), Mr Wayne LaBar (Liberty Science) & Dr Richard Sandell (Leicester), Global Citizenship and the Agency of the Museum Sector in Climate Change Interventions

* Funding ceased 2007 but project continues
# Funding commences 2009

CCR Co-sponsors Centenary of Rugby League Conference (continued from page 11)

Other presenters included conference convener Andrew Moore, and Drew Cottle, both of UWS’s College of Arts, who spoke with enthusiasm and humour. Their COA colleague Lindsay Barrett provided a paper called ‘Twilight of the Idols’, an evocative personal reflection on the end of the St George club’s winning era in 1967. Conference co-convenor Andy Carr, a senior librarian at the Mitchell Library Sydney and a former student of David Rowe, spoke of recently acquired sports collections that offer new opportunities for research into the history of the game. Leeds University provided a strong team, and Professor Tony Collins spoke of the formation of the Northern Union, the professional league established in England that preceded the Sydney league by 13 years.

Rugby League journalists including Ian Heads (on whom Andrew Moore has bestowed the honorary title ‘Associate Professor of Rugby League History’, and who gave the one of the keynote addresses ‘Messaging about in boots: a journey through rugby league’) and John Blanch represented the ‘fourth estate’ at the conference.

The Australian Society for Sports History had the peer-reviewed papers to which the presenters spoke published in a volume called Centenary Reflections: 100 Years of Rugby League in Australia ready for the conference. All participants received a complimentary copy.

At the conclusion of day one participants enjoyed a guided tour of an exhibition called League of Legends enjoyed a guided tour of an exhibition called League of Legends which was relocated to the Powerhouse Museum Sydney this year. The exhibition was a treasure trove of memorabilia for League buffs, a compelling mixture of ‘realia’ and interactive stalls. It included guernseys, honour caps, blazers and personal effects dating back to 1908 and beyond, trophies, countless photographs, caricatures, and informative communicæ. Popular attractions included an old wireless that could be ‘tuned’ to pick up calls by famous broadcasters like Frank Hyde and Tiger Black, and segments of the iconic television program Controversy Corner, which each Sunday morning for decades discussed only the most ‘pertinent league problems’.

This event, and CCR’s connection to Penrith Panthers Leagues Club through the ARC Art of Engagement project, demonstrates a shift in the Centre’s engagement with the sporting world.

Images courtesy National Museum of Australia & Powerhouse Museum
Olympic Symposium: Beijing and Beyond

Beyond Beijing Olympic Symposium

September 2008, following hot on the heels of that mega-sporting event in Beijing, was ‘Olympic Month’ at the CCR. It coincided with visits by prominent Olympic scholars who gave public talks, attended a seminar that addressed issues crucial to the immediate future of the Games, and made plans for future research collaborations with CCR’s Professor David Rowe and other CCR members interested in the cultural aspects of the Games.

The seminar After Beijing, Approaching London: Global Cultural Politics and the Olympics was the centrepiece for this mustering of scholars. It took place at the Female Orphan School, UWS Parramatta Campus, on 18 September.

First to arrive at CCR was Professor Gary Whannel of the University of Bedfordshire UK. Professor Whannel is a world authority in the field of media, sport and cultural studies and is convenor of the Journalism and Olympic Games group (JOG), an international research team addressing journalism and the representation of debates around the Olympic Games.

A UWS International Research Initiative Scheme (IRIS) grant funded Professor Whannel’s two-week stay at CCR. In addition to his role in the seminar, Professor Whannel met CCR’s Higher Degree Research students discussing research in media, sport and cultural studies and gave a paper at the CCR Seminar Series entitled That Obscure Object of Analysis: What Does It Mean to ‘Anaylse’ The Olympic Games?

Next in was Professor Toby Miller of the University of California, Riverside, USA. Professor Miller is an internationally renowned cultural researcher with publications across a broad range of areas, including media studies, gender, race, sport and cultural theory.

Dr Luo Qing from the Communication University of China arrived in Australia in the days preceding the seminar. Dr Qing inter alia lectures on China’s national image. Dr Qing is engaged in an international comparative research project, headed by the International Olympic Committee, addressing the media coverage of the Beijing Olympics between March and September 2008. CCR’s Professor David Rowe is the Australian coordinator of this research.

Professor Deborah Stevenson of UWS’s School of Social Sciences and CCR joined the forenamed participants in giving a session at the seminar. UWS’s MARCS Research Centres’ Stelarc introduced Symposium participants to the Head.

The opportunity to engage in conversation with the ‘Thinking Head’, a popular exhibition at the Beijing Olympic Arts Festival, was a highlight of the luncheon break. The Head is programmed to respond to chat directed to it by its ‘interlocutors’. The Head reportedly ‘displayed both his wit and vast knowledge of all things Chinese.’

On the evening preceding the seminar Professor Miller gave a public speech at the Museum of Sydney called An Olympian Task: Remaking Cities in the Shadow of Sport. An audience debate followed, including discussion with a panel consisting of Professors Miller, Whannel, Luo, Rowe and Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, Professor of Chinese Media Studies at the University of Sydney.

CCR Co-sponsors Centenary of Rugby League Conference

A conference that coincided with the celebration of the centenary of Rugby League in Australia took place at the Powerhouse Museum Sydney 7-8 November 2008. The conference also coincided with games played in the Rugby league World Cup in Sydney and Brisbane from 22 October to 25 November 2008.

CCR, with the Leeds Metropolitan University, the Australian Rugby League, and the Powerhouse and National Museums, sponsored the conference. The Tom Brock Bequest Committee of the Australian Society for Sports History presented the conference program. It followed the delivery on the previous evening of the Tenth Tom Brock Lecture by writer and filmmaker Lex Marinos.

The former NSW Minister for Education, Rodney Cavalier, a noted cricket historian but also no slouch on the past of the ‘greatest game of all’, gave the welcome address. He drew attention to the nexus provided between the histories of cricket and rugby league by the participation in the birth of the latter of the legendary batsmen Victor Trumper. Touching on the importance of history, he urged delegates ‘not to drink the water without thinking of those who dug the well’. He stressed the importance for initiatives such as the Brock series to continue, especially in a society that sometimes fails to be sufficiently aware of the importance of history.

CCR’s Director, Professor David Rowe, took the odds on copping a grapple tackle from the league ‘true believers’ that made up the majority of the audience. His address revisited and updated some of the arguments he made during his much-discussed Tom Brock Lecture of 2006, wherein he suggested that Rugby League might be destined for the perennial wooden spoon among the four codes of football played in Australia.

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Trots Return to South Western Sydney at Menangle

On 29 June 2008 the sport of harness racing (or trotting) returned after several years to the Menangle Park Paceway, located about 5 kilometres south of the University of Western Sydney’s Campbelltown campus. This was an event of cultural significance for Sydney, and for its west in particular.

On a sunny winter’s afternoon some 16,000 people, many of them new to racing and racecourses, attended the reopening. In addition to the racing the New South Wales Harness Racing Club provided a range of amusements including rides, stalls, face painting and music.

But undoubtedly the main attraction was the new 1400 metre track, which is almost 600 metres larger than the old Menangle circuit. The majority of Australian harness racing tracks are 800 metres or less, so the new Menangle is quite revolutionary. Horses will be able to record much faster times than on the old style tracks.

Other developments at Menangle include a new grandstand, dining facilities, participants’ areas and stabling.

Menangle the future of trotting

The CCR’s Dr Wayne Peake is an interested observer of recent developments at Menangle.

‘The New South Wales trotting industry is, to use a racing metaphor, making Menangle its ‘anchor bet’ for the future. On 27 October the members of the New South Wales Harness Racing Club voted to sell its Harold Park (Glebe) paceway, if it could secure a price of $150 million. This windfall is earmarked to further develop Menangle and boost its prize money. Should Menangle fail to realise the great hopes held for it, the industry might struggle.

‘Menangle’s success will be measured not by attendances but by betting turnover, most of it wagered on the off-course totalisator (TAB) in agencies, pubs and clubs.

‘Menangle is the first total adoption of American style harness racing in Australia,’ Wayne observes. ‘In the American version all races start from a mobile barrier. The courses are mostly large, like Menangle, and most races are sprints run over the flying mile, which is just over one lap of the course. The horses tend to race in looser formation. This is quite different to the traditional Australian form of harness race, which was a staying event run over several laps of the course. Fields were larger and started from distance handicapped ‘standing’ starts—in which the better performed horses give the others a ‘start’. Since the 1970s there has been a drift towards the American form in Australia.

‘In cultural research terms, this is an unusual example from the sporting world of globalisation and the trend towards the usurpation of ‘local’ cultural expressions by transnational templates that often originate in the USA—North American cultural imperialism to some people.

‘The thinking is that the American form of racing is the more spectacular, and that fewer competitors are blocked for a run—something that has long frustrated harness racing punters.

‘There are other consequences, though. The lack of distance handicapping, the smaller fields, shorter races, less interference, the disproportionate advantage inherent in drawing a position near the inside, all make it easier to pick the winner. This might seem a good thing, but it does make favourites’ prices consistently shorter. It remains to be seen if punters will like American style harness racing at Menangle over the long term—but TAB figures on early meetings have certainly been encouraging for the Club.’

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