

Briefs...

Internationals want to stay

A survey of the expectations and perceptions of more than 30,000 university students, including 4000 international students – The University and Beyond 2007 report, released by Graduate Careers Australia – has found that nearly two-thirds of international students plan to stay in Australia after graduating.

Uni expands student selection

The Australian Catholic University has moved away from using year-12 scores to select students, saying character and community service are also important. The decision could prompt other universities to place less emphasis on ENTER scores, which critics insist are a crude measure of suitability for tertiary study. The university – the largest producer of nursing graduates in Australia and among the top five for teachers will select candidates based on their community work or “mentality of service”, rather than relying solely on an ENTER score.

World’s top university cities

The 2008 Global University City Index has revealed the world’s liveliest education centres, with London, Boston and Tokyo leading the pack. Melbourne has been ranked 4th in the 2008 index, up from 5th place in the inaugural index last year.

Leaving the car at home

Deakin’s Burwood campus has funding from the State Government’s Department of Infrastructure to implement TravelSmart over the next two years. The TravelSmart project is designed to provide useful information for staff and students to help them travel more sustainably to the university, while at the same time helping to remove barriers that prevent staff and students from cycling, walking or taking public transport.

Cycle re-cycle



A local charity will receive a delivery of bicycles that are as good-as-new, thanks to a group of young students from Swinburne’s Croydon campus.

In an effort to give back to the community, the students have sourced old and disused bikes from hard rubbish collections, then repaired and decorated them so that they might be loved once again.

Aged between 15 and 19, the students involved in the project are undertaking the Certificate of General Education for Adults – Youth stream, which is an alternative to the mainstream schooling system.

According to Swinburne youth access coordinator Dianne Rees, the students have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the project.

“This really is a great initiative. It’s making use of materials that would otherwise be thrown out, so it’s sending a great message about sustainability to the students,” she said.

Rees says the project has given the students involved many new skills they can carry into the workplace.

Cut and paste click ‘ok’

Educationalist Dr Dale Spender says universities are out of touch with their students in seeking to clamp down on “cut and paste” information from the internet, arguing that what is dubbed plagiarism is just part of the way students learn.

And she while universities are quick to clamp down on students for plagiarism, academics often recycled their own research

papers, effectively plagiarising themselves.

“What they are all calling plagiarism isn’t plagiarism at all, it is in fact a new and fast and obviously digital way of synthesising information,” Spender was reported saying in *The Australian*.

“What kids are doing in downloading text is exactly what they are doing in downloading music,” she said.

“They take bits and pieces, mixing and matching them and making something that is their own product.”

When software programs such as *turnitin.com* could quickly identify repeated or plagiarised phrases, Dr Spender argued that rather than focusing on the failure of students to properly cite downloaded text, assessors should be focusing on whether the student had answered the

question and demonstrated their own understanding.

“I don’t really care if there are bits and pieces in their initial information that is downloaded from different points. What I care about is: do they understand it and did they use that information to come up with a solution to solve a problem?” she said.

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