

in BRIEF...



New prof of architecture

Leading sustainable development expert Janis Birkeland has joined QUT as its new Professor of Architecture based in the Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering. Professor Birkeland, *pictured above*, brings a wealth of experience to the position, having worked as an artist, advocacy planner, architect, urban designer, city planner and attorney in San Francisco before entering academia in Australia.

Equity Awards now open

Know someone who is making a contribution to supporting equity in lecture halls and workplaces across QUT? The opportunity to have their efforts recognised is now open with nominations being called for QUT's Equity Awards. Nominations close on October 12. For more information go to www.equity.qut.edu.au/programs/other/equityawards.

Brisbane book launched

QUT alumnus and staff member Dr Bill Hatherell recently launched his new book, *The Third Metropolis – Imagining Brisbane through Art and Literature*, as part of the Brisbane Writers Festival. With a focus on the literary

and visual arts – in particular poetry, the novel, and painting – *The Third Metropolis* considers the relationship of these works of art to the actual history of Brisbane – political, economic and demographic. Dr Hatherell has worked at QUT since 1992 in a variety of policy, writing and teaching roles.

Top students gather

Some of the best and brightest QUT students will gather next Monday night (September 24) at Brisbane City Hall to be inducted into the Golden Key International Honour Society. Students in the top 15 per cent of the university are invited each year to become members of the society which provides opportunities for industry networking. Golden Key is an international non-profit organisation affiliated with more than 335 universities around the globe. For further information visit www.qutgoldenkey.org.

Commercialisation retreat

bluebox will hold a free two-day commercialisation retreat for QUT PhD candidates at Novotel Twin Waters on the Sunshine Coast from November 1-2. Researchers will meet leading professionals from the legal, patent attorney and venture capital fields and learn about the commercialisation process at QUT. Free attendance includes travel, accommodation and meals. enquiries@qutbluebox.com.au or 07 3138 9420.



Less work more play equals smarter children

Early childhood

TEACHERS are being urged to keep the lines of communication open with parents to prevent potential discontent over the new Prep Year.

Early childhood PhD graduate Lyndal O'Gorman, *pictured above*, interviewed parents of Prep-aged children at a non-government school in South-East Queensland.

She found that the majority of the parents at that school liked a more structured program with elements of formal schooling such as homework and teacher-directed activities as preparation for Year 1.

But she said the evidence was clearly in favour of Prep programs that still

enabled children to play as this was best for a child's long-term development.

"The new Early Years Curriculum which Prep Year is based on advocates a mix of both teacher- and child-initiated activities and is actually very good preparation for formal schooling," she said.

"A play-based program allows children to follow their own interests and prepares them socially and emotionally while introducing them to literacy and numeracy without the workbooks and take-home readers.

"You don't make a person more intelligent by introducing formal, teacher-directed learning earlier."

Dr O'Gorman said the majority of parents in her study thought

the opposite with only one parent strongly opposed to a structured start to school.

"What I hope will come of my research is to give teachers an understanding of what parents may be expecting from the Prep Year and educate parents on the merits of a play-based start to school," she said.

"It's important during this introductory phase of Prep that teachers communicate with parents about the benefits of what they are doing.

"Also, we need to understand that different parents may want different things from the Prep Year. We've got a real challenge ahead of us."

- Toni Chambers

Scholarships for low-income students stop them dropping out

QUT scholarships offered to low-income students are helping relieve the financial burden of studying, and lowering attrition rates.

QUT Equity coordinator Mary Kelly said a survey of students who had received financial assistance in 2006 revealed the scholarships had a real impact on a student's financial situation which in turn improved

their academic prospects.

"Students report that they are able to focus on their study due to the alleviation of stress and the ability to reduce their paid working hours," she said.

"Eighty-six per cent of students said the scholarship had made the difference between staying at university or leaving, and data analysis

confirms that scholarship-holders have drop-out rates over 40 per cent lower than other students."

Ms Kelly said each year QUT provided thousands of scholarships and bursaries to low-income students, and that the attrition analysis had vindicated the worth of the program as a tool for learning.

"We want all students to have a

chance to complete their degrees undistracted by financial worries. The scholarships help students learn, pass and complete," she said.

"QUT has one of the largest scholarship schemes for low-income students in the country," she said.

QUT's Equity Scholarship Scheme provides different types of support for low-income students including

one-year scholarships, bursaries and free computers. These supports are valued from \$500 to \$3000.

The Federal Government also provides QUT with significant funds through the Commonwealth Learning Scholarships Scheme.

For more information visit www.scholarships.qut.edu.au.

- Sandra Hutchinson

graduate teaching course

Degree holders can now change careers and become qualified teachers with QUT's Graduate Diploma in Education.

You can complete this program full-time in one year or part-time in two years – either on-campus at Kelvin Grove (internal) or online (external).

You can focus your studies on:

- Early Years – early childhood teaching, prep to year 3
- Middle Years – primary and middle years teaching
- Senior Years – secondary teaching*

Reflecting the latest policies and priorities in Queensland, these study areas establish QUT's Graduate Diploma in Education as an innovative and progressive qualification.

On-time applications through QTAC close 28 September 2007.

More information

For further details, please phone (07) 3138 3947, email educationenq@qut.edu.au or visit Studyfinder at qut.com

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* Some Senior Years teaching areas are only available on-campus



Being open is something to get 'cited' about

and conference papers for everyone through QUT ePrints, available at <http://eprints.qut.edu.au>.

A staggering 50,000 downloads of Professor Frost's papers have been made in the past year by people around the world which has helped him achieve more than 4000 citations in the past 12 months.

Professor Frost, *pictured*, from QUT's School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, is a prolific author and has more than 250 papers in which he is the lead or co-researcher available on QUT's ePrints.

Open access

QUT is leading the world in open access to research papers and Professor Ray Frost is at the vanguard.

QUT was one of the world's first research institutions to provide cost-free open access to electronic copies of peer-reviewed research journal articles