

# ergo

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Number 94 March 2004

## Careers for Science Graduates Released



The latest in the series of "industry career profile" booklets, *Careers for Science Graduates*, is now available. Written by the GCCA's Dugald McNaughtan, this title provides background careers information for prospective science students in "Part One", then in "Part Two" provides job-seeking and career exploration advice for science students and graduates in the Australian market.

Science graduates typically have wildly diverse employment options and this breadth of choice is reflected in the booklet, which can be downloaded free from "Industry Career Profiles" section of the gradlink website – [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au)

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*Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Council, its Board or individual members.*

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## Graduate Prospects Remain Robust

The *Graduate Destination Survey* (GDS) is conducted annually by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) in co-operation with all Australian universities. The GDS tracks the activities of new university graduates who completed their qualifications in the previous calendar year. In 2003, information from over 107,000 new graduates was analysed for this new report.

### The Main Findings

Figures released from the *2003 Graduate Destination Survey* suggest that employment prospects for new bachelor degree graduates remain robust despite a small rise in the percentage still seeking employment.

Some of the other main points to come from the latest collection of data are that:

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2003, 80.1 per cent (81.3 per cent in 2002) were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees
- A further 12.1 per cent (11.2 per cent in 2002) were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment
- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2003, 7.8 per cent (7.5 per cent in 2002) were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey
- Ms Cindy Tilbrook, Executive Director of the GCCA, said "While graduate employment prospects improved and consolidated between 1999 and 2001, they fell slightly in 2002 and again in

*continued on page 8*

## The Graduate Careers Network

In February 2004, in response to considerable encouragement from many quarters in the graduate employment sector, the gradlink team decided to formulate and develop a new networking program for university careers staff, graduate employers and various auxiliary participants in the graduate recruitment process. The result was *The Graduate Careers Network*, the GCCA's inaugural "meet and greet" session which was held in Victoria on 19 February at the Victoria Hotel.



*Early arrivals*

### Introduction

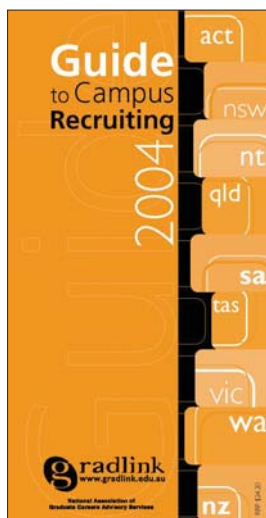
It was a balmy summer's afternoon as registrants arrived at the Victoria Hotel, located in the heart of the CBD behind Melbourne's Town Hall, and took their places. The proceedings began with a brief address from GCCA Executive Director Cindy Tilbrook, which covered recent GCCA events and initiatives, as well as providing a precy of the current graduate labour market. Cindy reported that the more upbeat mood which has been evident in the UK and US markets recently is finally beginning to be felt in Australia.

### NAGCAS President Speaks

Following on from Cindy, David Essex, the recently elected President of NAGCAS (the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services) for Victoria/Tasmania,

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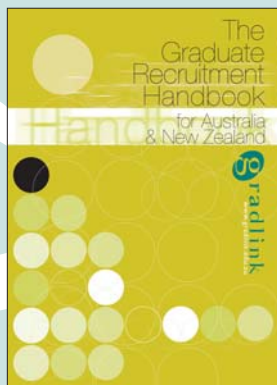
## GCCA Resources for Graduate Employers



The *2004 Guide to Campus Recruiting* is out now! This comprehensive guide to university careers services in Australia and New Zealand features:

- Important term and careers fair dates
- Staff contacts, including Employer Liaison
- On and off-campus services and facilities for employers
- Numbers of graduating students.

The *Guide* is available now for AUS\$24.20 – see contact details below to order.



The *Graduate Recruitment Handbook for Australia and New Zealand* is the companion piece to the *Guide to Campus Recruiting*. This book is a step-by-step guide for new graduate recruiters to help them budget, plan and execute a graduate recruitment campaign, and includes sections on interviews, processing applications, selection, offers, induction and development and the review process.

If you would like to order either of these titles, please contact the *gradlink* Helpdesk on: telephone: **03 9349 4300** or email: **info@gradlink.edu.au**

## New GCCA Resource for Careers Practitioners



The *gradlink* team is excited to announce a new addition to our range of careers-related video resources – “Your Job’s Online”, a 2003 video produced by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) in the United Kingdom. “Your Job’s Online” is a 25-minute video which attempts to dispel the myths about applying for jobs in the online environment. It shows two major employers selecting graduates using only their electronic applications. We hear the selectors assessing the candidates’ performance and then see the candidates react to those comments.

A few candidates may be dazzled by this kind of technology, but in general the problem is that it is often treated with too much familiarity. Because online application forms have elements such as tick boxes the temptation can be to treat them like any other online transaction (such as buying books or music). This is a mistake, as a real person will read the application form, and will expect to see the same evidence of a candidate’s skills and commitment as with a paper-based application.

This video shows how to maximise the effectiveness of online applications through providing evidence when answering questions, talking about relevant interests, self-marketing, common mistakes to avoid and the importance of a summary.

If you would like to order a copy of this title, please contact the *gradlink* Helpdesk on: telephone: **03 9349 4300** or email: **info@gradlink.edu.au**

# GoGrad: Victoria's Official Local Government Graduate Program



Graduates of Victorian Universities are being encouraged to start positioning themselves as future leaders by joining GoGrad, Victoria's official local government graduate program.

The two-year program, to be launched around the state in March 2004, will provide graduates with training and development sessions, ongoing structured support and a peer support network.

GoGrad encourages graduates to consider the unique benefits of a career path in local government.

## Employers From Across Victoria

With 79 potential employers across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria, graduates have access to multiple and diverse career opportunities through GoGrad.

The-day-to-day work of graduates will impact on people's lives. They will be challenged to make tough decisions for the community while being supported through a program of ongoing learning and development.

GoGrad will provide participants with the opportunity to gain real experience that can be applied locally as well as interstate and overseas across all levels of government, the private sector and community organisations.



For the 2005 intake, graduates will be recruited from the following disciplines:

- Civil Engineering
- Environmental Health & Public Health
- Public Policy
- Urban & Town Planning

## Municipal Association of Victoria

GoGrad is an initiative of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), the peak representative body for local government in Victoria. MAV provides leadership for councils by supporting them and enabling them to achieve the highest levels of respect and recognition through improved performance.

Find out all you need to know about the GoGrad program at [www.gograd.com.au](http://www.gograd.com.au)

Alternatively, you can email [info@gograd.com.au](mailto:info@gograd.com.au) or call the GoGrad hotline on 03 9203 4929.



## Graduate Opportunities 2004

*Graduate Opportunities* 2004, the GCCA's official graduate employer directory, is now available for only **AUS\$22.00!**

Featuring industry employment profiles, employer listings, important dates and facts and much more, *Graduate Opportunities* 2004 can be ordered directly from the GCCA by contacting:

**the gradlink Helpdesk**  
 telephone: 03 9349 4300  
 email: [info@gradlink.edu.au](mailto:info@gradlink.edu.au)  
 website: [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au)





## The Virtual Careers Fair - On Again in 2004

The *Virtual Careers Fair* (VCF) has quickly become an institution in the Australasian graduate recruitment scene. It is the only national careers fair which offers access to students all round the country and overseas by virtue of being online, and has the backing of most of the largest tertiary institutions in Australia. It offers an easily affordable method for graduate employers to make contact with proactive job-seekers, as well as raise their profile amongst the student/graduate population.

### Background

The 2004 *Virtual Careers Fair* is a ten day, online careers fair which will run from Monday 29 March – Thursday 8 April. The event will provide an interactive meeting place for Graduates, Students and Employers, and provide students with the ability to explore future employment options with organisations all over Australia and New Zealand. Students can attend forums run by expert presenters, participate in chat sessions, win door prizes and play the “Virtual Interview” Game.

Employers can advertise details such as the industries they conduct business in, the location of positions offered, the types of degrees sought and skills required and application details. Additionally, their company logo and website can be profiled, testimonials from current graduate staff included and PDF brochures made available.

Employers can also participate interactively at the VCF by hosting forums in a simple ‘chat room’ style, providing personalised contact with interested parties.

### Why a Virtual Careers Fair?

The VCF offers organisations the opportunity to raise their profile and promote their employment programs to graduates and students, through a cost-effective and wide reaching event. The VCF also offers organisations an innovative medium to



present themselves through online “Hosted Forums”.

Importantly the event offers all students the ability to be exposed to the same opportunities no matter what their location, schedule or study type, removing past inequalities in the graduate recruitment market. This has particular importance for regional students, external students and metropolitan students who are unable to attend their own University’s “physical” careers fair.

The VCF gives students the ability to follow direct links to online application forms quickly and efficiently, and in 2004 is the largest event of its type in Australia and New Zealand.

### Who’s Involved?

The VCF is an initiative of the University of New England, originally funded in recognition of the specific issues confronting university graduates in regional locations. It has secured sponsorship and support from both SEEK and *gradlink*, respectively Australia and New Zealand’s most visited employment website and

the official graduate website of Australia’s Universities.

### VCF 2003 Outcomes

In 2003, 12,285 individuals were identified as visitors to the VCF, with 89 per cent of visits occurring during weekdays and the average length of each visit approximately 24 minutes. There were 76 exhibitors from the public and private sectors, and students from 120 institutions came to the site.

### More Information

For information about the 2004 Virtual Careers Fair, to register as an exhibitor, to download the flyer for employers or to check out the full report from last year’s event, visit the VCF page on the *gradlink* website at [www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/1187](http://www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/1187). If you would like to discuss sponsorship please contact Rhonda Leece on (02) 6773 3408 or [rleec@metz.une.edu.au](mailto:rleec@metz.une.edu.au)

# 2003 NAGCAS Annual Conference – Lismore



**National Association of  
Graduate Careers Advisory Services**

It was a steamy morning in the southern-most part of Queensland which greeted delegates to the 2003 NAGCAS (National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services) Conference at Coollongatta Airport, and the weather was not the only thing which would have a tropical theme throughout the coming days. The event began for some with a scenic tour down the north-east coast of New South Wales, with delegates meeting that evening for an introductory barbeque.

## Day One - Opening

The Conference proper kicked off on Monday 1 December, and delegates from all over Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom met for three days of professional development, information sessions, and the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with their peers in the graduate employment sector.

Opening the proceedings was the Vice-Chancellor of Southern Cross University, Professor John Rickard, who had some interesting comments to make about specialist courses of study and the overall role of university education in Australian society.

Following an address from Mark Cully, General Manager of NCVER about job change factors, the program progressed to the first of three elective sessions, covering a range of topics relevant to the operation of careers services. These included programs for postgraduate and rural students, internal marketing and structured communication. Before lunch the second elective was held, and a modest but vocal crowd attended my "Getting the most out of *gradlink*" session, in which I spruiked the free resources available on the *gradlink* website – [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au).

## Showcase Sessions

The afternoon saw the first of two showcase sessions, where careers services from around the country presented for ten minutes on some recent innovations, and this contest was scored by the

audience to be awarded later in the conference. Dinner that night was at a celebrated local restaurant called Henry's, named after a local legend concerning a particularly plucky crocodile.

Tuesday began with some information sessions about various developments in the Higher Ed/ careers sector including CICA and the National Blueprint for Career Development, and these were followed by morning tea and the chance to browse stalls as part of the conference Trade Fair. The third and final elective sessions followed before lunch, covering some interesting topics such as career mentoring and helping elite athletes negotiate university choices, followed by more Trade Fair as the day began to really heat up – reflected in the strikingly informal clothing choices of many of the delegates.

## Conference Dinner

The afternoon featured the second and final showcase session and the special interest groups, while other delegates went back to their digs to prepare for the extravaganza which was the Conference Dinner. This latter event was held on-campus in a room which had been transformed with pillars, lights and an impressive AV display, into a mock-Hollywood awards night, and many delegates entered into the spirit of the occasion by dressing up – keen observers would have noticed Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin, Uma Thurman and Elvis among the crowd that night. The highlight of the evening's proceedings was for many the young ballroom dancing couple who punctuated the "awards" with a series of choreographed routines.

## Careers Service Hypothetical

Wednesday saw the heat continue and a rather rowdy "careers service hypothetical" session run by our own ED Cindy Tilbrook, which threw up some very interesting situations and some highly creative solutions from both the expert panel and the audience. Morning tea was a good opportunity for delegates to strengthen the networking activity of the past two days and for many to say goodbye, as after some wrapping-up comments the conference began to disperse. Overall it had been a very enjoyable and relaxed conference, and we at the GCCA are looking forward to the next NAGCAS event in Western Australia, which was very ably promoted by Julie Howell of Edith Cowan University.

**Dugald McNaughtan**  
*Communications Coordinator, GCCA*

## 2004 Careers Fairs Dates

### Australian Capital Territory

#### **Australian National University/Canberra University**

Thu 25 Mar – Tertiary to Work Fair

#### **Australian National University**

Tue 23 Mar – Law Fair

### New South Wales

#### **Macquarie University**

Thu 1 Apr – Graduate Recruitment Fair

Fri 2 Apr – Teaching Opportunities Expo (am)

Fri 2 Apr – Law Careers Fair (pm)

#### **University of New England**

Mon 29 Mar – Virtual Careers Fair (until Thu 8 April)

#### **University of New South Wales**

Tue 6 Apr – Careers Expo, (all faculties)

#### **University of Newcastle**

Mon 29 Mar – Careers Fair

Fri 2 Apr – Teacher Recruitment Fair

#### **University of Sydney**

Mon 29 Mar – APS Guest Lectures Program

Tue 30 Mar – Law Careers Fair

Wed 31 Mar – General Careers Fair

Aug (Date TBC) – Alternate Law Fair

#### **University of Technology, Sydney**

Wed 7 Apr – Careers Fair

Fri 21 May – Education Expo

Sep (Date TBC) – Construction & Quantity Surveying

Careers and Cadetships Expo

#### **University of Western Sydney**

Tue 30 Mar – Careers Fair, 11am-4pm

#### **University of Wollongong**

Mon 5 Apr – Careers Fair: All Disciplines

Mid-Aug (Date TBC) – Health Industry Fair

Early Sep (Date TBC) – Education Careers Fair

### Queensland

#### **Griffith University**

Tue 23 Mar – Careers Fair, Nathan Campus, 11am-2pm

Thu 25 Mar – Careers Fair, Gold Coast Campus, 11am-2pm

#### **James Cook University**

Wed 17 Mar – Cairns Careers Fair

Thu 18 Mar – Townsville Careers Fair

#### **Queensland University of Technology**

Mon 22 Mar – Careers Fair

#### **University of Queensland**

Wed 24 Mar – Careers Fair

Mon 12–Fri 16 Jul – Education Career Enhancement Fair

#### **University of Southern Queensland**

Fri 26 Mar – Recruitment Careers Fair

Fri 26 Mar – e-Careers Fair (internet fair live for two months)

### South Australia

#### **Adelaide University**

Thu 25 Mar – Arts, Commerce, Economics, Finance Fair

Fri 26 Mar – Mathematical & Computer Sciences, Engineering & Science Careers Fair, 10.30am-3pm

#### **Flinders University**

Tue 23 Mar – Law Career Fair (evening)

Wed 24 Apr – Commerce Careers Fair Thu 25 Mar – Science/Information Technology/Engineering Careers Fair

Tue 22 Jun – Teaching

Mon 26 Jul – Nursing

Wed 18 Aug – Recruitment Agencies Fair

### Tasmania

#### **University of Tasmania**

Thu 25 Mar – Careers Fair, 12 – 3.30pm Hobart Campus

Fri 26 Mar – Law Fair, 12 – 2pm, Hobart Law School

### Victoria

#### **Combined Victorian Universities**

Thu 29 Apr – SciTech Careers, Science and Technology

Careers Fair, 5.30 – 9pm, Telstra Dome Victory Room

#### **Deakin University**

Thu 4 Mar – Accounting Careers Cocktails, 5-7pm

Fri 5 Mar – “Careers and Croissants” Business & Information Technology Employers and Students

#### **La Trobe University**

Mon 15 Mar – Graduate Recruitment Expo (all disciplines), Bundoora Campus

Wed 4 Aug – Work Experience Expo, Bundoora Campus

#### **Monash University**

Thu 11 Mar – Economics, Commerce, Business, Arts, Law and Education Careers Fair, Clayton Campus

Fri 12 Mar – Information Technology, Engineering and Science Careers Fair, Clayton Campus

Thu 5 Aug – Vacation Employment Fair, Clayton Campus

#### **Swinburne University of Technology**

Tue 16 Mar – Employer Fair

#### **University of Ballarat**

Wed 24 Mar – Careers Fair (multidisciplinary), 5-7pm

Mon 9 Aug – Education Careers Fair

#### **University of Melbourne**

Tue 9 Mar – Business, Arts and Law Careers Fair

Fri 19 Mar – Engineering, Science and IT Careers Fair

Tue 3 Aug – Industry Experience Fair

Aug (Date TBC) – Working Holiday Careers Fair

#### **Victoria University**

Wed 10 Mar – Careers Fair

### New Zealand

#### **Auckland University of Technology**

Aug (Date TBC) – Careers Fair, Conf. Centre, WA Block

#### **University of Canterbury**

Wed 12 May – Careers and Employment Fair

#### **Massey University**

Wed 19 May – Turitea Campus, Palm. North, 10am-4pm

#### **University of Auckland**

Tue 16 Mar – Law Fair

Wed 5 & Thu 6 May – Careers Fair, University Gymnasium

#### **University of Waikato**

Tue 18 May – Careers Fair



## The Graduate Careers Network (cont.)

spoke about the valuable role that university careers services can play in the recruitment process, and why it is important for graduate employers to establish relationships with these and other services which can help them get their message across to more students.



*Networking goes up a gear*

The networking then began in earnest as attendees matched their respective halves of a well-known proverb to find their workshop group, then discussed its application in the graduate employment arena. The issues which eventually arose confirmed that many of those in attendance experienced similar problems, such as meeting budget and planning targets, communication and building relationships with other parties to the process as well as managing student and employer expectations.



*Sharing problems – and solutions*

### Networking Activities

The final part of the evening was a free networking session which included a competition where attendees attempted to complete a list of names. The mystery names were of other attendees who had supplied a particular fact about themselves prior to the event, and a winner was decided from those who were most successful. The purpose of this exercise was to encourage every attendee to meet as many other people as possible. While there were some quite unexpectedly creative answers, everyone benefited from this exercise, judging by the fact that some people remained deep in conversation after the bar had closed.



*The dialogue continues*

### Thank You

The GCCA would like to thank all those who attended and expressed their satisfaction with the event; it was particularly gratifying to see so many new employer organisations represented, and we intend for the event to become a regular feature from here onwards.

**Dugald McNaughtan**  
*Communications Coordinator, GCCA*



*from l – r: Cindy Tilbrook, Executive Director, GCCA; Jackie Vidot, Manager – gradlink*

### GCCA Industry Career Profiles

The GCCA produces and maintains a range of industry career profile booklets which provide career exploration advice to students and graduates from a wide range of disciplines. These span subjects from *Economics* to *Teaching*, and have been sourced from a variety of writers.

Distributed to careers centres across the country, these booklets are also available to download for free from the *gradlink* website. Browse the full range now by going to [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au) and navigating to the "Industry Career Profiles" subsection of "What Job For You?".

## Graduate Prospects Remain Robust (cont.)

*in 2003. In this regard, the graduate labour market in Australia has followed the pattern set in the graduate market internationally, which has been depressed over the last few years. However, overall employment prospects remain excellent for new graduates"*

- More than one in five respondents, or 22.8 per cent (24.1 per cent in 2002) were undertaking further full-time study after completing their qualification. Males were more likely than females to have continued in full-time study
- The median annual starting salary for bachelor degree graduates in their first full-time employment was \$37,000 (\$35,500 in 2002). This was 82.0 per cent of average earnings, down from 82.7 per cent last year, 85.8 per cent in 2001, and 84.2 per cent in 2000 but up on 81.6 per cent in 1999
- Males earned a starting salary of \$38,000 (up from \$37,000 in 2002) and females earned \$36,300 (up from \$35,000 in 2002). Differences in starting salaries between males and females can be partly explained in terms of the differing enrolment and employment profiles of male and female students
- Fields of study with high proportions in full-time employment at the time of the GDS included pharmacy (99.5 per cent), medicine (98.0 per cent), initial nursing education (97.5 per cent), and post-initial nursing education (97.1 per cent)
- Respondents in visual and performing arts, physics, psychology, humanities, mathematics, computer science, life sciences and social science were most likely to have been seeking full-time employment when surveyed
- At \$55,000, dentistry graduates earned the highest median starting salary
- The top ranked fields in terms of starting salary were dentistry, optometry, medicine, engineering and education
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) component of the GDS remains at a high level, with 89.8 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

### Graduate Unemployment Lower

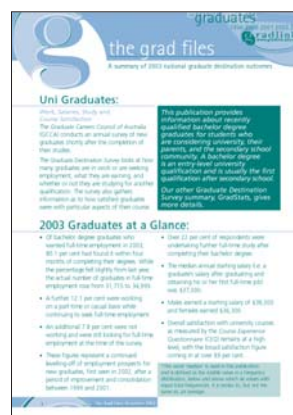
Cindy Tilbrook adds "University graduates enjoy a privileged position in the labour market and will continue to see the rewards of their higher education as their careers unfold. The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data (May 2002) show that just 2.9 per cent of those in the general population with bachelor degrees were unemployed,

*less than half the figure for the labour force as a whole."*

### The Grad Files and GradStats

These figures appear in the Graduate Careers Council of Australia's new summary publications for 2003, *GradStats* and *The Grad Files*. *GradStats* is a general summary of the GDS while *The Grad Files* is aimed at prospective university students and gives an overview of the type of work that newly employed graduates enter. You can read more about the results of the 2003 *Graduate Destination Survey* in *The Grad Files*, the printed publication included with this newsletter.

Anyone interested in these results can also download their own free copies of *GradStats* and *The Grad Files* (pictured below) by going to [www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/24](http://www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/24)



For further information, please contact Cindy Tilbrook, GCCA Executive Director, on (03) 8344 9334 or 0438 988 772 or Bruce Guthrie, GCCA Research Manager, on (02) 6367 5347 or 0418 25 3530.

***The next edition of ergo – number 95 – is scheduled for the first week of May 2004. As always, contributions from ergo readers on topics of interest to the graduate employment sector are most welcome – please submit them to [info@gradlink.edu.au](mailto:info@gradlink.edu.au). Advertising opportunities are also available – for more information please contact Jacqueline Vidot at [j.vidot@gradlink.edu.au](mailto:j.vidot@gradlink.edu.au).***

***Dugald McNaughtan,  
Editor***