

# ergo

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Number 95 June 2004

## GCCA Director Joanne Tyler



GCCA Director Joanne Tyler is currently enjoying a second stint as National President of NAGCAS (the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services).

Currently Director of Student Career Development at Victoria University, she has been a Director of the GCCA since 1994, and chair of the *gradlink* Steering Committee for the last five years. A firm believer in the value of collaboration, Joanne has been a member of the NAGCAS executive since its inception, and as President at this time oversaw the

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

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## Accessing the Graduate Voice: the launch of CEQuery

The innovative new software tool, *CEQuery*, was officially launched and released to the higher education sector on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2004. Professor Dennis Gibson, Chancellor of RMIT, and Chair of the *CEQuery* Steering Committee, performed the launch at an event hosted by the University of Technology, Sydney, and attended by over forty representatives from the higher education sector, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and other interested personnel. We were very fortunate in that the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors were able to attend the launch, and we were encouraged by their keen interest in this new product.



*Senior attendees from New South Wales universities at the CEQuery launch, including AV-CC president and Macquarie University Vice-Chancellor Prof Di Yerbury (seated holding CD) and GCCA Chairman and Chancellor of RMIT University Prof Dennis Gibson AO (seated far right).*

*CEQuery* is software that allows for the detailed and systematic analysis of the qualitative comments contained in the *Course Experience Questionnaire*.

Developed by the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Technology, Sydney, through funding provided by DEST, the software is now being offered free of charge to the

Australian higher education sector through the Graduate Careers Council of Australia Ltd (GCCA). The GCCA will also provide initial and ongoing training and support for this exciting new analysis tool.



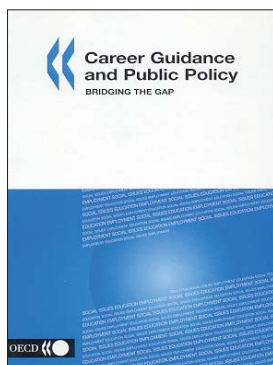
*Shane Brown, Queensland Uni of Technology – CEQuery Developer*

The launch on 23 March was followed by a workshop for the ten universities who participated in the pilot program for the software. Since then, a sequence of further workshops has been conducted around the country, so that universities have the opportunity to obtain the software and gain some detailed insights into the functionality and potential of the program.

The training and support of *CEQuery* represents a new initiative for the GCCA, and our liaison with the sector in this regard will provide a valuable adjunct to the information that universities already obtain from the *Graduate Destination Survey* and the *Course Experience Questionnaire*. We look forward to working with higher education institutions as they implement and use this new software.

**Cindy Tilbrook**  
*Executive Director, GCCA*

## Career Guidance and Public Policy – Review



The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an international body pursuing high sustainable economic growth and standards of living in its member countries, as well as multilateral, non-discriminatory expansion in world trade. The organisation's activities reach into most areas of public and commercial activity, not the least of these career guidance policies, and a new review into these areas begun in 2001 has now been published under the title "Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap".

The OECD review looked at how various aspects of career guidance relate to public policy (in particular lifelong learning and the labour market) and covered a range of settings including secondary and tertiary education. The stakeholders consulted included employers, community organisations, educational institutions, students, government and career practitioners, and statistics and opinions on a range of topics were gathered. The report looks at the relationship between career guidance and public policy, as well as how career guidance can be better resourced and delivered more effectively.

At over 170 pages in length, "Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap" investigates in detail how to meet the needs of young people and adults, staffing and funding career guidance and building policy frameworks for the future. Broadly, it concludes that developing career self-management skills and a greater diversity of services are two fundamental requirements which are currently given less than adequate attention, and that better quality assurance mechanisms (linked to funding) and strategic leadership should also be priorities.

An overview of "Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap" can be downloaded from the OECD website - [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org); the report is available now (ISBN – 92-64-10564-6)

## US Labour Market Update

The prevailing message to come from the latest NACE Spring Salary Survey, published late in the first half of 2004 in the United States, is one of cautious optimism. NACE, the National Association of Colleges and Employers, is the peak body for graduate employment in the US, conducting research into employment and salary outcomes for graduates of US universities. Graduate prospects appear to be strengthening late in the first half of 2004, underlining the more receptive market signalled in the NACE Winter Salary Survey at the start of the year. Salary increases were reported for more than half the disciplines surveyed, as well as a steadying of demand in many areas.

There were some interesting starting salary outcomes for some graduates in traditionally "in-demand" fields, such as management information systems which took a small dip, and communications where starting salaries dropped over 12 per cent. However, the increase in computer science and information science graduates' starting salaries was encouraging, as well as civil engineering which experienced a 1.7 per cent increase overall.

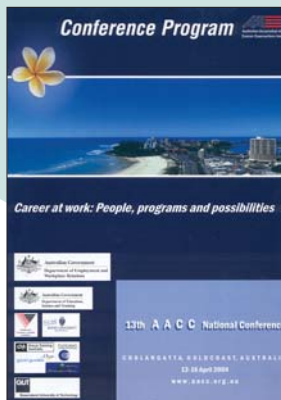
Employer activity in the US graduate market (reflecting the Australian experience) appears to be ramping up, with an increase in careers fair attendance, more interviews being conducted on-campus and a significant increase in online job postings. Hopefully this more upbeat mood will continue in the coming months as the US economy continues to rally and Australian economic growth continues to strengthen.

*Dugald McNaughtan*  
*Communications Coordinator, GCCA*

## GCCA Director Joanne Tyler (cont.)

transformation of NAGCA from an association of individuals to NAGCAS – an association of careers services. Fourteen years at RMIT, two years at Swinburne before that (and a spell at Monash in the distant past!) has given her a firm grasp of higher education issues, rounded off by a placement to the Research Policy and Evaluation Section in the Higher Education Research Branch of (then) DETYA in 1998, as part of the ATN Women's Executive Development Program; and an MBA.

## 2004 AACC Conference – Careers at Work



The annual Australian Association of Careers Counsellors' conference was held from 14-16 April at the Twin Towns Resort in Coolangatta, Queensland. With an attendance of well over 300, the conference provided a wonderful opportunity to network with people interested in different aspects of career planning and development, counselling and employment. Delegates came from all backgrounds, including secondary and tertiary education, private practice, government and the Job Network.

The Minister for Employment, the Hon. Mal Brough, opened the conference with insightful thoughts regarding the changing workforce in Australia, for example, there will be 170,000 new workers entering the workforce this year which is more than is projected for the entire decade in the 2020s. As many readers will already know, we are also facing a much high number of mature-age workers either re-entering or seeking to stay longer in the workforce over the coming years. All of this leads to the increased importance and relevance of career guidance and development.

Set against this backdrop, the conference geared up to assist those in attendance to work with their clients operating in a changing Australian and global workplace.

Numerous keynote speakers and workshop sessions covered a range of themes including:

- Career as story: Using life themes in counselling – Professor Mark Savickas, Northeastern Ohio University, USA
- Temporary work and new careers – Professor Kerr Inkson, Massey University, NZ
- Forging links between organisational and occupational career counselling – Professor Norm Amundson, University of British Columbia, Canada

I found the international panel discussing indigenous career issues and activities enlightening. Speakers from Canada, New Zealand and Australia detailed career planning and development issues specific to working with indigenous clients in their respective countries, as well as working with and lobbying government and industry to achieve their organisations' aims.

The conference was abuzz on the final morning as The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson was in attendance to announce the Government's \$4.5 million funding boost to assist in building professional standards and career opportunities for careers professionals. Full details of the funding package can be found in the Minister's media release at: [www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2004/04/n678160404.asp](http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2004/04/n678160404.asp)

The audience was pleased to hear of the commitment to careers and the injection of funds was a sure sign that 'the train is in' – a common theme regarding the current profile of careers education and development throughout the conference. It seems that now is the time to realise the 'possibilities' and cement the importance of career development and lifelong learning initiatives in this country.

The Minister also announced the recipients of the 2004 Australian Careers Service awards. Congratulations to the deserving winners:

- Winner – Scotch Oakburn College, Tasmania
- Runner-up – Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School, Birkdale Queensland

GCCA/gradlink was proud to participate in the conference as a materials sponsor. We also enjoyed the opportunity to conduct a workshop and to have a trade stand across the three days, as it was a chance to meet new faces and catch up with old friends.

Thanks are extended to the AACC Conference Organising Committee for their tremendous efforts in coordinating such a well-run and informative conference. This is a key event in the annual careers calendar, and I encourage our readers to attend next year's conference in Canberra. Further information can be found on the AACC website – [www.aacc.org.au](http://www.aacc.org.au)

**Jackie Vidot**  
Manager – gradlink

## Targeting New Hires On-Campus

The essential task for graduate recruiters is to attract the best and most appropriate new talent to their organisation. As an increasing number of information sources demand the attention of job-seekers, developing a targeted strategy to reach final and pre-final year students becomes vital; here the University careers service is ideally placed to help.

Careers services should be the first stop on-campus when planning and executing a student/graduate recruitment drive, as they offer a range of services from which the savvy recruiter can choose an effective mix. For direct contact with proactive job-seeking students, the university careers service provides (usually online) direct job vacancy advertising – particularly useful when an urgent need to hire arises, as well as profile-raising opportunities through the careers website and inhouse careers publications.

### Targeted Email Campaigns

The careers centre can also provide targeted email campaigns (where students from a certain faculty or year level can be selected) and facilitate campus visits and information sessions; these are all good ways to build up the students' perception of your organisation as an employer with a real interest in providing good graduate opportunities. Some services will also keep a library of information about employers with ongoing programs, so it's useful to ensure that the marketing materials you give out to universities are kept up to date.

Similarly, keep university careers services abreast of hiring requirements and planned on-campus activities, as the better-informed they are the more they can do to help you; if you have new graduate recruitment staff, introduce them to the relevant careers service staff. Careers Fairs are a vital means for larger employers to not only promote graduate programs and employment opportunities, but in some cases to conduct interviews on the spot. Often, selection interviews will be permitted throughout the year at appointed times; and if supplemented by information sessions with recent graduate recruits, they can provide a firsthand glimpse of employment possibilities for students who are soon to graduate.

### Plan Using the University Calendar

It is essential to plan using the university calendar, as there are peak periods to attract candidates and other times when they are occupied with examinations, or simply not there. Timing is

essential, and employers should know when exams are held and assignments due (usually the end of semester), when semester breaks occur and when the year begins and ends. These important dates, as well as contact details for careers services in Australia and New Zealand can be found under Important Dates and Contacts on *gradlink* – [www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/208](http://www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/208)

### Other Methods to Reach Students

In addition to these careers service activities there are many other methods to reach students; briefly these include online “virtual” careers fairs (ideal for reaching remote or regional candidates in a cost-effective manner), co-operative education (co-op) and other curriculum-based programs (in conjunction with the relevant faculty), contact with academics and alumni offices, involvement in student activities and scholarships, sponsorship of events and competitions such as the Higher Education Workplace Skills Olympiad (HEWSO) and inclusion in publications such as *Graduate Opportunities* – [www.graduateopportunities.com](http://www.graduateopportunities.com).

### For Further Information

For information about HEWSO, the annual *Virtual Careers Fair* and other events, as well as help for new graduate recruiters and more, visit the *gradlink* website at [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au).

*Dugald McNaughtan*

*Communications Coordinator, GCCA*

## SA Graduate Careers Network Event – Book Now!

The Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) presents a new initiative for 2004 – **The Graduate Careers Network**. This networking event brings together employers of graduates with university careers staff, and will be held from **4.00 - 6.00pm** at the **National Wine Centre of Australia** (Corner Hackney and Botanic Roads, Adelaide) on **Thursday 24 June**. The program will include networking activities, an interactive workshop session, prizes and more.

Attendance costs **\$33.00**; to reserve your place, please download and fill in the registration form found at [www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/1625](http://www.gradlink.edu.au/content/view/full/1625) and fax it to 03 9347 7298. For more information, contact the *gradlink* Helpdesk on 03 9349 4300 or [info@gradlink.edu.au](mailto:info@gradlink.edu.au)

## Careers Services in the UK and Australia: A View from the Outside

Over the next two editions of *ergo*, we will be featuring the stories of two Careers Advisers from opposite sides of the world, who swapped jobs, houses and cars for six months: Eleanor Berry from the University of Warwick, UK and Rosemary Sainty from the University of Sydney in Australia.

Part One of this feature is from Eleanor, who came to Australia in mid-Semester One, 2004; Part Two from Rosemary will feature in the September edition of *ergo*, number 96.



*Eleanor Berry, on exchange*

### Eleanor's Story

I arrived in Sydney a couple of days early to meet my exchange partner, Rosemary. My life felt like a "Reality TV" show as I waved farewell to Rosemary before moving into her family home. The highs, lows and new experiences would have been worthy of a television show – before departure I had convinced myself that there would only be minor differences between careers guidance in the two countries, but how wrong I was! These are the five most significant differences that I found between the UK and Australia.

### Profile

The reasons why careers guidance has a higher profile in Britain than in Australia are covered clearly in Judi Green's article "Fit for the Future: the AGCAS Biennial Conference 2003, Edinburgh" (see *ergo* issue 93). The two areas which are currently driving the agenda in Britain are the league tables and the introduction of Matrix.

British league tables are proving to be a mechanism which gains the attention of students, University management and academics. As in Australia, British students are adapting to higher fees. However, British students, or "consumers", make vital decisions about study options based on league tables. The national newspapers publish

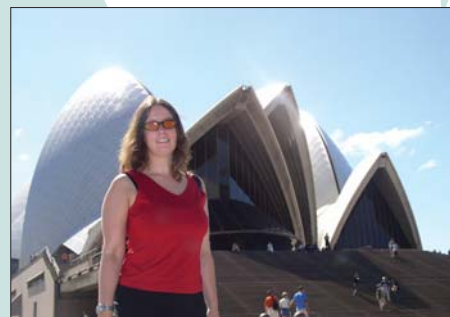
different versions of these league tables derived from different sources, including The Research Assessment Exercise, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Audits, and the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey.

In Australia The Good Guides Group publishes a type of league table, rating universities using a star system. Unlike in Britain however, the universities are not placed in order and the results are not published by the media.

The significance of the British league tables has meant that the Warwick University Careers Service has been able to use them to encourage developmental work with academic departments. Indeed, these departments are beginning to enthusiastically initiate new ideas, including tailored workshops and training for the academic staff in the role of the Careers Service. Having to address these needs has meant that we are rushed off our feet in the autumn term.

With Education Minister Brendan Nelson's new initiative to "promote excellence in university teaching", Australian universities may find themselves heading in the same direction.

The introduction in the UK of the quality standard "Matrix", has reinforced the student-focused approach and improved the quality of services in different ways. The team at Warwick concentrated on the vision and goals of the service. Although we had always encouraged feedback, and based our future provision on the advice of our clients, this became even more central to our way of thinking.



*Eleanor outside a certain Sydney landmark*

### Career Resources

Another important difference between Australia and the UK is the amount of resources available, for example the number of staff. Whilst an average careers service in Britain will have 10.4 staff (from

*continued overleaf*

## Eleanor's Story (cont.)

an AGCAS Survey of 75 Careers Services) there are only 5.4 staff in Australia. I had two questions:

- 1 How does this impact upon daily work?
- 2 Is there a link between resource levels and the profile of a careers service?

At The University of Warwick there are three distinct teams: Information, Employer Liaison and Guidance; at Sydney University I found myself covering all three. Whereas in England I would only have contact with employers to enrich guidance skills, in Sydney I have been organising the Public Service Careers Fair, the timetable of employer presentations and guest lectures: complete with the administrative customer care (pre- and post-presentation). And this is on top of guidance work.

Six people at Warwick would have covered my work at Sydney. It was tricky dividing my attention between employers and students at a time when students needed my attention most.



*Taking the ferry to work*

This difference applies specifically to these Universities, but it is clear that many Australian Services are more constrained in choosing between priorities. For example, some universities here have eliminated longer interviews or restrict career work to academic departments. Such strategic decisions are less common in Britain.

Even with a greater level of resourcing, Careers Services including Warwick have had to move from providing for those students who seek help, to aiming to ensure the employability of all students through mass and self-help provision. This is common to all services but approaches to solving the problem differ.

Warwick's strategy has been to ensure that the students who need greater assistance with decision-making are the ones using more careers resources

and those who require information are able to locate it. We also work more closely with departments, develop lifelong Career Management Skills and have restructured our website and library to encourage students to work independently, thus requiring less one-to-one support.

The level of resourcing clearly follows the profile of Careers work. The Government's push to improve careers provision in Britain has led to greater resources and improved standards.

### Graduate Recruitment

I am beginning to understand how fierce the competition is between graduate employers in Britain. At Warwick over 80 employers gave presentations on campus. These presentations were worthy of the cinema and employers creatively compete for students' attention, with anything from the latest gadgets to giving a deferred job offer allowing the graduate to travel the world for a year. One employer even constructed mysterious 'careers pods' on campus. It would be good to see some of the global employers sharing ideas internationally.

British recruitment has a lot to learn from the *Virtual Careers Fair*, an initiative from the University of New England which can be found at [www.vcf.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.vcf.gradlink.edu.au)

### Vocational Degrees

In Britain 40% of employers look for a graduate with any degree. However, in Australia many employers look for specific degrees. Therefore, there is pressure to make vital career decisions before tertiary education. As a result, many Australian students seem unaware that they still have options open. For example, business students have a tendency to feel that their choices are limited to a few careers.

*continued on page 8*



*Eleanor makes friends with the locals*

## SciTech Careers 2004: a Forum for Science, IT and Engineering Graduate Careers

The inaugural SciTech Career Forum was held on the afternoon and evening of 30 April 2004. This event, the first of its kind in Australia, was organised by the careers team at La Trobe University under the cool and unflappable guidance of Anna Heywood, and had the backing and support of most other Victorian universities. Some 700+ participants gave up four hours in the pursuit of better career planning and job-seeking skills, and listened to expert forums featuring speakers from a wide variety of industries.



*Opening of the Forum*

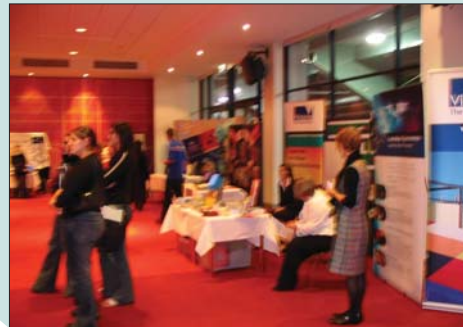
The SciTech expo was open to students from all Victorian universities, and covered career prospects for the Information Technology, Science and Engineering disciplines. Held at the imposing Telstra Dome in Melbourne's sporting heartland in the new docklands area, the event was a great success as participants thronged about the three Victory rooms and the Trade Fair stalls in the main area. The sense of activity was compounded by the rather eerie closure of the roof, which meant that it felt like night-time during the day-light hours.



*Mr Matt Viney MP launches the new gradlink career information booklets*

The Forum was officially opened by Matt Viney, Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry, who launched the GCCA's *Careers for Science Graduates* and *Careers for IT Graduates* booklets as part of his address. In the sessions that followed I had the privilege of chairing one of the first forums, entitled "Where Do All the IT Graduates Go?", a pertinent question following the "dot-com" crash of the late 90s and the subsequent

correction of the IT industry to its present healthy, sustainable growth in the following decade. Other sessions throughout the night would include graduate panel sessions on careers in government with a science degree, teaching as a career option, practical application of physics and mathematics in the workforce, future "hot areas" in science and engineering as a vocation.



*Students visit the Trade Fair*

The event also catered for an enthusiastic contingent of secondary school students, who had come to learn more about their career prospects should they choose to pursue a higher degree in Science, IT or Engineering; one session entitled "Open or Close the Door: Doing a Higher Degree" specifically covered this area. Our executive director Cindy Tilbrook also chaired a lively debate entitled "A Pass Degree in Science is Enough to Find Employment", another contentious topic.



*GCCA Executive Director Cindy Tilbrook staffs the gradlink trade stall*

The evening finished with networking over sandwiches and coffee, during which students made full use of the opportunity to speak to potential future employers, as well as snap up free copies of our IT and Science careers booklets. Reflecting on the evening while packing up our *gradlink* trade stall, it seemed the evening had been a significant success, and we hope that this becomes a regular fixture in the Victorian careers calendar.

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

## New Careers for IT Graduates Booklet



The GCCA produces and maintains a range of career information 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 – [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au). Simply navigate to the “Industry Career Profiles” subsection of “What Job For You?” and download the appropriate PDF.

The latest addition to the career booklet range in 2004 is *Careers for Information Technology Graduates*. Written by Anna Heywood from the Course and Careers Service at Latrobe University, this booklet covers many important careers-related areas for IT graduates and students, including:

- occupations and typical IT careers pathways
- emerging occupations
- employment-seeking strategies
- joining industry groups and
- sources of further information.



*The GCCA would like to gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of the Australian Computer Society ([www.acs.org.au](http://www.acs.org.au)) which made this booklet possible.*

## Eleanor’s Story (cont.)

### Sunshine

The purpose of Freshers/Orientation week remains constant around the world but it is easy to underestimate the effect of sunshine. I was amazed at the societies’ fairground booths that appeared on the lawn to advertise their activities. The outdoor version of Freshers Week consisted of bands and barbeques. How different from the cramped indoor alternative in Britain!

To summarise, there are similar challenges for career professionals in the two countries yet it seems these are more acute in Australia because the level of recognition is lower. I hope that the new education reforms, promoting accountability within Higher Education, will recognise and support the crucial role played by University careers services at the interface between education and the workplace.

### Eleanor Berry

*University of Warwick, on exchange at the University of Sydney*



*The Careers team at Sydney University*

*You can read the final part of “Careers Services in the UK and Australia: An Outside View” in the next ergo newsletter. “Rosemary’s Story” will be in ergo number 96, which is scheduled to be distributed in the first week of September 2004.*

*As always, contributions from ergo readers on topics of interest to the graduate employment sector are welcome – please submit them to [info@gradlink.edu.au](mailto:info@gradlink.edu.au). Advertising and insert 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**