

# Research grants, reports and related activities

## Research grants and projects

Research at a local, national and international level is a very significant component of the work of the School of Education. This research spans the whole range from policy-oriented to basic research. To give focus to its applied and industry funded research, the School has the Centre for Learning, Change and Development (CLCD).

During 2006, the School has maintained its access to nationally competitive grants and University grants for basic research.

## Australian Research Council (ARC) discovery project grants

**Internationalisation of higher education: sociocultural dynamics of group learning**  
**\$189 000 (2006-2008)**

**Professor Simone Volet**

Summary:

A better understanding of the challenges created by social and cultural diversity in the context of internationalisation of higher education will lead to educational and social benefits. The research will provide a conceptual basis for the development of innovative teaching practices, which address these challenges and capitalise on diversity to enrich the learning of both international and local students.

It directly addresses the national research priority of enhancing Australia's capacity to interpret and engage with its regional and global environment, through greater reciprocal understanding of the interface of diverse culture and societies.

**Multidimensional unfolding: the latitude of acceptance and the structure of the single peaked response process in a multidimensional space**

**\$90 000 (2004 – 2006)**

**Associate Professor Guanzhong Luo and Professor David Andrich**

Summary:

The latitude of acceptance and the operational function that structures the single peaked response process have only recently been understood as central to unidimensional models for the measurement of attitude, preference and choice. They have been neglected in multidimensional models. This project will formalise these two central components in a multidimensional space. The operational function governs the relationship between any item-person distance and the latitude of acceptance defines a multidimensional hyper-sphere within which the more positive response is more likely. The project will articulate and operationalise these models for a range of typical response formats from ranking to pairwise preferences.

## Australian Research Council (ARC) linkage project grants

**A pedagogy for multiliteracies with information and communication technologies in Early Childhood Education**

**\$150 000 (2003-2005)**

**RMIT, Melbourne: UNSW, Sydney IBM Australia, Australian National Schools Network, Victorian Schools Innovations Commission, Sydney Day Nurseries, Kindergarten Union Services, The Gowrie WA Inc. Global Multimedia, The Department of Education and Training, NSW, The Department of Education and Training WA, Global Futures**

**Dr Libby Lee, Dr Yelland, Dr Harrison and Dr O'Rourke**

Summary:

The goal of this project is to determine the most effective pedagogy for the use of ICT in Australian early childhood education. The research is essential in order to plan for a world-class educational future for young Australians. A collaborative action-research program will be undertaken by four leading academics in association with a network of thirty-six teachers in three states. This innovative research approach is based on a multiliteracies framework.

The project will investigate how ICT can best be used for enhancing children's learning and identify specific ways in which teachers can develop multiliteracies in early childhood education environments.

**Enhancing school retention: School and community linkages in regional/ rural Western Australia.**

**\$200 000**

**WA Department of Education and Training committing a further \$90 000 and Ballarat University, Murdoch University and WADET providing in-kind contributions to the value of \$337 000. Professor Barry Down, City of Rockingham Chair in Education and Emeritus Professor John Smyth, Ballarat University.**

Summary:

One of the most intractable issues confronting schools, communities and education systems in Australia, is how to create and sustain the conditions to retain young people for twelve years of schooling, particularly in regional/ rural areas.

This project will ethnographically map, investigate and describe a small number of schools and communities in the Rockingham/ Kwinana region to develop A Profile of Conditions Supporting Improved Retention.

The profile will be developed and validated using an action research process in collaboration with participating teachers and schools.

Finally, a set of materials focusing on the conditions promoting school retention will be developed for wider use by systems, schools and communities.

This research team is contracted to publish two books arising from the research:

- (1) *Critically Engaged Learning: Connecting to Young Lives*. Peter Lang Publishers, New York (due Dec 2007) (co-authored by Smyth, J., Angus, L., Down, B., & McInerney, P.); and
- (2) *Activist and Socially Critical School and Community Renewal: Social Justice in Exploitative Times* with Sense Publishers (Kluwer, the Netherlands) (due July 2008) (co-authored by Smyth, J., Angus, L., Down, B., & McInerney, P.).

As well, a series of seven professional development modules will be published for the benefit of schools, teachers and the community:

- (1) School and Community Renewal
- (2) Public Policy Context
- (3) Vocational Education and Training
- (4) Youth and Popular Culture
- (5) Pedagogy and Relationships
- (6) Poverty and Education
- (7) Reflective Practice

**Maintaining invariant scales in state, national and international level assessments.**  
**\$338 446 (2004 – 2006)**  
**MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce**  
**International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO) and**  
**Australian Council for Educational Research**  
**Professor David Andrich and**  
**Associate Professor Guanzhong Luo**

Summary:

Large scale assessments involve comparisons between countries, states within a country, and within these over time. For many reasons, identical items cannot be administered to

every student. Nevertheless, the items must operate invariantly across groups.

The Rasch models, which have invariance as an intrinsic property, are powerful in checking for such invariance.

This project brings the basic research of the Chief Investigators to the industry partners to study, apply and document ways in which violations of Rasch models and different data collection formats are reflected as changes of scale, and how these might be controlled both statistically and empirically.

## Carrick Institute grant

**Enhancing the student educational experiences through school-based curriculum improvement leaders**  
**\$199 062 (2006-2008)**  
**Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching, Higher Education Grants**  
**Associate Professor Renato Schibeci and**  
**Dr Ric Cummings, Teaching & Learning Centre.**

Summary:

The project is investigating curriculum leadership in Schools of Study at the University.

The purpose of this study is to identify policies and practices which support academic staff who are not 'positional leaders' to improve their teaching and learning practices in the respective School of Study.

Underpinning this project the notion of developing a scalable model and sustainable processes for improving the quality of curriculum and teaching and learning within the educational environments of a range of disciplines.

This project is designed to enhance strategic change and build upon existing programs reinforcing relations across the university. Improvements would be clearly focussed on ultimately enhancing student outcomes and research projects would be aligned with University plans and School priorities

## Murdoch University Research Excellence Grant Scheme (REGS)

**Improving tertiary participation and retention: (Re)engaging students from low socio-economic backgrounds in the Rockingham region**  
**\$10 317 (2006)**

**Professor Barry Down, Dr Jane Pearce,**  
**Liz Moore (Phd student)**

Summary:

This study aims to investigate the university and community-related conditions that promote, support and sustain enhanced levels of tertiary participation and retention at the Rockingham campus.

The project is valued at \$10 317 over 12 months. Chief Investigators are Professor Barry Down, City of Rockingham Chair in Education and Dr Jane Pearce, Rockingham campus. Liz Moore, a current PhD student, is Research Associate.

The project is now in the final stages of analysis. This work will be presented at a symposium entitled *The Cultural Politics of (In)Exclusion to University: Narratives of Class, Identity and Pedagogy* at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Annual Conference in November 2007.

**Taking action on online learning: A cognitive and social analysis**  
**\$12 434 (2006)**

**Dr Dorit Maor**

Summary:

This study reports on a careful examination of educational processes in an exclusively online asynchronous discussion of a university course in three consecutive years.

The researcher used NVivo software as a tool for the qualitative analysis and as a way to establish performance profiles.

The study first establishes a framework to identify social and cognitive aspects of online learning based on three models of interaction and then refines the framework to better understand these processes of interaction.

## Centre for Learning Change and Development (CLCD)

During 2006, the Centre for Learning, Change and Development continued with its core work overseeing a number of research projects and preparing and submitting tender responses, and also assisting with the internal Review of the CLCD (Stage 1). There were some minor staffing changes in 2006: Gillian Buckingham and Roselina Stone continued as Manager and Secretary, and Anne Winterton completed her time as Project Manager of the Review of Education in Visual Arts, Craft, Design and Visual Communication. Dr Susan McKenzie was appointed Assistant Director at the end of the year to replace Dr Judy MacCallum (Director) who went on Outside Studies Program leave for the second half of 2006.

School of Education researchers were successful in winning a competitive DEST tender, a DEST research grant, a Telstra Foundation Grant, and funding for Critical Friends in the ASISTM project, coordinated

through the CLCD. A large variety of projects also continue to be administered and researched through the Centre. Dr Andrew McConney was selected to write a DEST report in the Schooling Issues Digest series on Measuring Teacher Effectiveness. The report will address the characteristics of studies that measure the impact of teachers and teaching on student achievement and a summary of findings from both International and Australian studies that have measured the impact of teachers and teaching. It will also include a brief history of attempts to measure the effectiveness of teaching on student outcomes.

Dr Susan McKenzie and Karen Murcia won a DEST Literacy and Numeracy Innovative Projects Initiative Third Round project to explore *Whiteboard Technology: engaging children with literacy and numeracy rich contexts*.

The project will investigate the use of Interactive Whiteboard (IAW) technology as a tool for facilitating children's development of literacy and numeracy skills. The project is located at Coolbellup Community School in Perth.

A/Prof Renato Schibeci won funding from The Telstra Foundation Community Development Fund for the project *Numeracy to Go: Improving Numeracy with mobile phones as electronic learning objects*. The project aims to explore new information and communications technology (ICT) as one way of addressing numeracy issues in primary school age gifted and talented children and indigenous children. Two Perth schools, Bateman Primary School and Moorditj Noongar Community College are involved in the project.

Involvement in the Australian Schools Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project (ASISTM) began in 2005 with three staff members acting as Critical Friends to Round 1 projects. Five staff were then selected to be Critical Friends in Round 2 projects which commenced in 2006. These staff were selected on their experience in working with schools and being able to provide support and guidance to the Project Coordinators and Leaders on all aspects of the project, including the educational quality of proposed teacher professional development, teaching and learning activities and participation of the teacher associates.



From left: Susan McKenzie, Gillian Buckingham, Judy MacCallum and Roselina Stone

## Research and development projects continued during 2006

Project Title	Timeframe	Project Leader/s	Funding Source	Grant/Income
PIPS Project	2006	Helen Wildy	Participating Primary Schools	\$306 723
Provision of a National Review of Education Visual Arts, Craft, Design and Visual Communication	2005 - 2006	Peter Wright Robin Pascoe Judith MacCallum (and Terry Church; Judith Dinham, ECU; Neil Brown, UNSW; Kathryn Grushka, Newcastle)	Australia Council for the Arts	\$250 000
Raising Achievement in Schools: Data management and reporting	2006	Helen Wildy	Catholic Education Office of WA	\$50 000
NuLitData CEOWA	2006	Helen Wildy	Catholic Education Office of WA	\$120 000
Melville BELS	2006	Helen Wildy Coral Pepper	Melville Senior High School	\$20 000
Kimberley Literacy	2006	Helen Wildy	Catholic Education Office	\$20 000
Accelerated Literacy	2006	Helen Wildy	Catholic Education Office	\$10 000
Mentoring Training	2005 - 2006	Judith MacCallum	ACE Foundation	\$5 000
ASISTM critical friends	2005-2006	Renato Schibeci Coral Pepper Karen Murcia	Australian Catholic University	\$25 315
AISWA: NuLit Data	2006	Helen Wildy	Association of Independent Schools WA	\$100 0 00
NSW DET Standards	2006	Helen Wildy Coral Pepper	NSW DET	\$15 900
Values Education Good Practice Schools Project	2005-2006	Barry Down	Australia Council of Deans of Education Inc	\$17 000

## Research and development projects new in 2006

Project Title	Timeframe	Project Leader/s	Funding Source	Grant/Income
Whiteboard Technology	2006-2007	Susan McKenzie Karen Murcia	Commonwealth Department of Education Science & Training	\$40 000
Measuring Teacher Effectiveness	2006	Andrew McConney	Commonwealth Department of Education Science & Training	\$29 950
Numeracy to Go	2006	Renato Schibeci	Telstra Foundation Community Development Grant	\$40 000
ASISTM Round 2	2006-2007	Jeff Baxter Judith MacCallum Andrew McConney Dorit Maor Karen Murcia	ASISTM project through Australian Catholic University	\$41 695
Mungullah-East Carnarvon Primary School Project	2006-2009	Libby Lee Corinne Reid	DEST/AETC combined project	\$130 186 \$105 000



## Research reports

### The Boys Education Lighthouse II Project: aiming for success across Australia

Over the past decade, the topic of boys' education has received intense media coverage and government interest at local, national and international levels. Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training in 2004, The Boys Education Lighthouse II (BELS II) project involved \$6.5 million and 350 schools across 51 clusters, nation-wide. Headed by Professor Peter Cuttance (Director of Research Australia Development and Innovation Institute), BELS II aimed to improve boys' educational outcomes by establishing and evaluating school-based interventions, such as mentoring programs and the integration of ICT in classrooms.

Managed by Associate Professor Wayne Martino and Dr Wendy Cumming-Potvin, the WA team involved several researchers from Murdoch University's School of Education. For example, research consultants such as Dr Judith MacCallum, Associate Professor Helen Wildy and Ms Coral Pepper collaborated

with school principals and practitioners to achieve better outcomes for specific groups of boys (and girls) in remote, rural and urban settings. Building on the work of BELS II, Wendy was recently invited to facilitate a 'Boys and Literacy' workshop, as part of a series of national conferences for the Australasian Boys' Education Network Professional Learning Program.

**Dr Wendy Cumming-Potvin**

### International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP)

ISPP is an international partnership between researchers in Western Australia (Associate Professor Helen Wildy and Dr Simon Clarke W.Aust), Scotland, England, Canada, USA, Mexico, Turkey, South Africa and Jamaica. The impetus for the project came from discussions at AERA meetings in 2003 about the impact of preparation programs on school principals' performance. The main research question driving the project is: *How useful are principal preparation programs to novice principals?*

The study has three phases: first, a mapping of principal preparation programs in each partner country; second, case studies of

novice principals' experiences to ascertain their understanding of the utility of these programs; and third, an international cross-cultural survey of the perceptions of principals of their needs for preparation.

Ironically, despite the initial involvement of Associate Professor Helen Wildy in setting up the project and designing the study, there is no formal mandated principal preparation in Australia and, to some extent, the study is not relevant in this country.

By taking a slightly different angle, the research question was applied in this setting. For example, the mapping exercise of the first phase identified what kinds of pre-appointment programs, such as induction and postgraduate study, were available for principals. The research question for the second phase became: *What are the challenges and needs of novice principals for which they would benefit from improved preparation?*

In 2006 a small scale study involving six novice principals was conducted in rural Western Australia. From this study three papers have been written and submitted for publication, and a series of conference presentations made in WA and internationally.

**Associate Professor Helen Wildy**

## Kimberley Literacy Data Project – research and development of new data management and analysis techniques (KimLit)

KimLit aims to develop new application software that will permit new methods of data analysis to facilitate the interpretation and synthesis of literacy performance data in the WA Kimberley Catholic primary schools.

The 12 schools in the Kimberley area include both large schools in regional centres and very small inland community schools characterised by mobile student populations and high staff turnover.

Supporting schools to improve student literacy levels presents many challenges. One approach is the Catholic Education Office's Literacy strategy which includes, *inter alia*, assessing students at a number of points and designing and implementing interventions to support their needs.

KimLit supports this strategy by providing software for summarising and representing the assessment data in forms that help teachers and principals, as well as literacy consultants, make judgements about students' needs.

### The project team

Associate Professor Helen Wildy (Chief Investigator) and Dr Barry Sheridan (programmer and software developer) – work with principals and literacy coordinators to demonstrate and apply the software to facilitate the entry and summary of student performance data from seven subtests.

The displays show individual student scores as well as school and sub group means and standard deviations, pre and post intervention scores for all seven subtests.

In addition, displays show regression analyses of the relationship between attendance and performance.

Workshops are conducted to support teachers and principals to interpret the displays and to make decisions about the effectiveness of their teaching strategies.

### Associate Professor Helen Wildy

## The NuLitData Projects 2006

Both the Association of Independent Schools of WA (AISWA) and the Catholic Education Office of WA (CEO) opted to continue the development of the NuLitData Projects for their schools in 2006.

The NuLitData program provides assistance for schools in interpreting their results in The Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA) and the Monitoring Standards in Education in Year 9 (MSE9) assessments for school improvement and accountability purposes. In 2006, the NuLitData project reported on the data from the 2005 WALNA and MSE9 assessments. The sections of the NuLitData project are software development of the program to analyse and display the data; preparation of individual disks for each school; and the provision of professional development workshops for school personnel. In addition, for the CEO system, comprehensive reports are prepared which present summary results at a system level on all schools in the Catholic Education system in WA for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. A further aspect to the reporting for CEO is the provision of required reports to the Commonwealth (DEST).

### Software development

As well as the software developments which had been undertaken for the previous NuLitdata projects, a further innovation was added this year. For CEO schools, secondary schools were asked to nominate the primary schools in the Catholic system which were their 'feeder' schools for Year 7 students in 2004. From this a 'virtual' Year 7 cohort was constructed for each secondary school consisting of the 2005 Year 9 students who had been in the Catholic Education system in Year 7, 2003.

This enabled the links to be made at an individual student level between Year 7 (2003) and Year 9 (2005).

### Professional development workshops

A series of 17 workshops was organised in the metropolitan area to provide professional development for school personnel, eight of these were for the AISWA sector and nine were for the Catholic sector. In country areas a further eight workshops were held, some of which were joint workshops shared by schools from both sectors. The principal and another staff member from each school with students in Years 3, 5, 7 or 9 were invited to attend a workshop. This year a workshop was held with the consultants at the Catholic Education Office to give them first-hand experience with the program. Members of AISWA staff were also invited to attend.

### The NuLitData CD

As well as the three-hour workshop explaining the program, schools received a colour printed manual and a CD which contained their own school data for the years 2001 to 2005. The CD displays data using line graphs and box and whisker plots, to enable schools to track their own performance for a particular year or over a time period, and to compare their performance with State (all schools) performance or the performance of a group of schools with a similar Ross Farrish (SES) index, known as the Like Schools group. In the case of composite schools with both a primary and a secondary component, the data for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were included on the CD. Regression analyses generating standardized value added residuals are performed. These results are presented in graphical form to allow schools to monitor their progress over time and hence the effectiveness of their provision for particular student cohorts.

### The project team

The team for the two NuLitData projects consists of Associate Professor Helen Wildy (Project director and professional development facilitator), Dr Barry Sheridan (software developer).

### Associate Professor Helen Wildy



From left: NuLit Team, Helen Wildy, Barry Sheridan and Annette Mercer



## PIPS – Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) On-Entry Baseline Assessment is administered by Murdoch University and offered to schools and systems in Australia. This Baseline Assessment of literacy and numeracy is one of a range of assessments developed by the Curriculum Evaluation and Management Centre (CEM) at the University of Durham, UK, under Director Professor Peter Tymms and his colleagues. This assessment can assist with assessing progress of students entering primary school.

In 2006, the PIPS Australia team at Murdoch University consisted of Associate Professor Helen Wildy (Project Director), Eva Tam (Project Coordinator) and Antony Gray (Project Officer).

In 2006 for the first time PIPS data were linked with WALNA data. The linking was possible for those WA Catholic Education (CEOWA) schools and Association of Independent Schools (AISWA) who had taken up PIPS in 2003 as these students were

assessed as Year 3 students in 2006. The linking was made available to schools in each sector through the NuLitData projects. Two regression analyses were carried out. One involved school means and generated value added residuals. Such analyses are useful in monitoring the effectiveness of PP - Year 3 programs for the students and allow schools to answer the question: Have our students made enough progress in their early years in our school?

The second analysis involved matching individual scores from PIPS with students' subsequent WALNA data. This analysis is useful for monitoring the progress of individuals and allows schools to answer the question: Has this student made enough progress over the early years in our school? The first analysis allows schools to get a picture of the overall effectiveness of their provision; the second allows schools to see whether their provision is adequate for individual students and sub groups of students.

The table below shows participation from schools over the years since the PIPS On-Entry Baseline Assessment was introduced into Australia.

Driven by the technology available and the constant desire to improve the PIPS Project, in 2006 we introduced PIPS+ Australia-wide. PIPS + is an innovative feature allowing users to submit data via the Internet, giving them immediate access to their past and present feedback.

This new feature has proved very successful with regard to its useability and convenience. The turn around time was also shortened as schools did not have to wait for feedback to be posted. With PIPS+, schools can print their feedback as soon as it is available on the web and have the advantage that as many copies can be printed as required. Please visit [www.education.murdoch.edu.au/pips/](http://www.education.murdoch.edu.au/pips/) for more information about the PIPS Project.

**Associate Professor Helen Wildy**

State	Year	No. of Schools	No. of Students
ACT	2001	not offered	0
	2002	70	2827
	2003	69	2714
	2004	72	2761
	2005	75	2845
	2006	77	2901
NSW	2001	not offered	0
	2002	2	95
	2003	1	41
	2004	1	41
	2005	2	86
	2006	2	82
NT	2001	not offered	0
	2002	not offered	0
	2003	6	399
	2004	8	255
	2005	6	229
	2006	3	107
QLD	2001	1	22
	2002	7	409
	2003	52	2115
	2004	41	1888
	2005	55	2897
	2006	65	3384
SA	2001	not offered	0
	2002	not offered	0
	2003	5	305
	2004	5	202
	2005	3	128
	2006	3	36

State	Year	No. of Schools	No. of Students
TAS	2001	48	1449
	2002	170	5314
	2003	196	5697
	2004	203	5989
	2005	199	5973
	2006	202	5974
VIC	2001	not offered	0
	2002	not offered	0
	2003	not offered	0
	2004	not offered	0
	2005	not offered	0
	2006	34	1066
WA	2001	40	2268
	2002	172	5857
	2003	146	5343
	2004	215	7489
	2005	252	8174
	2006	318	10 205
TOTAL	2001	89	3739
	2002	421	14 502
	2003	475	16 614
	2004	545	18 625
	2005	592	20 332
	2006	704	23 755

*These figures indicate the number of schools increased by over 600% and students by over 500% over the last 5 years. 2006 saw the inclusion of all Western Australia Catholic schools, and was the first year that schools from Victoria were involved with PIPS.*

## Raising Achievement in Schools (RAISE): data management and reporting

RAISE is an application project of the K-12 Literacy Strategy for Catholic Primary Schools in Western Australia. The RAISE initiative draws heavily on current research projects, nationally and internationally, aimed at both school improvement and literacy achievement. The RAISE project started in 2004 and continues to grow.

In 2004 RAISE funding from the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia totalled \$20 000; in 2005 it was increased to \$30 000 and further increased to \$50 000 for 2006. The number of participating schools has risen from 20 (Intake 1) 2004, to 41 (Intake 2) 2005, to 62 (Intake 3) 2006. It is expected that the project will grow to include, at least, 70 schools in 2007.

The RAISE team is also increasing in number to include Peter Hayes, Sue Benson, Peter Noonan, Julie Southwell, Judith Reeves and Gabrielle Bastow at the CEO. The research team providing assistance in data gathering and analysis through the School of Education are Associate Professor Helen Wildy (Chief Investigator), Coral Pepper (project manager) and Dr Barry Sheridan (software development).

The RAISE intervention is a whole school program delivered in three waves: firstly, targeting teachers and students; secondly, supporting those students identified in the lowest fifth of the cohort; and thirdly, providing a specialist to support students who need long term intervention.

All schools participating in the program are required to implement a data gathering

schedule. Teachers are trained in both the administration and analysis of assessment instruments and expected to engage in routines of continuous student monitoring, including Running Records, and writing and spelling analysis.

All data are forwarded to Murdoch University for comparison with baseline data gathered in 2004 and a summary report is compiled for the Catholic Education Office.

The comparison of student performance data with baseline data is used by schools to monitor the impact of school level interventions on teachers' practice over time. Generally, the performance results for students in 2006 are higher than those for students in 2004.

The project includes support to all staff, both by Catholic Education office consultants and by the RAISE Chief Investigator. The support involves leadership development for principals, first wave coordinators and teacher leaders, as well as advice on the interpretation of whole school and individual student data.

**Associate Professor Helen Wildy**

## Standards for School Leaders: NSW Department of Education and Training

Following a recent ARC funded project titled *Performance-based assessment of professional standards for school principals* (Wildy, Loudon & Andrich), and an invited presentation to key personnel from all Australian educational jurisdictions, a research partnership between Associate Professor Helen Wildy and the

NSW DET was established. The research was to replicate the research conducted in WA with the aim of finding out whether the same attributes applied to leaders in NSW: the attributes that were found to distinguish quality in leaders' performance are the extent to which schools leaders are fair, decisive, collaborative, supportive, tactful, persistent, innovative and flexible. These are the cornerstone of the WA DET Leadership Framework (<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/lc/standards.html>).

The first phase of the NSW project involved interviewing 34 principals from a range of contexts about the challenges they faced. The interview data formed the basis of a set of 34 narratives which depicted principals at work. The second phase occurred in June 2006, when half of these narratives were used to generate both qualitative and quantitative data.

The qualitative data comprised descriptions of what distinguished quality in the narratives; the quantitative data comprised judgements about that performance. Data were collected from several hundred primary principals gathered in four workshop sessions in metropolitan Sydney and regional centres. Similar data collection sessions are to be held with secondary school principals in 2007. The third phase, the data analysis, will be undertaken when all narratives have been rated and described.

The extent to which the descriptors are consistent with the WA descriptors will be ascertained from the qualitative data. The extent to which the NSW narratives can be arrayed on continua will be ascertained from Rasch analyses of the quantitative data. The NSW DET will then decide the ways in which these findings can be incorporated into their leadership development programs.

**Associate Professor Helen Wildy**

# Education Research and Academic Programs Office (ERAP)

The Education Research and Academic Programs Office (ERAP) has many roles within the School in assisting staff and current and prospective postgraduate students.

In March 2006 ERAP staff were pleased to welcome Vivienne Pepper as an Administrative Assistant to replace a staff member who resigned at the end of 2005.

Some of the tasks that kept the ERAP office busy in 2006 included:

- Servicing the School Committee, the Research Postgraduates & Centres Committee (RPC) and the Initial Teacher Education Committee (ITE). These meetings occur on a monthly basis and cover a wide range of issues.
- Administering, on behalf of the School, the School's annual academic planning. All courses and units are monitored and any amendments or new initiatives are first considered by the RPC and ITE Program Committees and finally approved by the School Committee.
- Providing administrative support to the Human Ethics Expedited Review Committee. This committee is a sub-committee of the RPC and it approves the majority of research proposals from students (both undergraduate and postgraduate). The Chair in 2006 was Dr Wendy Cumming-Potvin. If applications are outside of its brief they are sent to the Central Ethics Committee.
- Coordinating research seminars, as listed on the following page. These seminars are presented by staff, outside visitors and postgraduate students. They provide a vital role for interaction and discussion about research being conducted in the School or by visitors to the School. The list of seminars in 2007 will be found on the School of Education website page [http://www.education.murdoch.edu.au/educ\\_seminars.html](http://www.education.murdoch.edu.au/educ_seminars.html)
- Providing administrative support for the Education Postgraduates Seminar and Social Group, as shown in the 'Teaching' section of this Annual Report. These workshops are provided for postgraduate students, on issues of particular interest to them, by academic staff in the School and they also enable postgraduate students to meet together.
- Administering staff and postgraduate student research funding. School research funds are available to staff, by application, to assist them in their research. Research students also have funds available to them during the period of their candidature.
- Enrolling Master of Education Research students into their units.
- Assisting postgraduate students and staff with any queries they may have and administering documentation required by the School and the Graduate Centre. Reports are generated periodically for supervisors and Program Chairs to monitor postgraduates' progress and for the purposes of staff workload.
- Organising visits to schools to promote School of Education postgraduate studies.



(From Left): Margaret Luck, Vivienne Pepper and Angelina Chillino.