

# New MA in knowledge management reflects diversity of field

Sue Myburgh, senior lecturer and program director, Knowledge Management, Internet Communication Strategies, School of Communication, Information and New Media, University of South Australia

After extensive research into the information needs of organisations of all types, the School of Communication, Information and New Media at the University of South Australia has developed a new program. This is the Master of Arts (Knowledge Management), which provides education and training for a new breed of information professionals in this recently developed, multi-disciplinary area of strategic information management.

The education of skilled information professionals is evolving to meet the many new challenges that have resulted from the complex, knowledge-based environment in which we live and work. Therefore the program anticipates and accommodates the education and training for the new roles of knowledge workers as they emerge.

Sue Myburgh, the program director, undertook a lengthy study of the field before initiating the design process. This included an international benchmarking study, talks with experts in the field, an extensive literature review, attending many conferences both locally and internationally, as well as a longitudinal analysis of the kind of

skills that employees were asking for, as indicated by job advertisements and descriptions appearing in newspapers, journals and on the internet.

The MA (Knowledge Management) is designed to prepare graduates to assume diverse roles as information professionals. It is also designed to assist in making organisations more efficient and effective in their information creation, gathering, accessing and disseminating activities, with the result that businesses/organisations are more competitive.

Knowledge management investigates the need for readily accessible knowledge and information in the decision-making processes of organisations, drawing upon internal and external resources, both explicit and tacit. Knowledge management is a strategy that turns an organisation's intellectual assets, including recorded information, corporate memory and employee expertise, into greater productivity, increased competitiveness and increased collaborative efficiency and effectiveness. Knowledge management therefore represents another point on the spectrum of information and knowledge workers, as it emphasises deci-

sion-making, policy creation, knowledge transfer and management in organisations.

The introduction of the MA (Knowledge Management) provides for great flexibility, so that students can tailor their program to suit their professional objectives and accommodate their existing background and training.

The MA offers an applied, industrially-based research training in the field of knowledge management, and leaves further academic study (at research degree level) a viable option. This suite of programs works to develop full participation within virtual business, in the belief that such businesses will become more diverse and ubiquitous.

These programs will be available via flexible delivery, and offer a wide spread of information, including self-tailored assignment and project work, so students may focus on aspects of knowledge management of most relevance or importance to them and applicable to their organisational situation. The programs use applied project-work styles of teaching and learning to make assignments practical and professionally useful, and to endorse skill development and confident use of information technologies.

In this model, we have deliberately attempted to educate professionals for a long future in the field, and we hope to be able to provide them with a base upon which they can build successful careers. This includes giving them the necessary skills with which they can gain employment upon graduation, as well as the vision and understanding which might help them cope better with the rapidly changing world in which we live.

The program starts in January 2002, with a set of intensive modules, where four days of direct contact are supplemented by online exercises and project work. These modules can be completed either as part of the Certificate (for progressing through the Diploma and into the Master's), or as one-off CPD experiences. For enquiries, please contact Sue on phone 08 8302 4421, fax 08 8302 4745, or e-mail Sue.Myburgh@unisa.edu.au. ■

## Last chance to register for 'boisterous merrymaking and festivities'...

The ALIA RAISS symposium *Revelling in Reference* 12-14 October 2001, VUT Conference Centre, 300 Flinders St, Melbourne is shaping up to be a lively symposium.

Librarians, information specialists and researchers from all parts of Australia and New Zealand, plus our overseas speakers will certainly have a chance to 'make a noise' as they revel in a stimulating program, good company, fine dining and entertainment. This is the occasion to meet new colleagues, catch up with old, share our experiences in delivering reference and information services in the 21st century.

Seize the chance: check out the web site — <http://raiss2001.monash.org> — or contact Conference Plus, e-mail [conplus@ozemail.com.au](mailto:conplus@ozemail.com.au), phone 03 9885 4525.

Looking forward to seeing you in Melbourne.

Margaret Smith, RAISS 2001 conference committee