

MONASH MEMO 11/9/02

Getting a feel for science

Cutting-edge research into applications of tactile virtual reality will soon be under way at the newly established Bionics and Cognitive Science Centre at Gippsland campus.

The centre has received \$360,000 in funding from the federal government through the Sustainable Gippsland Advisory Committee.

The centre's first project will be to find a way for people to 'touch' an object that exists only in the virtual world.

Applications for such hands-on virtual technology are almost limitless, according to the centre's principal researcher, Dr Barry Richardson.

"The technology could be used for everything from training pilots and improving telesurgery techniques to online entertainment and helping improve a golf swing," he said.

The research will also utilise the expertise of Dr Richardson and Dr Dianne Wullemin from the Arts faculty, Professor Jim Jarvis and Associate Professor Yousef Ibrahim from the Engineering faculty and Professor Laurence Dooley from IT.

The centre's research will be of direct relevance to students of the Bachelor of Cognitive Science degree, for which the School of Humanities, Communications and Social Sciences has recently received faculty approval.

The degree will include studies in psychology, philosophy, computing, engineering and mathe-

matics, making it one of the most multidisciplinary degrees offered at Monash.

Development of the new technology is estimated to take three years, but the research will begin in the next few weeks.



Gippsland staff involved in the newly established Bionics and Cognitive Science Centre at Gippsland campus (clockwise from bottom): Dr Barry Richardson, Gippsland pro vice-chancellor Professor Brian MacKenzie, Professor Laurence Dooley, Professor Jim Jarvis, Dr Yousef Ibrahim and Dr Dianne Wullemin.