



## **Centre for Communication Research** An AUT Key Research Institute

### **Annual Report** **2003**

#### **Background**

The Centre for Communication Research (CCR) was inaugurated in 2001, and in 2003 became one of nine AUT Key Research Institutes receiving increased funding support. At that time it became a separate unit within the Faculty, reporting to the Associate Dean (Research). The Centre involves staff and students from the Schools of Art and Design, Communication, Languages and Social Sciences in its activities.

The goals of CCR are to:

- undertake and stimulate research in communication (broadly interpreted) among AUT staff and students
- raise the research capability of and mentor AUT staff and students in the area of communication
- present and publish the findings of communication research conducted at AUT
- win funding to support research in communication
- develop collaborations and relationships with other centres of research excellence in communication.

The Centre is characterised by a range of disciplinary, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research practices with special interests in critical perspectives on communication, culture and identity, sociolinguistics and language learning, multilingual and multicultural Auckland, visual and material analysis, creative industries and media discourses. The Centre fosters a collegial environment that encourages research projects in its strategic areas of interest, mentoring less experienced staff and postgraduate researchers. It encourages research which addresses issues of both practice and theory, the local and the global, and engagement with socially important research questions.

The Centre's development strategy focuses on three areas – developing research collaborations within and beyond AUT, developing editorial and publications capability, and winning external funding.

## **Personnel**

### **Centre for Communication Research staff 2003**

Allan Bell  
 Professor of Language and Communication  
 Director, Centre for Communication Research

George Major  
 Research Assistant

Philippa Smith  
 Research Coordinator

Susan Shaw  
 Editorial Assistant

### **2003 Research Fellows**

John Bitchener  
 Senior Lecturer, MA coordinator, School of Languages

Pat Strauss  
 Senior Lecturer, School of Languages

Frances Joseph  
 Programme Leader and Principal Lecturer, School of Art and Design

Nancy de Freitas  
 Senior Lecturer, School of Art and Design

### **Television Violence Project Team**

Allan Bell, Centre for Communication Research, AUT  
 Barry King, School of Communication Studies, AUT  
 Geoff Bridgman, UNITEC  
 Philippa Smith, Centre for Communication Research, AUT  
 Andrea King, IPP  
 Sharon Harvey, Faculty of Arts, AUT  
 Charles Crothers, School of Social Sciences, AUT  
 Ian Hassall, Institute of Public Policy, AUT  
 George Major, Centre for Communication Research, AUT  
 Susan Shaw, Centre for Communication Research, AUT  
 Deidre Tollestrup, UNITEC

30 Research Assistants

### **CCR Board**

Allan Bell  
 Alan Cocker  
 Barry King

Charles Crothers  
 Elizabeth Grierson  
 Frances Joseph  
 Ian Shirley  
 John Bitchener  
 Lynn Grant  
 Mark Jackson  
 Peter Hoar  
 Sharon Harvey  
 Veronica Strang

### **External funding 2003**

In February 2003 CCR won a major research grant (\$160,000 nett) to conduct a six-month project on television violence for the Government's Working Group on Television Violence. The project is reported below.

Blackwell Publishers funded copy editing and proofing of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* with approximately NZ\$3000.

### **2003 Research Fellowships**

CCR advertised a contestable process for Research Fellowship appointments for 2003. These were available for Faculty of Arts staff who proposed a programme of research for which the Centre would fund a proportion of their time. The 2003 fellows were:

John Bitchener, School of Languages, .2 time proportion (1 semester)  
 Writing up journal articles and one empirical study for publication in the field of second language acquisition and learning.

Pat Strauss, School of Languages, .4 time proportion.  
 An investigation into the language challenges facing EAL undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Science and Engineering at the AUT.

Frances Joseph, School of Art and Design, .2 time proportion.  
*Construction Design History: An Investigation of Collections.*

Nancy de Freitas, School of Art and Design, .2 time proportion.  
*Collaboration as Research Method in the Visual Arts:* An analysis through active documentation of the collaborative component of a current practice based research project, *Weight of the Human Heart.*

### **Conference: Between Empires - Communication, Globalisation and Identity**

This international conference was organised and hosted jointly by the School of Communication Studies and CCR. It was held over three days at AUT in February 2003. There were over 50 paper presentations, and 3 plenary speakers:

Janet Wasko, University of Oregon. *Disney and the World.*

Sean Cubitt, University of Waikato. *Globalisation: universal commodity or digital democracy?*

Michael Peters, University of Glasgow. *Between Empires: Rethinking Identity and Citizenship in the Context of Globalisation.*

### **Links within and beyond AUT**

John Bitchener was supported part time during 2003 to investigate and develop research collaborations between CCR and other researchers within and beyond AUT. His survey of current collaborations between Faculty of Arts staff and other parties indicated a wide range of involvements with other universities in New Zealand and overseas. The projects ranged across social sciences, visual arts, architecture, tourism and linguistics, and there was a variety of funding agencies involved.

Editorial and publishing links with a number of other institutions in New Zealand and overseas were strong during 2003. A book on Languages of New Zealand is being co-edited by Donna Starks (University of Auckland), Ray Harlow (University of Waikato) and Allan Bell. It will appear in 2004 with Victoria University Press.

The Pasifika Languages of Manukau Project, which was completed at the end of 2002 under a Marsden grant, produced several joint papers during 2003. It is a collaboration of AUT, University of Auckland and Manukau Institute of Technology. The communication of findings to the community and decision makers will continue in 2004 through website development, pamphlets and meetings.

Dr Adam Jaworski from Cardiff University was hosted as a Visiting Fellow in CCR in April 2003. He presented well-received talks and workshops on media language and discourse, and on the language of tourism, in cooperation with the NZ Tourism Research Institute. His visit initiated plans for joint work on linguistic and visual representations of Pacific tourist destinations.

Through collaborative research projects and scholarly activities, international links were enhanced with the Universities of Brighton, Cardiff and Glasgow, and nationally with Universities of Waikato, Victoria, Canterbury, and Auckland, as well as working partnerships in research projects with Auckland War Memorial Museum, the Auckland Museum of Transport and Technology, and Manukau Institute of Technology. In the area of globalisation, a proposal has been developed for collaboration between CCR, the Global Studies Association (UK), & Globalism Institute (RMIT, Melbourne).

## **Publications**

A number of journal publications are produced within the Centre, including the online Working Papers in Communication, and individual online publications of the NZ Design Archive. Elizabeth Grierson was supported part time during 2003 to gather information on current publications activity within the Faculty, including both hard-copy and online outputs, and to develop publications in CCR.

The *Journal of Sociolinguistics* is an international journal published quarterly by Blackwell Publishers. It publishes 640 pages per year, covering a wide range of research in the area of language and society. It is co-edited by Nikolas Coupland in the Centre for Language & Communication Research at Cardiff University and Allan Bell in CCR. The Journal is copy-edited, proofed and coordinated in CCR by Susan Shaw.

Elizabeth Grierson took up editorship of *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives in Communication, Cultural and Policy Studies* in 2003. One issue appeared in 2003, a further issue due in early 2004, and other issues are scheduled throughout 2004, which will bring the journal's publication up to date.

## **Television Violence Project**

A major project for the Centre for Communication Research in 2003 was a comprehensive investigation into violence on New Zealand television. Commissioned by the ministerial Working Group on Television Violence, the Television Violence Project involved three aspects: an extensive literature review, content analysis and policy survey. The Working Group was chaired by Dr Rajen Prasad and included representatives from the television industry, academics with a particular focus in broadcasting, mental health or social policy and other groups associated with television production and broadcasting standards.

The team of researchers consisted of Allan Bell, Barry King, Geoff Bridgman, Philippa Smith, Andrea King, Sharon Harvey, Charles Crothers and Ian Hassall.

The literature review section of the project used a dichotomy between behaviourist and active-audience approaches as an organising principle. It examined a wide range of research, theories, varying methodologies, including content analyses, associated with television violence in New Zealand and overseas. This review of a field which has produced an estimated 3000 to 4000 studies was an exhaustive attempt to encapsulate the development of research dating back several decades and stretched across diverse disciplines from media research, communications and cultural studies, to medicine, psychology, physiology and sociology.

The second section of the project was a content analysis of a recorded full week of television, 6am to midnight, on eight channels in New Zealand. Thirty research assistants were trained to code the amount and type of violence in the 550 hour sample so that it could be compared with other major international studies.

Finally an evaluation of regulatory regimes and public policy helped establish the position New Zealand television holds in the international broadcasting arena, identifying areas relating to television violence that could be changed, introduced or improved upon for the betterment of society.

The finished report *Television Violence in New Zealand – A study of Programming and Policy in International Context* was 261 pages plus appendices, and was delivered to the Working Party in December 2003. Findings will be public when the Working Group's own report is released in 2004.

### **Supervisions**

#### **(Director only)**

Ruth Thomas, School of Communication Studies (primary supervision): investigating how journalism students are socialized into production of the genre of news discourse.

Ineke Crezee, School of Languages (primary supervision): investigating attrition of English and reversion to Dutch by elderly Dutch immigrants to New Zealand.

Shanjiang Yu, School of Languages (secondary supervision).

Two candidates withdrew from the PhD programme during 2003.

### **Teaching**

#### **(Director only)**

Allan Bell taught on the MA (Applied Language Studies) in the second semester, paper 168103, Language & Society. The standard of work of this year's students was the highest overall since the paper began in 2001.

### **Other activities**

#### **(Director only)**

In May 2003 I was a member of Oxford University's Electoral Board to appoint their new Professor of Language & Communication. I attended and contributed as 'expert advisor' in the disciplinary field of the chair. Professor Deborah Cameron was appointed and has taken up the position.

I was a member of the PBRF Social Sciences & Other Cultural/Social Studies panel which assessed all New Zealand university staff submitting their research portfolios in these disciplines under the new contestable PBRF system. The Panel met for training in March, advised TEC on processes on request during the year, assessed staff portfolios during October-November, and met for a week in November to discuss and finalize the assessments of 600 staff.

I examined a University of Canterbury PhD thesis in sociolinguistics.

### **2004 developments**

CCR's new postdoctoral fellow, Katalin Lustyik, began a two-year appointment in the Centre in February 2004. She will be researching the uptake in New Zealand of globalized children's television media such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network.

Four research fellows from within the Faculty of Arts are being supported from March 2004:

John Bitchener, School of Languages, .3 time proportion

Writing up several journal articles in the area of English as a second language, and a pilot project investigating promotional texts for tourist sites (with Elizabeth Grierson)

Heather Devere, School of Social Sciences, .3 time proportion

*Cross-cultural Discourses on Friendship.*

Lynn Grant, School of Languages, .2 time proportion

*Researching and Teaching Figurative Language.*

Albert Refiti, School of Art & Design, .3 time proportion

*Fale: Polynesian Architecture and Identity Construction in New Zealand.*

Philippa Smith, who coordinated the Television Violence project, has been taken on part time to develop research projects in the Centre, to prepare applications for external grants, and to upgrade CCR's public information.

A Lecture Series in Communication is planned for the second semester of 2004.

In 2004 the Centre is establishing a category of 'Research Associates' consisting of staff whose research interests relate to the Centre's and who wish to affiliate to CCR. Research Associates will be eligible to apply for a limited pool of funds to support research expenses.

**Allan Bell**

Director

4 March 2004