

Profile: Marc de Cure, strategic advisor

UNSW Accounting Honours alumnus Marc de Cure (Honours, 1980) has been on centre stage during some of the most significant changes in Australia's corporate history over the past two decades, and has taken on enormous challenges during his career.

Marc has played various advisory roles in the consolidation of the General Insurance industry, the float of GIO, and the demutualisation of AXA and AMP.

Marc de Cure now works in the financial services sector as a Principal Advisor with Bain & Company, one of the world's leading global management consulting firms. He is also a member of the Faculty Advisory Board at UNSW.



AMP and earlier

Before joining Bain, Marc was head of strategy and development for financial services giant AMP and was the executive responsible for the AMP Group's International Division, including the Virgin Money JV, and Reinsurance Division. In this role, Marc confronted the devastating capital losses that emerged in the UK, where extensive capital guaranteed insurance liabilities were backed by a severely falling share market. He was one of the key architects of the plan behind AMP's successful demerger, leading to the creation of the \$2 billion UK-based HHG, and a \$10 billion Australian AMP financial services organisation that is now once again profitable.

Marc was previously CFO of the AMP Group from 2000-2002, responsible for finance, risk management, strategy and M&A. The breadth of his role included operations in Australia, New Zealand, UK, Europe and Asia in the fields of asset man-

agement, life and general insurance and banking. Shortly before Marc took on the CFO role, AMP had disastrously acquired NPI in the UK and general insurer GIO, and within just one month of joining, Marc was managing a \$1.5 billion write down in this business, going on to sell the GIO's general insurance business to Suncorp and running off the reinsurance portfolio.

Before joining AMP, Marc had 20 years' experience in providing financial and strategic advice to numerous major financial services clients at Coopers & Lybrand and PricewaterhouseCoopers. He was Chairman of the C&L Financial Services Industry practice in Australia and also headed the C&L NSW Business Assurance Services Practice which incorporated the Assurance, Business Services, Insolvency and Corporate Finance practices. In this role Marc was actively involved in the C&L and PW merger process. Following

the merger Marc headed the Australian and Asia Pacific Theatre Global Risk Management Solutions Practices of PWC.

AHANews interviews Marc de Cure

Marc, few of us have experienced life at the epicentre of a large organisation going through a period of such enormous changes as at AMP.

What were the main challenges and achievements for you at the time?

The challenge is always knowing how best to allocate limited time. During the demerger there was a particular problem of keeping the staff motivated and focused on the task when, for many, they knew that when it was all done there may not be a job for them.

From the School of Accounting

Welcome to the third edition of **AHANews**, the newsletter of AHAN, the Accounting Honours Alumni Network.

2005 has been a vibrant year for the Accounting Honours program, with 9 full-time and 3 part-time students. Nine of the Faculty's Honours Excellence scholarships were awarded to Accounting students, reflecting the outstanding calibre of students the program continues to attract.



Marc de Cure (Honours, 1980) is very well known for his pivotal roles in AMP's evolution. I am grateful to Marc for giving the Accounting Honours Alumni Network, of which he is of course a member, the opportunity in this newsletter to read about his management experience. Marc is now a Principal Advisor with Bain & Company, and makes a valuable ongoing contribution to the university as a member of the Faculty Advisory Board.

AHAN members continue to contribute generously to the university in diverse ways. Special thanks to the alumni who spoke at the **Honours Information Night**. For talented students considering whether to do Honours, personal contact with alumni at this enjoyable event is an invaluable and inspiring source of information.

I encourage all AHAN members to support the Faculty's Scholarships Appeal Fund by purchasing a copy of the excellent new book **Savvy**, which profiles a number of outstanding entrepreneurs who are also alumni of the Faculty. **Savvy** features AHAN chairperson Tony Abrahams and several other UNSW Accounting alumni. See Page 6.

Thank you to those who supported one of the School's major annual events, the John V. Ratcliffe Memorial Lecture. This year's topic was **New Frontiers in Extended Performance Reporting**. The Ratcliffe has become a significant annual event on a topic of public interest, and it was great to see so many of you there.

We sadly farewell **Dr Gerry Gallery**, who has co-ordinated the Honours program during 2005. Gerry takes up a professorship at Queensland University of Technology. Congratulations to Gerry, and we all thank him for his intelligent and friendly leadership of the Honours program. Best wishes to Dr Liz Carson (Honours, 1996) who takes over from Gerry.

Finally, very warm wishes to all AHAN members for the Christmas season and a successful year ahead. I look forward to seeing you at future events.

Professor Wai Fong Chua, Head, School of Accounting

President of UNSW Asia

Congratulations to Professor Greg Whittred on his appointment as inaugural President of UNSW Asia – UNSW's new campus in Singapore. UNSW Asia is Singapore's first foreign University and the first wholly owned research and teaching institution to be established overseas by an Australian University.



Making the announcement in Singapore, UNSW Vice-Chancellor Professor Mark Wainwright said it was a significant appointment and a key milestone in the development of UNSW Asia. "Professor Whittred has the ideal credentials to lead UNSW Asia as its inaugural President," Professor Wainwright said.

"He is one of the University's most distinguished business academics, has been at the forefront of our engagement with Asia and brings a wealth of management and leadership experience to the role. Professor Whittred has a passionate vision for UNSW Asia and will build on the tremendous work that has been done to date to establish this new university," the Vice-Chancellor said.

Professor John Piggott will take on the role of Acting Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics from November 30 until Greg's successor is chosen.

Speaking of the achievements and friendships forged during his four years as Dean, Greg said "I have enjoyed the role immensely and leave it with very real regret - a regret that is assuaged somewhat by the knowledge that FCE will be a major contributor to the success of UNSW Asia and I will be able to continue to support the Faculty's initiatives in my new role as President of UNSW Asia."

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AHAN helping students: Honours Information Night

5 May 2005, The Squarehouse, UNSW

A gathering of talented Accounting third and fourth year students, Honours alumni, staff and sponsors:

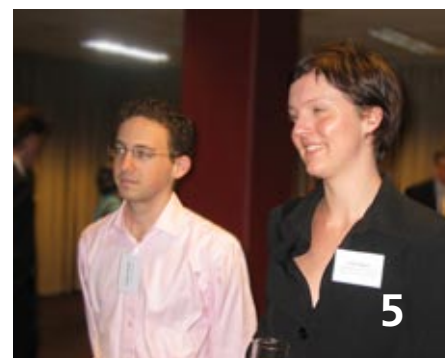
questioning searching discussing networking mentoring assessing exploring informing sharing reflecting motivating growing learning inspiring clarifying revealing imparting communicating connecting encouraging demonstrating explaining investing



"The Big 4 need well-rounded people who can push back. We have recently received 1000 applications from whom we will be hiring 100 people. We sponsor this program because we want access to the people who can contribute, who can speak up in meetings; who, even if they may be 100% wrong, have the intellectual wherewithal to take it on board and get it right next time."

Jon Pye (Ernst & Young, Honours Excellence Sponsor)

Photos:



1. Speakers Alana Smith (2003), Mandy Cheng (1996), Tony Abrahams (1996), Rob Lee (2001), Hari Balkrishna (2004), Dr Gerry Gallery (Honours Co-ordinator)

2. Michael Moldrich (Honours 2005), Leanne Cheng (Honours 2005), Alana Smith (2003), Prof Roger Simnett

3. Cameron Barnsley (Honours 2005), Tony Abrahams (1996)

4. Jessica Morgan (Honours 2005), Kate Stone (Honours 2005), Tony Abrahams (1996)

5. Hamish Magoffin (Honours 2005), Jane Howes (Goldman Sachs JBWere, Honours Excellence Sponsor)



6. Rob Lee (2001) third from right, with students Edward Leung, George Ng, Jonathan Chau, Archana Gelda and Sam Sherry

Marc de Cure profile (cont. from page 1)

One of the biggest achievements was what we called 'landing the three jumbos at the same time'. This involved ensuring we kept the market fully informed through a period of great uncertainty and coordinating the capital raising, financial re-forecasting and demerger activity and announcement.

What new insights did you gain?

Not a new insight but a reminder of an old one: Be positive, think big and believe in your ability to get there, and chances are you will. The other thing is to choose well the people you work with, support them, empower them and trust them. Finally I learned to trust my judgment - if your gut tells you something, it's probably right, so don't rationalise yourself out of it.

How has the AMP experience helped you in your current role, and what advice would you give to Honours alumni facing similar challenges?

I think we learn more from mistakes than success and in fact sometimes we take incorrect learnings from success. At AMP some fundamental strategic mistakes were made and hopefully my experience of that will help others not to repeat them. My advice is to be very clear on what you are trying to achieve and stay focused. Many things can distract you, if you let them, from the important tasks and objectives.

You've been quoted as saying you worked 20-hour days for 18 months, with no guarantee of a job at the end of that period. How do you manage the tension between professional passion, focus and dedication on one hand, and "life balance" on the other?

The answer is I probably didn't handle the 'balance piece' very well, although I believe it is important that family involvement and non-work interests are seen as a key objective so that they receive appropriate allocation of time and focus. This is definitely the way I now operate.

What, for you, were the positive and negative implications of working at that level of intensity?

Getting the job done and contributing to a significant and ground-breaking exercise was stimulating and very exciting. I like to be challenged and to test the boundaries, and that exercise certainly provided the opportunity to do that. It was like the demutualization in complexity, on which I worked on secondment to AMP, but under constant public, media, corporate and regulatory scrutiny: All in a period of massive uncertainty in financial markets.

The big negative was burn out. It was heavily emotionally draining, particularly on top of the 'excitement' of my previous role and the internal conflicts that accompanied it.

Can you tell us why you would – or would not – do it again?

The experience was great. Life is only as good as your experiences. Having said that I would do a few things differently.

What do you most enjoy about your current work at Bain & Company?

The variety - I get to work with different clients and on issues that really make a difference, and the ability to stand back and think hard about what is going on in an industry from a strategic and operational perspective. I'm working part time at Bain, enabling me to spend more time at home, work with UNSW on the Centre of Excellence in Ageing, and complete a Masters Degree. I have really enjoyed going back to university and studying again after 25 years away from assignments and research. I have been learning about subjects close to and way beyond my core, through the Masters Degree in Wine Quality – with subjects ranging from marketing and tourism to environmental

it's not about you - it's the team that will make the real difference.

How did you go about choosing the directions you have pursued at each stage of your life/career?

I don't believe in career 'master plans' but I'm not fatalistic either. It is important to be really honest about your strengths and weaknesses and seek opportunities or make choices with this in mind. But I think if you over plan you may fail to see the opportunity you never would have dreamed of, or become disappointed when things don't go the way you planned. Nevertheless plans are fine and important to ensure you are heading somewhere, but I don't necessarily expect them to work out.

What do you value most about your connection with UNSW – both now, and at earlier stages in your career?

UNSW taught me to think, particularly my Honours units, and gave me a great grounding for a professional and business

“... the key as a leader is to realize it's not about you - it's the team that will make the real difference.”

assessment, chemistry/wine making and viticulture. It's great to learn new things.”

Can you share some observations on the role that self-confidence plays in senior management positions?

I was a guest speaker at a University Degree presentation ceremony back in 2002 and my main message was the ingredients for success are passion, integrity and self-belief. Self-confidence stems from self-belief and is powered by passion, and it is absolutely critical: How can you expect to be a leader and ask others to follow you, have confidence in you, if you don't have confidence in yourself? This confidence must however be empowering and transferred to those you work with. This is something I keep working on; some do extremely well, and they make great leaders. I think the key as a leader is to realize

life. I also believe that the Honours program meant I started my working life with a confidence in my ability that enabled me to take on more responsibility and succeed. Even though the Honours degree took an extra year, I quickly made up the lost time and within four years of joining C&L was a manager in the London Office, learning and having a great life experience.

Now I really enjoy and see great value in the way the FCE, under Greg Whittred's leadership, has been increasingly engaging with the business community and alumni. I think that engagement is so important for Universities to remain relevant and at the cutting edge.

Thank you to Marc de Cure for sharing his insights and experience. ■

2005 John V. Ratcliffe Memorial Lecture New Frontiers in Extended Performance Reporting

Wednesday 22 June 2005, Heritage Ballroom, The Westin Sydney

Speakers Professor Jan Mouritsen (Copenhagen Business School)
 Mr Geoffrey Bazzan (Maple-Brown Abbott)
 Dr Ian Woods (AMP Capital Investors)

Below: Ratcliffe speakers Mr Geoffrey Bazzan, Dr Ian Woods and Prof Jan Mouritsen



For companies, does "performance" have the same meaning as "financial performance"? Corporations increasingly report on intangibles such as, in Australia, social or environmental responsibility, and in Europe intellectual capital. Are these corporations providing stakeholders with genuinely useful additional insight into their performance? Or are their triple bottom line reports primarily marketing spin? What new frontiers are emerging to enable companies to more meaningfully report on intangibles that drive their value?

These were some of the issues behind the topic **New Frontiers in Extended Performance Reporting** for the annual **John V. Ratcliffe Memorial Lecture**, held on 22 June 2005. Several AHAN members joined with prominent members of academia, commerce, the professions, financial media and public service at The Westin Sydney. The lecture is convened by the School of Accounting and supported by a fund established by Mrs Florence L. Ratcliffe to commemorate the work of her late husband.

Professor Jan Mouritsen, of Copenhagen Business School, has a distinguished academic background and is the lead researcher of the Danish Intellectual Capital Project. In cooperation with around 150 companies and the Danish State, this project has developed



Suresh Cuganesan (1994), Ileana Steccolini and Mark Bezzina



Mandy Cheng (1996), Helen Kang (1996), Nicole Ang (1996) and Asher Curtis (2001)



Ros Kelly, Michael Wilkins and Wai Fong Chua

guidelines on how to construct and analyse intellectual capital statements.

Many companies acknowledge that intellectual capital has a substantial impact on their business, but few track it well. Jan presented a comprehensive overview of intellectual capital (IC) reporting in Scandinavia, and explained how IC reporting – whether internal or external - can clarify the contribution that knowledge and intangible assets make to corporate performance. This in turn can facilitate competitive knowledge-based strategy.

Mr Geoffrey Bazzan, of Maple-Brown Abbott, is a Chartered Financial Analyst and equities portfolio manager. Geoff spoke from the viewpoint of a wholesale funds manager, whose closely-scrutinised objective is simply to outperform the index by the right margin: as expressed by Milton Friedman, "the business of business is business".

Geoffrey's perspective as a long-term value investor is that good companies are not always good investments: the key determinant of value is price. Balancing this position, Geoff emphasised the importance of Australia's generally good corporate governance as a driver of our cost of capital. Analysts consider not only the financial reports, but also management ethics and integrity, along with triple bottom line results, to form their assessment of the financial value of a company.

Geoff also presented an example demonstrating the potential for much

current extended performance reporting to be so vague as to be meaningless.

Dr Ian Woods, of AMP Capital Investors, is Senior Research Analyst for the Sustainable Funds Australian Equity Team. This group actively considers the environmental, social and ethical performance of companies in the investment decision making process.

Ian's view is that quality extended performance reporting can help Socially Responsible (SRI) investors not only to identify those companies that meet an SRI mandate, but also to assess performance in key intangible areas of value. His view is that applied corporate social responsibility is correlated with strong financial returns, perhaps because it is also a measure of management quality and risk management systems.

With some exceptions, Ian's overall assessment of the current status of extended performance reporting is that much of it is selective, only telling the good news; much is repetitive; much of it focuses on systems rather than performance and anecdotes rather than outcomes; and much of it fails to identify or discuss the relevance of issues. There is value in broadening the reporting emphasis beyond environmental issues in order to give greater focus to social, workplace and value chain issues. And there is also scope to improve comparability of reports, for example by adoption of the Global Reporting Initiative guidelines. ■

Are entrepreneurs book-smart or street-smart or a combination?

Savvy

Understanding the entrepreneur

Savvy is a new book that showcases some of Australia's best-known entrepreneurs who are graduates of the UNSW Faculty of Commerce and Economics.

This book, **Savvy**, recognises and celebrates some of the Faculty's alumni who have built their own highly successful businesses. The book profiles a group of 15 entrepreneurial men and women, spanning all sectors here and overseas.

Savvy tells the stories of the likes of Mark Bouris (Wizard), Paul Cave (BridgeClimb), Cathy Rossi Harris (Harris Farm Markets), and many others, sharing their highs and lows and finding out the secrets of their success. It should prove to be an inspiration for the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Marking the Faculty's 50th anniversary, **Savvy** is a book about alumni, written by alumni for alumni, to support future alumni. Proceeds from the sale of the book will go towards the Faculty's **Scholarships Appeal Fund** to support talented and disadvantaged students.

Available now for a limited print run. Purchase online from the Switzer Group at

www.switzer.com.au

Savvy \$39.95 plus p & h

National Honours Colloquium 2005

19 August 2005, The Scientia, UNSW



Guest speaker at the Colloquium dinner
James Millar, CEO of Ernst & Young



UNSW Honours 2005 students at the Colloquium: Michael Moldrich, Cameron Barnsley, Angela Linus, Hamish Magoffin, Alison Wong, Kate Stone, Rachel Kim and Keith Ling



Guest of Honour, UNSW Vice-Chancellor
Professor Mark Wainwright



Dr Gerry Gallery (Honours Co-ordinator)
with UNSW Honours 2005 students
Michael Moldrich and Angela Linus

The **National Honours Colloquium** saw some of the best fourth year Honours students from universities across Australia and New Zealand assemble at UNSW to present their research-in-progress. The event offered an exceptional opportunity for outstanding Honours students to discuss and share their research with fellow students, and to meet specialist academic staff and prominent industry leaders.

The National Honours Colloquium is an annual one-day event of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics. The event was generously sponsored by Goldman Sachs JBWere, Ernst & Young, 452 Capital, Salmat and The Australian.

UNSW Accounting Honours students who presented their research-in-progress were:

Angela Linus

The impact of recent regulatory changes and corporate governance on the earnings forecasts disclosures of Australian IPOs.

Michael Moldrich

An investigative study into the effects of mandatory audit firm rotation on audit quality.

Alison Wong

Performance measurement diversity: effects on role stress, organisational commitment and performance.

Congratulations to Angela, Michael and Alison, and thank you to the School of Accounting staff who critiqued presentations. ■

Alumni news: congratulations Dr Mandy Cheng and Dr Elizabeth Carson!

Congratulations to Mandy Cheng (1996) and Liz Carson (1996) on gaining their PhD awards from UNSW earlier this year.

Liz's thesis title was *Global Audit Firm Networks, Global Industry Specialisation and the Market for Audit Services*, and her supervisor was Professor Roger Simnett.



Graduation photo: Dr Liz Carson (1996) and supervisor Prof Roger Simnett

Mandy's thesis was on *The Behavioural Effect of Multiple Performance Measurement Systems*, and her supervisor was Associate Professor Peter Lockett.

Stop Press: ARC grant win

Together with Professor Ken Trotman, Mandy has just won a three-year 2006 ARC Discovery Grant. These grants are highly valued and difficult to obtain. Mandy and Ken will use their grant proceeds to investigate *Multi-person judgement in management accounting*.

Improved managerial judgements can facilitate more efficient/effective resource allocation within organizations, significantly increasing Australian companies' competitiveness. Ken and Mandy's project benefits a range of stakeholder groups such as shareholders and employees. Also, by drawing on theories from different disciplines (accounting, social psychology), this project increases our understanding of how accounting information can encourage managers to behave in a socially desirable manner, such as adopting a conciliatory approach during negotiation. Other benefits include the training of future researchers and raising Australia's profile in accounting research. ■

Meet the ceo continues

Meet the ceo is a unique professional development and networking opportunity, exclusively for graduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics

The series is one of a number of programs initiated by the Faculty Advisory Board. **Meet the ceo** aims to give our alumni and students access to contemporary thinking in business by its leading practitioners - the men and women whose innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership have fundamentally altered the way business gets done. Each of our guest business leaders is interviewed onstage by a professional journalist, with plenty of time for questions from the audience.

Guests during 2005 have been

Michael Hawker CEO, Insurance Australia Group

An ex-Wallabies Vice-Captain, Mike Hawker has enjoyed success on the playing field as well as in the world of business as CEO of IAG. The leading general insurance group in Australia and New Zealand, IAG insures over \$800 billion in assets and employs 11,500 people. In his role as CEO since 2001, Mike Hawker has overseen the success of IAG after the highly publicised de-mutualisation of the NRMA in August 2000.

Richard Pratt AC Chairman, Visy Industries

One of Australia's wealthiest and most generous philanthropists, Richard Pratt, AC, is Chairman of Visy Industries. Visy is one of the world's largest privately-owned packaging and recycling companies, employing almost 8,000 people. Most recently, Richard Pratt has been pursuing a passionate interest in issues to do with water, and the challenges of better managing Australia's water resources.

Geoff Dixon CEO and Managing Director, Qantas

Geoff Dixon was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Qantas in early 2001, after seven years with the company. Under his stewardship, Qantas has enjoyed a record increase in profits and the launch of its budget brand Jetstar.

Look out for next year's speakers. It has been confirmed that Deloitte will continue to sponsor the **meet the ceo** series for a further three years.

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