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12 December 2002

Media Release

New UWS supercomputer helps fight bushfires and builds virtual baby

A new High Performance Computer (HPC) centre at the University of Western Sydney will be officially opened tomorrow by the NSW Information Technology Minister, the Hon Kim Yeadon, MP.

The powerful computer specialises in complex visualization projects and will solve practical problems for small to medium sized businesses in the Western Sydney region.

One of the first projects is a leading-edge virtual baby being developed in conjunction with Nepean Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The virtual baby will be used to train medical staff in resuscitation techniques for newborn infants.

The High Performance Computer will also be used by staff at UWS to develop a bushfire modeling system to visualise fire behavior under different weather and terrain conditions.

Other projects in the pipeline include developing a powerful data collection project to monitor prematurely born babies; assisting the Sydney Catchment Authority to run a number of water demand and flow models; and the development of visualisation systems to assist small to medium sized enterprises.

The new computer is based at the Centre for Advanced Systems Engineering at the University of Western Sydney's Kingswood Campus.

Western Sydney is now one of the few areas in Australia to host a cluster-based High Performance Computer. The new supercomputer is the equivalent of 50-60 standard lap tops, has around 40 gigabytes of memory and 800 gigabytes of fixed disk storage, according to Associate Professor George Bryan, one of the architects behind project.

"The new HPC Centre provides the University with specialist research facilities which will enhance our PhD program in Advanced Systems Engineering. It will also foster new collaborative links between the University and local industry," said Associate Professor Bryan.

The new Centre has been established with funds from the University and the Australian Centre for Advanced Computing and Communications, *ac3*. *ac3* was

[MORE]

Media Release

New UWS supercomputer helps fight bushfires and builds virtual baby (cont.)

set up with a \$12 million seed-funding from the NSW State Government to provide specialist Advanced Computing Services to NSW industry, commerce, government and academia. The NSW Government is the major shareholder in *ac3*, which has eight university shareholders, including the University of Western Sydney.

GROW Employment Council, the Commonwealth Government's Regional Assistance Program as well as the Penrith City Council are also strong supporters of the new HPC Centre.

What: The opening of the High Performance Computer Centre
When: Friday 13 December 2002 at 10am – 12 noon
Where: University of Western Sydney
Bldg U, Ground Floor, Room 50 (UG50),
Second Ave, Kingswood, NSW

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