

# SHORT CUTS

## POP APPEAL

UQ research has gone backstage to some of Australia's biggest music festivals to discover what makes them tick, and the answers may surprise you.

Dr Nic Carah, a Lecturer with UQ's School of Journalism and Communication, has studied the way corporations use music festivals to help build their brands and found rather than alienating young people, these branding practices were embraced.

"Global corporations have become very adept at co-opting popular music culture into their marketing strategies," Dr Carah said.

"Instead of being seen as an outsider of youth culture, they gain authenticity by being part of these events."

He said while in the past some of these strategies may have been looked upon as suspicious, young people today understand the marketing practices and accept it as part of the culture.

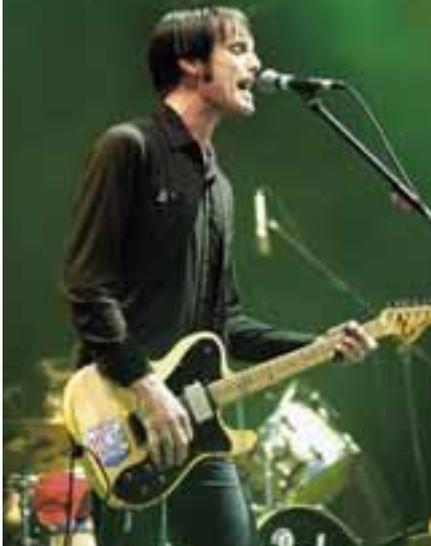
He said events such as the V Festival – a very overt branding exercise – are acceptable as long as there is value in it for the concert goer.

"If Virgin brings popular bands to a festival, then the audience is comfortable to use their phones and cameras to send texts and pictures to giant branded screens," he said.

"They also share these experiences on web 2.0 spaces such as MySpace and Facebook, pushing the corporations' reach even further.

"Music events like the V festival work because they try to develop a meaningful and natural engagement with the audience."

Dr Carah is working on a book about his research to be titled *Pop Brands: branding, popular music and young people*, which is expected to be published next year.



JEREMY PARTEN

## BACTERIA BUSTING

A group of scientists in London have collaborated with a UQ researcher to discover a way of using tiny nano-probes to help understand how an antibiotic is effective against bacteria.

Bacteria such as MRSA (commonly known as Golden Staph) are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics, posing a major community health problem.

Professor Matt Cooper (pictured), has recently joined the Institute for Molecular Bioscience at UQ on a \$4 million Australia Fellowship.

Through the fellowship, he will establish a research program to develop antibiotics and antifungals that are active against drug-resistant pathogens.

"In order to attack this problem we need to understand not only the ways in which bacteria develop and exhibit resistance to antibiotics, but also how new antibiotics can work to kill or slow the growth of resistant bacteria," Professor Cooper said.

To study antibiotic action, the London team made nano-probes coated with molecules found



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in bacterial cell walls from normal bacteria and bacteria resistant to antibiotics.

They then added doses of the "last resort" antibiotic, vancomycin, to the system and found that probes from normal bacteria were stressed and changed shape, whereas probes from resistant bacteria were only weakly affected.

The team are now screening other antibiotics with the goal of finding a drug that is able to bind strongly to resistant bacteria and cause substantial structural weaknesses to the cell wall.



STOCKXCHING

## REACHING FOR THE STARS

Queensland high school students recently reached for the stars at a UQ event to explore the future of life in space.

About 100 students from 10 different high schools from throughout the state took part in the annual Australian Space Design Competition in January.

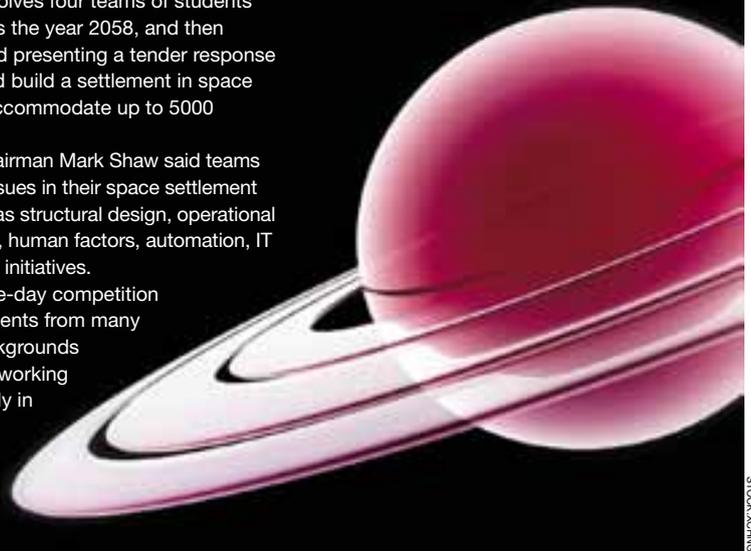
Hosted by UQ's School of Information Technology & Electrical Engineering (ITEE), the event involves four teams of students assuming it is the year 2058, and then preparing and presenting a tender response to design and build a settlement in space suitable to accommodate up to 5000 humans.

ASDC chairman Mark Shaw said teams addressed issues in their space settlement design such as structural design, operational requirements, human factors, automation, IT and business initiatives.

"The three-day competition involves students from many different backgrounds and schools working collaboratively in

order to solve space settlement issues and ultimately win the chance to visit the USA and compete on an international scale," Mr Shaw said.

ITEE Head of School Professor Paul Bailes said the event allowed students to communicate in a group, demonstrate teamwork, work on projects and showcase their ideas and futuristic inventions.



STOCK XCHING