

Holiday dates hit parents

By Amanda Snow

Parents teaching or studying at AUT University were forced to perform the ultimate juggling act during their children's recent school holidays — which began the same time AUT holidays ended.

Traditionally parents at AUT have enjoyed the same school holidays as their children, but new dates for the university's second term mid-semester break means there is no longer an overlap.

It's a move that parents, like radio journalism lecturer Bridget Galvin, have struggled with.

"It's a real double blow. I don't get to have time with my children because I'm working while they're on holiday. Plus it costs me about \$500 in day-care."

The mother of two boys, aged eight and five, says she misses the September holidays they usually take as a family — which come after a long winter and before the run-up to Christmas.

"I feel sorry for the boys. They're getting to the end of the year, they've been sick over the winter and they don't want someone else looking after them."

The general manager of AUT's services and operations, John Williams, says AUT has to juggle many issues when planning holiday dates — but the motivator isn't alignment with school holidays.

He says the long 10-week third term, exam timetables and alignment with other universities are all factors considered when determining the AUT term calendar.

"It's not black and white. We have to organise our semester timetables to fit with our reason for being here — which is to be a university — while also trying to balance alignment when we can with school holidays."

Williams says that while AUT's term calendars have been

published to 2009, AUT is reviewing the 2008 and 2009 timetables — but that next year's dates are set in stone.

He hopes the results of a recent survey asking students and staff what their preference is for breaks will be taken into account when reviewing the holidays. But it will not be a determining factor.

In 2002, AUT won the top prize in the Work and Life awards for encouraging staff to find a balance between work and private lives.

The awards recognised that AUT benefited staff and students with children by aligning its terms with primary school holidays.

Auckland Student Movement (AuSM) president Paul Stewart says the change could impact the growing mature student base.

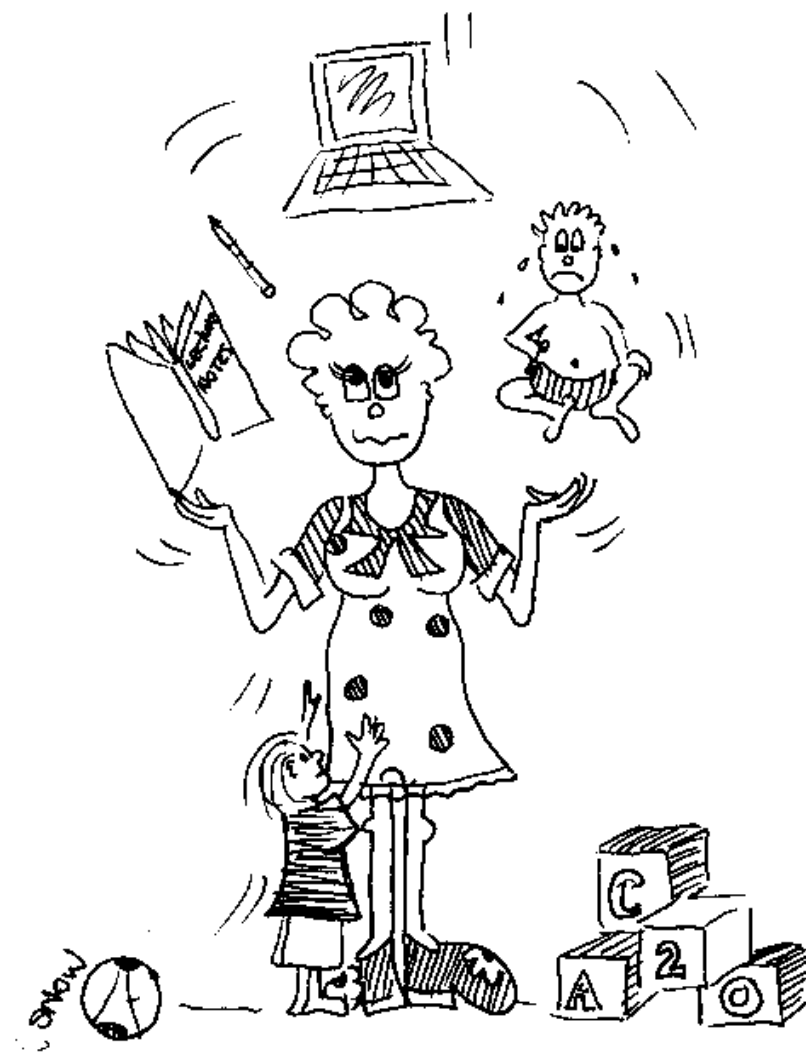
"I know a lot of undergraduate students actually support the change but at the same time we've lost that balance that made us unique. It's obviously going to affect mature students and the choices they have to make."

Mature student Sian Northfield, who is studying a graduate diploma in public relations, says she had little choice other than to miss lectures for a week so she could stay home with her two young girls during their school holidays.

She says she was pressured and busy and did not get quality time with them because she was still trying to meet course deadlines.

"It's unfortunate my socio-economic demographic doesn't enable me to afford to send my children to an out-of-school programme. It's definitely more pressure at such an intense time in the academic year."

Association of Staff in Tertiary Education branch president John Prince says an overwhelming



number of AUT staff are against the change — but some have said they support the new holidays because they shorten the third term.

Others welcome the move because they do not like sharing the same holidays as school children.

Prince says while the change may not affect recruitment of new staff it may affect retention.

"The university made the

change because it saw it as a compromise.

"It shortens the third term and AUT is trying to squeeze in a summer school. But I don't think it's made the right decision. Maybe there's another way — maybe we start later."

He is hoping to seek a solution that would satisfy all groups for 2008 and 2009 and says he is happy to hear from concerned students by email or phone.

Shops after better deal for magazine space

By Scott Winton

Supermarket giant Progressive is using its dominant market position to demand more money from magazine publishers. Smaller publishers feel the move might lead to magazine prices increasing and niche titles disappearing from supermarket shelves.

David Hall of *Wilderness* magazine says the news came to him as a bit of a shock.

"It's quite a major situation because the publishers are being forced to give something to Progressive for nothing in return. It's really scary actually," says Hall.

Progressive Enterprises, which owns Foodtown and Woolworths, is demanding a rebate directly from publishers. This is on top of about 25 per cent of the retail price it receives. Progressive is negotiating with individual publishers.

"They're trying to divide and conquer. I went to them with an offer, but they said it was too low. I don't know where I stand," says Hall.

But John McClintock, of the Magazine Publishers Association (MPA), says he is unsure how this move will affect the New Zealand magazine industry.

"It's hard to say if this will drive some magazines to the wall because I don't know the discounts," says McClintock.

Niche titles could be in trouble as supermarkets look to decrease the number of titles they hold, says Julian Andrews of Jones Publishing, publisher of *Top Gear*.

Commenting on Australasian media giant ACP Media, Andrews said: "The big companies like ACP are in a strong position because they represent about 50 per cent of the total magazines sold in supermarkets. The supermarkets can't afford to lose that."

He says the deal each publisher gets is all down to relationships and the skill of the negotiator.

"We have to see it as an opportunity, otherwise you could get incredibly demoralised. I could see this coming because the power of the supermarkets isn't magazine specific," he says.

A spokesman for Progressive Enterprises says it is company policy not to discuss publicly negotiations with individual suppliers.

Change diet call to save planet

By Qiane Corfield

Help save the planet — become a vegetarian.

At least that's the view of Dr John Livesey from the New Zealand Vegetarian Society.

Earlier this month as part of World Vegetarian Day, Livesey promoted plant-based diets as the most environmentally friendly means of food production.

"With one third of the earth's surface dedicated to the production of livestock for human consumption, going vegetarian is the most effective step anyone can take to relieve environmental pressure on the planet."

The Vegetarian Society say that New Zealand's environment is affected by land and water wastage, ozone damage from methane and nitrous oxide gases

and pollution run-off from dairy farming.

According to Livesey, vegetarianism has 90 per cent less impact on land use than a meat diet and says "we cannot sustain this kind of environmental damage long-term".

Environmental concerns have led to an increased interest in vegetarianism, says the Vegetarian Society.

However, Christine McCabe, who has been a vegetarian for 47 years, believes most people choose to become vegetarians for humane reasons, rather than environmental ones.

"I'm appalled by veal. The thought of baby calves being

treated like that makes me sick."

As a child she was a fussy eater and during her teens she realised she "just couldn't handle the thought of chewing meat".

Vegetarian Kelley Smith agrees. She says becoming a vegetarian is a personal choice and people should be nicer to animals.

"I don't think about the environment. I just have my own beliefs."

Farmers should think about the environment more, but I don't have an opinion about using the land because we have a lot of land. I care more about animal rights and I am opposed to the way ani-

"I'm appalled by veal. The thought of baby calves being treated like that makes me sick."

