

Year 12 comes down to earth

STUDENT enrolments in environmental and religious studies have increased in this year's HSC exams, which begin tomorrow for a record 69,261 students - 1330 more than last year.

Enrolments in the subject earth and environmental science have increased 10 per cent, to 1405. And economics enrolments have increased from 5491 last year to 6214.

The president of the NSW Board of Studies, Tom Alegounarias, said the growth in economics "is a reflection of an increasing community interest and understanding of economic matters".

"Our enrolments in the sciences are trending upwards, while they are declining around the rest of Australia," he said.

About 44 per cent of all students studied a science subject this year. Biology has increased its enrolments by 18 per cent since 2004 and chemistry is the eighth most studied subject.

Studies of religion has boosted its numbers to 13,935 students - 300 more than last year - making it the fifth largest



"In three weeks' time it will be over" ... *Marianthe Varipatis, 17, a student of Bethany College, Hurstville, hits the books in preparation for this week's HSC exams. Photo: Steven Siewert*

subject. **Marianthe Varipatis, 17, of Bethany College in Hurstville, will sit for the studies of religion exam on Thursday.** "Studies of religion is compulsory at my school, but I'm glad I did it because it was very interesting," she said.

"I really liked it because you learn a lot about religions apart from your own. Business studies is something I want to

go further in. I want to do business or commerce and law at university."

Business studies will be the first subject to be examined tomorrow morning, with classical Greek. Aboriginal studies, agriculture and electrotechnology will be tested in the afternoon. Exams for about 22 languages including modern Greek, Spanish,

Vietnamese, Dutch, Hindi, Maltese, Khmer, Russian, Swedish and Ukrainian will also be held tomorrow.

Students will sit for the first English examination on Wednesday and the second on Friday.

Marianthe said she was feeling relaxed about the exams. "I'm not too stressed because it has gone so quickly, and in

three weeks' time it will be over for me."

Mr Alegounarias said that for the first time exam papers would be printed on 13 million pages of recycled paper.

Anthony Cleary, the director of religious education and evangelisation for the Catholic Education Office in Sydney, said 60 to 65 per cent of Catholic school students were enrolled in studies of religion, apart from the internal course on Catholicism.

Recent criticism of religious studies had inspired curiosity about the subject, he said. "Often kids have a yearning for a greater understanding of the philosophical questions of life. Australia's multicultural society has led to children studying more than their own religion. There is an interest in the roles of different religions."

This is the first year that students will be examined on the vocational automotive and electrotechnology courses. Of the 668 enrolled in electrotechnology, 38 are girls. There are just three girls among the 238 doing the automotive course.

Enrolments in Aboriginal studies are up by 20 per cent to 340 students.

Article from the Sydney Morning Herald

Our swagger is big, but others are unconvinced

AUSTRALIA may think the world of itself but the world does not think as much of it, at least not when it comes to a business environment, culture and social welfare, says a poll of citizens of the eight largest economies. Foreigners rated Australia for its world-class lifestyle but marked it down as a place to do business, the quality of its products and services, its government and its contribution to the global economy, a survey by a think tank, the Reputation Institute, found. But when it comes to self-belief, Australia is without peer; Australians are more positive about themselves than any other of the 33 nations that took part in the institute's wider survey. Japan and South Africa registered the lowest self-image, and China, Russia and India recorded the greatest gap between how they perceived themselves and how others saw them. Oliver Freedman, the general manager of AMR Interactive, which conducted the research, said: "When it comes to the physical beauty and overall lifestyle we are doing a very good job of communicating with the rest of the world, but there's been a lack of communication about other areas such as our inventiveness and innovation." Despite creating a good impression overall, coming behind the leaders Switzerland and Canada, Australia failed to make it into the top five in key areas such as innovation, technological advancement, culture and social welfare, the survey of 22,000 people found. That did not stop citizens of Group of Eight countries - Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Britain and the US - from ranking Australia as the fourth most likely place to invest in. Mr Freedman said: "My guess is that Australia has weathered the financial crisis very well; we are last in and first out. We have a very strong resources sector so from a general [shares] investor point of view Australia does make sense."

HSC ensures Kogarah Library is busy

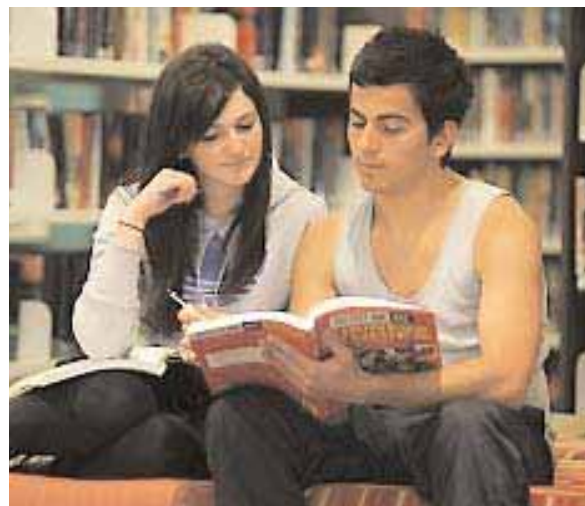
STUDENTS have descended on Kogarah Library to study for HSC exams, which begin October 20.

Youth services officer Justin Yeomans said the library is very busy.

"We have communal tables, there is a natural light environment and we've a very large and up-to-date collection of HSC study guides," he said.

"What we've got is a variety of study rooms from large rooms to smaller spaces where you can book those in advance and utilise them."

Mr Yeomans said psychiatrist Toulia Tsovolos outlined problems which students often suffered



Study time: St Ursula's College student Nicole Sukkar, 17, and Waverley College's Demi Carigliano, 18, shared notes at Kogarah Library. Picture: Angelo Velardo

from anxiety, procrastination and motivation.

Dr Tsovolos said parents should motivate children to do well but ensure they don't think the HSC is the be-all and end-all of their future, and focus on helping them manage anxiety and

ensure they get sufficient rest, exercise and nutrition.

Surviving the HSC:

- Plan your time effectively: Have a realistic revision schedule and stick to it.

Include time for relaxation or hobbies to break up your study routine.

- Avoid distractions.
- Make sure you have somewhere quiet.
- Use visual aids such as sticking notes around your desk. Key points will help you remember details.

- Test yourself practice makes perfect. Answer questions and write essays in given time limits.

- Ask for help teachers should be available to receive email. Your mother, father or older siblings may also provide assistance.

- Exercise activity will stimulate your brain and provide a break.

- Get plenty of sleep.