

PHOTO: SURF LIFESAVING NEW ZEALAND

SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR: Michael Buck juggles surf lifesaving with his business studies at AUT.

Major awards go to minor sports

By Priscilla Duncan

Minor sports took centre stage at the 2007 AUT University Blue Awards last Friday with the four major prize winners representing golf, boxing, hockey and surf lifesaving.

The Blues, part of a tradition dating back to 1922, were awarded to 37 AUT students who have demonstrated excellence in their chosen sport.

Bruce Meyer, who is responsible for AUT sport development, says it was good to see the top awards go to less dominant codes.

"Minority sports often get overlooked or miss out altogether," he says.

"We certainly didn't choose the winners on that basis, but it just turned out that way."

Female Athlete of the Year went to Phillis Meti for her efforts in golf, while Male Athlete of the Year went to Ben Collier in hockey.

Athlete of the Year is awarded purely on athletic performance while the Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year awards also incorporate academic achievement and contribution to AUT.

Featherweight boxer Alexis

Pritchard won Sportswoman of the Year while surf lifesaver Michael Buck was named Sportsman of the Year.

Meyer says there was a wide range of sports represented on the night and a host of high calibre athletes.

"In past years a lot of Blues have been awarded to regional representatives but this year we had a record number of players who have represented New Zealand at a senior level," he says.

Ex-All White Noah Hickey, the guest speaker for the

"Minority sports often get overlooked or miss out altogether."

evening, expressed his concerns with the culture of sport in New Zealand.

He said athletes had it too easy in this country and therefore did not always set high enough goals.

Sportsman of the Year winner Michael Buck says he enjoyed hearing from a top sportsperson as well as meeting other high achievers his own age.

"When I'm around other AUT

student athletes it makes me realise I'm not alone," he says.

"It keeps me motivated to continue on juggling my studies and my sport even though that's difficult sometimes."

Meanwhile Alexis Pritchard, 24, was surprised to win the top award for her efforts in boxing. The four-time featherweight national champion is in her first year of physiotherapy after completing a Bachelor of Science at University of Auckland.

Pritchard says she was never nominated for a Blue Award while at the University of Auckland.

"I didn't even know about the awards when I went to Auckland," she says.

"But here at AUT the sports division is really active so athletes don't miss out on being recognised."

Phillis Meti was awarded Athlete of the Year largely thanks to her win at the World Long Drive Championships in Nevada last year. She became the youngest ever woman to win the competition by smashing a golf ball 298.1 metres.

Athlete of the Year on the men's side went to Ben Collier, who has 47 caps for the Black Sticks and competed at the Commonwealth Games last year.

From *Breakfast to Sunrise*: a success story

Chelsea Burke speaks to AUT graduate Josh Heslop, presenter on TV3's new *Sunrise* show.

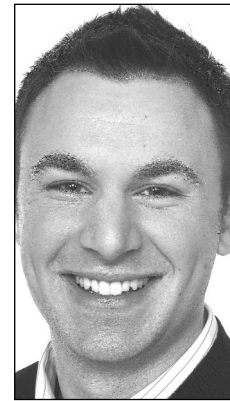
Sunrise weather presenter and AUT University graduate Josh Heslop believes the new breakfast show on morning television will be good competition for both channels.

The rival to TV One's *Breakfast* airs at the same time of 6.30am and was launched on October 1.

He says at first the show will be seen as competition but then it will go back to being just like every other show.

"The publicity is going to die down after the first week and then it will simply be a new show on air," he says.

"Right up until last week I was



JOSH HESLOP

"I don't want to see what people have to write about me."

quite stressed out about it but we had a week of rehearsals. We're not concentrating on competing anymore - we've got our own things to worry about like connecting with

our viewers. We don't even see what *Breakfast* is doing as we're on air at the same time."

In what he describes as a rare series of events, the young journalist was approached by the competition while working on *Breakfast* as a junior reporter.

He says TV3 has wanted to make a breakfast programme for a long time but it wasn't until TVNZ axed *Breakfast* staff that TV3 were able to scoop them up, and he was approached.

The youngest on air member of the *Sunrise* presenters has

decided not to read the media coverage after the initial launch because he's "not too sure what it will be like".

"I've decided I don't want to see what people have to write about me and the rest of the team. We're all more focused on the show itself," he says.

Heslop says he is on a steep learning curve. At TVNZ he used to report live crosses combined with writing the midday news bulletins.

He says his new job involves presenting the weather, so it's essentially putting the two jobs into one.

"I'm definitely ready for this. I'm really looking forward to it," he says.

"The live cross is something I'm going to be doing a lot of. This is the hardest out of everything because you don't get a second chance, but it's the ultimate in what I wanted to do in broadcasting."

Heslop's first job in broadcasting began in the TVNZ newsroom on what seems to be the reporters' career launching pad, the assignments desk.

He juggled shiftwork at the network while studying at AUT towards a Bachelor of Communication Studies.

His advice to journalism graduates is to be prepared to start from the bottom even if you're making coffee.

"Don't look at that as a waste. It's surprising how much you absorb from a newsroom even as a coffee maker. If you've got basic skills to move forward, you'll move forward."

"Take all the information you've learnt in theory and practice and build on that as much as you can."

NZ only 'superficially friendly' - study

By Beth Allen

Institutions need to help Asian students interact with Kiwis more, says the coordinator of AUT University's Centre for Asian and Migrant Health Research.

Ruth DeSouza's comment follows a report by the Asia New Zealand Foundation showing many Asian students say they have limited opportunities to engage with New Zealand students and host communities.

DeSouza, on the foundation's

board, agrees with the findings. "Institutions need to take more responsibility to make interaction happen between people," she says.

"Asia is increasing as a place for us to trade - we can't look to the US anymore - and so we are looking to Asia very strategically and really cultivating that relationship."

The report was written by the foundation's director of policy and research Dr Andrew Butcher.

Butcher says when he and his

research team spoke to Asian students about their experiences, many said they had hoped Kiwi students would be friendlier.

"There may be a few people who choose to mix only with their own nationality but most come with an expectation that they will make friends with New Zealanders," says Butcher.

"When this doesn't happen, they give up because it is too hard."

Butcher says many Asian students get influential jobs when they return to their countries

and it is important New Zealanders create good relationships with these students while they are here.

The report says Asian students find Kiwis only "superficially friendly".

AUT arts and business student Jan Singhapan, 29, from Thailand, says she has made some close Kiwi friends but not as many as she expected or would like.

When Kiwis greet you and say "Hi, how are you" they don't expect an answer at all, she says.

But in "Asian culture we expect an answer and it's a genuine feeling".

Business student Hai Tao, 22, from China, agrees Kiwis are friendly to strangers "but it doesn't mean you know these people well".

Tao says group assignments, where students are put in mixed nationality groups, are the best way to make friends with Kiwis at university.

But he says he has met most of his Kiwi friends at his part-time job.