**Transcript: Nick Bisley – International Relations**

The international relations program is an established program, it’s well recognised by governments and employers and it’s also one that’s focused on policy and on the real world. It’s the study of contemporary events, it’s an ever-changing landscape so whether it’s interventions in Libya, whether it’s the rise of China, looming conflict between America and the emerging powers, how to make sense of India, Brazil, South Africa – some emerging, new non-Western powers, as well as a bit of stuff like the global financial crisis – these are big, world-shaping events that are difficult to make sense of, and the study of international relations will allow you to come to terms with them and understand them, explain them and be able to make sense of them.

It’s an intersection of a range of different disciplines so that at any one moment you’ve got a little bit of economics, political science, defence and military, philosophy, and it really sits at the intersection of those events. And obviously, it’s about big events that matter so there’s a kind of immediate interest and appeal.

It’s a structured degree that’s very targeted at analysing a particular part of political science – international politics – as a result of that specialisation not only do you get a much more detailed and systematic and thorough knowledge of a particular area, it’s also one that’s much more focused on career outcomes and vocation.

One of the things about the degree is that it does attract high-achieving students from across Victoria and actually interstate. We get quite a few students coming from Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, and what that produces is a really strong student body. We’ve got great staff but also a nice mix of experience, established, famous scholars – Dennis Altman is very heavily involved in the international HIV movement, Professor Joseph Camilleri has spent a lot of time influencing government policy, I’m involved in a range of defence and foreign policy discussions in Australia and abroad, Michael O’Keefe has been actively involved in lecturing with the defence college. We’ve been very fortunate to be able to recruit some of the best young IR scholars in Australia.

Almost a third – and it’s a rising percentage – of our students take a semester or more of their degree abroad. We have established links with about twenty-five universities around the world on every continent except Africa. Graduates go and work in government, work in various departments of federal and state government, Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Immigration Department and the like as well as at the state level. We also have a lot of graduates who go work in the private sector.

Having a degree that students really seek and for which there’s a lot of demand is something that has really tangible benefits for whilst your here, and also what goes on in the labour market when you leave. What we want with our graduates is not to leave feeling like they know all the answers but know how to ask the right questions.