

# Students take on business

THE Peninsula campus of Monash University has trialled program that saw business students working with Hastings traders and a public relations consultant to produce low cost marketing strategies.

"This type of interaction between businesses and university students has enormous benefits for all concerned," Dr Fiona Newton of the university's marketing department said.

Dr Newton said feedback from employers to the Business and Economics Faculty showed they wanted students to have "more applied and soft skills".

"We have established a business degree at the peninsula campus that specifically focuses on bridging the theory-application gap and providing students with opportunities to work with business from day one."

She said businesses were "giving their time to develop the next generation of business students and also leveraging an untapped source of assistance".

"It also highlights the fact that the peninsula has an innovative business degree program right on its doorstep that is implementing cutting edge pedagogy," Dr Newton said.

"Our students gain vital experience applying their theoretical knowledge to the types of business problems they will face when they graduate. At the same time, the local businesses receive valuable ideas and advice across a range of issues that they may be experiencing."

Dr Newton students had worked with the owners of Maple Threads



**Down to business:** Monash University lecturer Fiona Newton, left, with business students Daniëlle Kingston-Yates and Bridget Hassell.

Boutique and H C Shoes to develop a variety of strategies, including ways to entice people into the shops.

"The students had to think about applying their understanding of consumer psychology to issues around merchandising, social media, and

sales transactions," she said.

The students were mentored by marketing and communications consultant, Nicola Oldridge from Out of the Box Consulting, who helped them develop their ideas and understand time management, team work, and

confidence in communicating ideas.

Ms Oldridge said having students work on real-life scenarios "beats sitting in a traditional lecture theatre, just listening to the theory being explained".

*Keith Platt*