IT school answers world call

By JODIE MINUS

EVER-ADAPTIVE, the University of Wollongong has merged two schools from different faculties.

Launched yesterday by the Minister for the Illawarra David Campbell, the new School of Information Systems and Technology (SISAT) combines business systems and technology in a bid to meet an international shortage of IT graduates.

The head of SISAT, Associate Professor Peter Hyland, said more than 300 students had already enrolled for nine courses commencing next year.

"There was a School of Information Systems in the Faculty of Commerce and a School of Information Technology in Informatics, but a great deal of the work we were doing was overlapping," Prof Hyland said.

"We realised there was potential here to bring these slightly different perspectives together and put together a really strong school that had both a business and technology focus." Prof Hyland said that due to the international shortage of IT graduates, the United States was offering green cards, within two weeks, to IT professionals.

"The US is effectively trying to scoop up as many IT professionals as they can before the shortage really bites," he said.

"We thought by bringing the new school together it would add an extra dimension to the sort of courses we could offer, so we have revamped nine courses to be more efficient and more attractive to industry."

Mr Campbell said the university was leading the way because it adapted to industry demand. "It is the strength of the university that it doesn't stand still, it always moves forward and finds a better way to deliver the courses to students. As a community we should be proud of that," he said.

APEC may be tall order for beached ship

By GABRIELLE DUNLEVY

AN Indonesian sailing ship stranded on a south-east Queensland beach is unlikely to make it to Sydney's APEC summit, as bad weather has continued to sweep the region.

The 36m vessel Arung Samudera was on its way to Sydney for next month's Asia-Pacific leaders' forum when it encountered a storm that brought flash flooding to the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay.

The ship dragged its anchors and the rudder and centreboard broke. It grounded on Inskip Point beach early on Thursday and 18 crew members forced to abandon ship were taken in by the community at Rainbow Beach.

The town received a local rainfall record, with 713mm in the 24 hours to 9am yesterday.

As the deluge continued, parents were advised not to send children to school and floodwaters made driving out of Rainbow Beach dangerous.

Efforts to salvage the ship were hampered. After an inspection at low tide, Indonesian naval attache Eden Gunawan hoped they would make it to Sydney as planned, where they would join other tall ships on September 2 to mark the start of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum.

But the Navy's Commander Forbes Peters said it was unlikely the salvage operation would start this weekend.