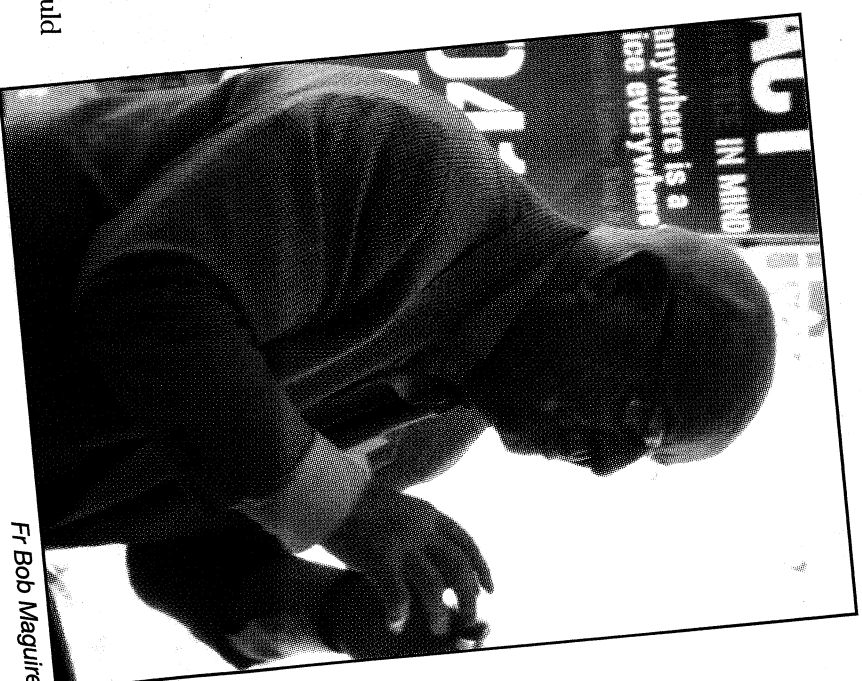


THE HIDDEN



Fr Bob Maguire

Struggling to study

Balvindra Singh Jodha (above) is typical of many students who arrive here from overseas. The systems engineering student from Rajasthan in India explained that one of the first difficulties for him was the language barrier.

"I studied English at school, but when I first got here I did find communication difficult," the 24-year-old said.

Upon arriving in Australia in February this year, Balvindra was given a list of real estate agents by the university and the search for accommodation began.

"Who would want to rent a house to a young man like me? No one knew anything about me." Balvindra laughs as he states the obvious. With the availability of rentals at an all time low, it is easy to

see why property owners would think twice about renting to a young man with no credit history.

But finding somewhere to live proved easier than finding a job. Balvindra has a degree in mechanical engineering, but the only work he could find was as a cleaner.

"That was a scary day for me, my first day at work as a cleaner," he said. "In

"I GUESS IT IS STUDENT LIFE. WE ARE EXPECTED TO STRUGGLE."

my head I kept thinking 'but I am an engineer!'"

The youngest of five children, Balvindra relies

on an allowance from his parents. He must pay a yearly university fee of \$11,280. Add to that the cost of books and day-to-day living expenses, and it is no wonder Balvindra finds it difficult to make ends meet.

"I guess it is student life. We are

expected to struggle," Balvindra shrugged philosophically.

"This morning I had no breakfast and no lunch ... But I will have dinner tonight."

Deb Bennett

To find out more, and join the Just Education network, go to: <http://www.justeducation.org.au/> (see 'Just Join In' section in the right hand side)

** Anti-Poverty Week has been an annual event in Australia since 2002. Coinciding with the United Nations annual International Anti-Poverty Day on 17 October, this year the week ran from 12 to 18 October. The aim of the week is to increase public discussion and awareness about issues relating to poverty and encourage action to address these issues.*



Listening to...