World leadership in marine resource management
Hackett Hall: Renovation for Your Next Occasion

Enjoy your next function amidst the glorious gardens and grand architecture of the University of Western Australia. Hackett Hall, a historic building adjacent to the beautiful Swan River, has recently undergone extensive refurbishment making it the perfect venue for on-campus activities, weddings, engagements, birthdays, cocktail parties and corporate functions. Fully air conditioned, Hackett Hall offers seating for up to 200 people for formal dinners and caters for cocktail parties up to 450 people. Ensure your special occasion is an unforgettable one and book today!


Specialists in Quality Catering, Outstanding Service and Truly Memorable Occasions.

University Function Caterers

Fully Licensed
New Seasonal Menu

University Function Caterers
The University of Western Australia
35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, Western Australia 6009

Phone: 6488 2315    Facsimile: 6488 1115
Email: catering@guild.uwa.edu.au

A division of the UWA Guild of Undergraduates
Vol. 26 No.3  Spring 2007

UNIVIEW

CONTENTS

FEATURES

In Focus: campus news and views 2
From the Vice-Chancellery 7
“Out of the dreams of a few...” 8
In pursuit of good medicine 15
Good science, good management 25
Graduate Profile: Dr Rosanna Capolingua 28

GRAD NEWS 30
GRAD BRIEFS 34

COVER: One of countless spectacular coral gardens in the pristine waters that lap Western Australia’s coastline – see Good science, good management. Photo: Gary Kendrick.

CONTENTS PAGE PHOTOGRAPHS:
Top: Professor Marcus Atlas performing a cochlear implant at St John of God Hospital – see In pursuit of good medicine. Photo: The West Australian.
Centre: UWA students join excited medal winners from other universities at the 2005 Indian Rim Asian University Games – see In Focus.
Bottom: Sponges at Jurien Bay – see Good science, good management. Photo: Simon Grove.

Editor-in-Chief: Doug Durack (doug.durack@uwa.edu.au) Editor: Trea Wiltshire (treawiltshire@uwa.edu.au) • Grad Briefs: Terry Larder (terry.larder@uwa.edu.au) • Production: UniPrint (www.uniprint.uwa.edu.au) • Advertising: Trea Wiltshire +61 8 6488 1914 • Editorial: Public Affairs, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009, Telephone: +61 8 6488 1914, Fax: +61 8 6488 1192.

UNIVIEW is published three times a year, in February, June and October and is sent free to all UWA graduates. Summer edition: February 2008. Winter edition: June 2008. UNIVIEW is printed on environmentally friendly oxygen-bleached paper. Material from UNIVIEW may be reproduced accompanied by an appropriate credit. UNIVIEW can be viewed at http://www.publishing.uwa.edu.au

UWA Internet: http://www.uwa.edu.au

Changing your address? Please contact Terry Larder:
Phone +61 8 6488 2447, +61 8 6488 7992 and +61 8 6488 8000,
Fax: +61 8 6488 7996, Email: terry.larder@uwa.edu.au

The University of Western Australia

UNIVIEW
IN FOCUS

EXPLORING INDIGENOUS HUMAN RIGHTS

This issue of UNIVIEW is very much caught up in year-long celebrations of the School of Medicine’s 50th anniversary. We return to the inspiring story of post-war community support that laid the foundations for the School and that won admiration around the world. That such a sparsely populated State could raise so much money in record time was widely acknowledged as a triumph – and that spirit of generosity still extends the reach of medicine.

Extending that reach to rural and remote WA has long been the aim of this University, so it was appropriate that our half century celebrations should include the opening of the Kalgoorlie headquarters of the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia.

You can read about this and other medical landmarks in “Out of the dreams of a few...” and In pursuit of good medicine.

Every student who receives a scholarship acknowledges the doors that open, the financial burden that is lifted, and the opportunities that are presented along with their award. Some silently bless a benefactor who may have died, or a surviving relative who created a scholarship to perpetuate the memory of a loved one. Others are lucky enough to meet those whose generosity allows them to advance their studies, or to continue studies threatened by financial hardship.

Indigenous student Sheena Graham was delighted to accept her Jack and Eleanor Bendat Rural Indigenous Scholarship from her benefactors recently. The scholarship was designed to assist Indigenous students from regional Western Australia who are experiencing financial hardship to complete their first undergraduate degree course, including Honours if applicable.

“Jack and Eleanor are beautiful people, kind-hearted and generous – and they own the Wildcats!” enthused Sheena.

Sheena, who is originally from Norseman, began distance education tertiary studies through Deakin University. The single mother waited for her son to go to school before enrolling at UWA. She is now in her final year, studying political science and history for a BA degree.

One of several Amnesty International volunteers on campus, Sheena recently became part of an Amnesty research mission to Canada.

“We conducted a fact-finding mission to investigate human rights abuses in a First Nations community and are producing a report based on our findings,” explains Sheena.

The mission took her to a First Nations reserve in Ontario, where the clearing of forests on traditional lands has become a contentious issue – a tussle between forestry companies answerable to the provincial government, and a federal government responsible for protecting the treaty rights of the people.

On her return to WA, Sheena organised a seminar with the Western Australian Student Aboriginal Corporation and the UWA Amnesty Group during Reconciliation Week. The event was for staff and students at UWA and it centred on Aboriginal human rights issues.

“In invited Noongar elders to speak because I think it is important to hear about Aboriginal history from those who experienced it,” says Sheena.

At this event the UWA student spoke about her own Australian history studies. She hopes to continue studying at UWA for her Honours next year and plans eventually to work in the area of human rights.

“In my Honours studies, I particularly want to explore the historical development of rights and freedoms from Plato onwards and to chart how awareness of rights issues was developing in countries that, at the same time, subjugated Indigenous people in the US, Canada and Australia.”

At the opening of the Rural Clinical School’s Kalgoorlie headquarters (l–r) Professor Campbell Murdoch, Professor Adrian Bower (Dean of Notre Dame Medical School), Prime Minister John Howard, Kalgoorlie MHR Barry Haase, UWA Medical Dean Professor Ian Padday and UWA Vice-Chancellor Professor Alan Robson.
Sheena has completed an Aboriginal History unit which was taught by UWA lecturer Blaze Kwaymullina, who, along with Professor Sally Morgan and Research Fellow Tjalaminu Mia of the UWA School of Indigenous Studies, is editor of *Speaking from the Heart*, a collection of stories reflecting the history, culture and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal Australians.

**NEWLY-CREATED ENERGY POSITION**

UWA law graduate and Chief Executive of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA, Tim Shanahan, has been appointed as the University’s new Director (Energy and Minerals Initiative).

Mr Shanahan takes on an important strategic role, newly created to reinforce the University’s strong commitment to supporting the minerals and energy industry as it rides the crest of a period of significant growth.

An influential and highly-respected advocate of the State’s resources industry, Mr Shanahan will provide strategic industry advice, leadership in promoting and coordinating teaching and research in this area, and attracting research funding, as well as supporting growth in higher degree research and coursework enrolments.

“I see my role as trying to assist the University to take advantage of the buoyant conditions in the sector at the moment, and to assist the University in connecting it capabilities across a range of areas with industry and government to take advantage of these opportunities.

“I am looking forward to it immensely. This is an exciting time for the University and for myself. Western Australia has not seen this kind of investment in the resources industry since the gold rushes of the 1890s.”

Mr Shanahan takes up his post at UWA later this year.

**$1 MILLION FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH**

Fifty years ago, less than 10 per cent of children with leukaemia were cured; today, thanks to huge advances in medical science and technology, the rate has risen to a heartening 75 to 80 per cent. Now a team of cancer researchers at the Telethon Institute for Child Health has received a five-year, $1 million grant that could help raise that percentage still higher.

Professor Ursula Kees, head of the Children’s Leukaemia and Cancer Research laboratory at the Telethon Institute, is optimistic that the grant from the Children’s Leukaemia and Cancer Research Foundation (Inc.) will help the team develop a fast, simple gene test that could significantly improve treatment and outcomes for cancer sufferers.

Current tests for cancers are costly and take time, and there are many different sub-types of leukaemia. Using high-speed computers to assess the molecular genetics of cancer patients, the researchers have been developing new diagnostic methods. “We use advanced micro-array technology to probe the entire human genome in one test,” said Professor Kees. “We have done extensive experiments on specimens from leukaemia patients and patients with brain tumours, the largest disease groups.”

The researchers have identified a number of cancer genes, including a tumor suppressor gene associated with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in children. They are working closely with clinicians at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, and with overseas hospitals and research institutes.

“We have compared normal blood cells with leukaemia cells, and focused on the genes that are differently expressed on the leukaemia cells in comparison with their normal counterparts,” said Professor Kees.

A major goal of the research is to understand the mechanisms behind the growth of cancer cells. Another is to refine methods for measuring risk levels in patients. At present, leukaemia patients with the best chances of recovery receive standard therapy, those at greater risk receive more intensive therapy, and those at highest risk get the most intensive treatment. But sometimes low-risk patients return with the disease and have to be given the next level of therapy, but this often does not achieve a cure.

“We are working towards a more refined assessment test so that we can choose the most appropriate therapy,” said Professor Kees. “And we are following the same path with brain tumours.”

**NEW RESEARCH INITIATIVES POSITION**

Professor Alistar Robertson has been appointed to the newly created position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Initiatives).

Currently Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Professor Robertson will act as a focal point both externally and internally to foster collaborative research relationships with partners in the private and public sector, particularly in the environment area.

“I am very excited about this new role and the challenges it will bring,” Professor Robertson said. “It will allow me to use what I consider to be some of my main skills, including embracing new and innovative ideas with enthusiasm, facilitation of research partnerships, and planning and communicating the core values of UWA internally and externally.”

As part of a team led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation),
Professor Robertson will focus on developing large-scale collaborations between UWA and Commonwealth Government agencies, particularly the CSIRO and its Flagship program; and work with State departments and industries to build more research linkages.

He will also work with faculties to increase research income (particularly ARC Linkage grants in faculties where research performance has the capacity to improve. “Together with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) I will also work on research development and leadership mentoring packages for staff in the early stages of their research careers.”

**ARC GRANT SUCCESS**

Topics as diverse as cane toads and water management have won funding in the mid-year round of Australian Research Council Linkage Projects, in which UWA has achieved 65 per cent success, with funding for 11 projects out of 17 applications. The national success rate was 46 per cent.

Minister for Education, Science and Training, Julie Bishop, announced ARC funding for UWA of almost $5 million, with around $10.5 million from partner organisations. The grants are for industry-linked research over three to five years.

The projects cover a range of topics, including remediation of underground contaminant source areas; understanding and managing woody vegetation and water in the central Pilbara; increasing liquefied natural gas production efficiency; the establishment of a cane toad genome program; the study of cyanobacterial toxins in waterways; and the acoustic, control and aerodynamic aspects of a hoverpad.

**THE WIN-WIN OF AUSAID**

Above: UWA Vice-Chancellor Professor Alan Robson, Truong Duc Toan from Vietnam, who completed a Master of Science in Natural Resource Management, and Dr Ben White, Head of the School of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Below: Also at the AUSAID farewell ceremony was Mufida Shabiby from Kenya, who completed a Masters in Public Health.

Professor Alan Robson admits that hosting ceremonies to farewell AUSAID students who have completed their studies is one of the pleasures of being UWA Vice-Chancellor. Not only have these students advanced their skills through postgraduate studies that build capacity in their home countries, but their presence enriches the student experience on campus.

“We consider that cultural competency is essential in our graduates,” Professor Robson told the departing students, “and one way of achieving this is working with students who come to our campus from other countries.”

“When I was studying for a PhD, I worked with two students from Pakistan, and we exchanged a lot of information, including our thoughts about Islam and Christianity. Such exchanges are an important part of learning. They give you that depth of understanding and that capacity to work in different countries.”

Professor Robson expressed the hope that the students would leave UWA not only with greater knowledge and expertise, but with newly forged friendships and happy memories.

That was clearly the case as, one by one, the students — Mufida Shabiby from Kenya, Donny Lesmana and Jos Samuel from Indonesia, Truong Duc Toan from Vietnam and Evisness Nyalugwe from Malawi — accepted farewell gifts and spoke warmly of their time at UWA.

“It is hard to leave this lovely country and its friendly people,” said Donny Lesmana, who completed a Masters of Financial Mathematics and now resumes teaching at the Bogor Agricultural University.

Like his companions, Jos Samuel paid tribute to those who supervised his PhD in hydrological factors that affect flood frequency — vital knowledge that he will share with his students in the Pancasila University. Because periods of study supported by these AUSAID scholarships have ranged from 18 months to several years, family members often accompany scholarship winners.

In the case of Mufida Shabiby from Kenya, this involved her husband Ameer and daughters Safiya and Hanaan. Her husband spent the first year with his family in Perth before returning to the Sudan for the World Food program.

Mufida completed a Masters in Public Health, studying health risk factors among African immigrants in Western Australia. She was supervised by Dr Michael Rosenberg and Dr Helman Alfonso.

Accepting her farewell gift from the Vice-Chancellor, Mufida (who has a degree in Medicine and works with the Ministry of Health) said: “Coming from a medical background, I used to think that medicine was the noblest profession; now I think it is public health!”

**HONOURING LINNAEUS**

After six months of extensive renovations, the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery has reopened with a celebration: an exhibition linking UWA with Sweden to mark the 300th birthday of Carl von Linné, better known as Carl
Linnaeus, the father of modern botany.

The renowned Swedish-born scientist and passionate botanist spent his life studying how nature worked, and devising a way of classifying and naming all life on Earth. So successful was he that, three hundred years later, the system he developed to describe plants, animals, and other forms of life, still forms the basis of scientific classification. This is despite the fundamental changes taking place today through the huge advances achieved by DNA analysis and molecular science.

Linnaeus’s system gave all plants a two-part Latin name: the first was the genus, the second the species.

The title of the new exhibition, *The System of Nature*, is drawn from his famous text, *Systema Naturae*. On view are artworks that reflect our human desire for order and system, and our attempts to find ways of illustrating our relationship to nature. Artists include Janet Laurence, Fiona Hall, Simyn Gill, Robyn Stacey, Holly Story, Greg Pryor, Perdie Phillips and Siné McPherson.

The exhibition continues until November 7.


**INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY GAMES**

Up to 20 teams from 12 universities in China, Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa and Western Australia, will come together in December to compete in the 2007 Indian Rim Asian University Games (IRAUG) at UWA Sports Park.

The 2007 games follow the resounding success of the inaugural event held in 2005 – a joint venture by the five WA universities and EventsCorp, which has provided seed funding. The 2005 Games attracted 1,252 local and overseas students and officials, making it the largest international university sporting event held in Australia. Games manager Brian Vanallen is expecting similar numbers this year.

Mr Vanallen regards the Games as a unique event for WA. “Most international sporting events are brought into the State, whereas these games are home-grown. UWA – through the UWA Sport and Recreation Association – plays a leading role in the event.

“Our overriding aim is to provide an opportunity for international competition for WA students, who don’t often get a chance to compete on an international level.

Maps don’t necessarily represent reality. In the days before modern exploration, they often involved imagination and guesswork, sometimes even lies. During the era of colonial conquest, maps usually presented the colonisers’ view of the world, and often influenced both the colonisers and the people they colonised. Then there were the fantasy maps of fiction, published in adventure books such as *Treasure Island*.

Norman Etherington, Professor of History at UWA, is editor of a new book from UWA Press, which explores the history of cartography in Australia and Southern Africa. The book charts the progress and development of mapping technologies in two countries where patterns of colonial conquest were similar, and similar techniques were used in surveying and mapping.

*Mapping Colonial Conquest – Australia and Southern Africa* is a study of how the maps produced by colonisers have erased, written over and/or displaced Indigenous ideas of space.

The Internet has made it possible to study maps in digital form, opening the way for inter-disciplinary research, and contributes to the book include historians, a research scientist, a literary scholar and gallery curators. The text is illustrated with an abundance of maps, charts, sketches and reproductions of artworks.

Also new on the market from UWA Press is the long-awaited companion to the popular *Guide to the Reptiles and Frogs of the Perth Region*, released in good time for enthusiasts of the camaraderie of the 2005 Indian Rim Asian University Games.

“It’s also an opportunity for cultural and university exchange. Our motto is sport, culture and friendship. We want everyone to have a good time, experience each other’s cultures, exchange ideas and develop friendships. Some of the students may come back here for postgraduate study.”

Bringing international students together is also an ideal opportunity to promote Western Australia as a holiday destination, generate income for the State, and highlight the appeal of Perth as a location for tertiary study.

The program features nine sports – hockey, judo, rugby 7s,
TIMBER RESEARCH CENTRE

Western Australia’s forests yield some of the most beautiful and hard-wearing timbers in the world, but more research is needed to enable the industry to exploit their full potential. Hence the establishment of the Advanced Timber Concepts Research Centre, a joint venture between the Forestry Products Commission and UWA, aimed at researching and adding value to the State’s forest products.

“Primarily, we carry out research into the properties and potential of West Australian hardwoods and softwoods through research by design,” says Centre Director Patrick Beale. “We design a product and the process raises a series of questions, some of which require basic research into the properties of timber, some relate to the engineering of joints, some to production.”

One such project was the design of the ‘Shimmer’ chair, a lightweight model in jarrah, which is renowned for its hardwearing qualities. “The idea was to see how far we could push the material. Very little research has been done, and most of the evidence is anecdotal,” said Mr Beale.

“We started looking at the properties of jarrah. We were told it would snap if we used short lengths of timber, but we found it was quite flexible, and the largest lengths we used in the chair were 22mm square.”

Projects like this demand a range of skills, and the Centre, located within the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts, accommodates architects with product design experience, a research assistant, joiner, structural engineer, and furniture maker.

The Centre is also producing flatpack timber-frame housing for the Shire of Perenjori, where more accommodation is needed for mining personnel. Other projects include developing simple jarrah dining chairs using short lengths of timber, working with laminates, and with karri. “Karri is typically not used very much because it is difficult to finish, but we have achieved a beautiful silky finish by using modern machinery and a particular treatment,” said Mr Beale.

“Our intention is to collaborate with the timber industry to generate the knowledge and research it needs in order to do more with less, and generate more income. WA hardwood timbers have special characteristics and have been radically undervalued for some time, but little work has been done to build up the market through value-adding.”

GOOD SCIENCE, GOOD MANAGEMENT

In this issue, we cover the launch of the Western Australian Marine Science Institution, known as WAMSI, which brings together 14 State, national and industry organisations with researchers and students from local tertiary institutions.

WAMSI was recently launched by WA Premier Alan Carpenter in the presence of scientific luminaries, industry leaders and passionate conservationists.

“WA is known for its fantastic lifestyle and our marine environment is a large part of this drawcard,” said the Premier.

“We’re committed to ensuring that our marine and coastal biodiversity and pristine environment are around for future generations.”

Read how UWA is playing its role in preserving our marine environment in Good science, good management.

“What do they know that I don’t?”

News and information that advises, educates and motivates. Subscribe today, call 9288 2100 or online www.wabusinessnews.com.au
Many will be aware that the University is undertaking a significant review of our course structures to ensure that in every field of study the quality of the education provided by this University will meet the needs of 21st century graduates at the highest international standard of excellence.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us to design academic programs that match our aspiration to be among the world’s leading universities.

The review is reaching a pivotal point with the imminent release of *Courses for Tomorrow’s World*, an ‘issues and options paper’ that sets out a range of possible structural changes to our academic programs. You will soon be able to find the paper on the review website: http://www.coursesstructuresreview.uwa.edu.au and I would encourage you all to seek this paper out in coming weeks and contribute to the discussion.

The paper has emerged from a broadly consultative process. It included more than 160 written submissions from many individuals and groups within the University community and beyond it, commissioned research and working party reports, and numerous meetings. Dozens of our graduates submitted information and opinions, all of which have been carefully considered by the Review’s Steering Group.

Extensive consultation will continue, with comments on this paper being invited from all stakeholders. Final recommendations for change are not likely to be made before April-May next year.

*Courses for Tomorrow’s World* includes an analysis of various trends and pressures that are causing many universities to scrutinise their program structures.

Externally, these include: demographic developments, forces of globalisation, the changing nature of knowledge, new technology, patterns of employment and work mobility, the shift away from public funding of universities, reforms in secondary school curricula, and a more diverse and competitive higher education market.

Internal factors that require us to consider changing some aspects of our course structures include the need to fortify some of the University’s defining characteristics. For example we are proud of being a research-intensive university, but what should this mean for our teaching programs? We are also mindful of the distinctive features of the UWA student population, of the need to augment our resource base, and of various pressures that many students and staff members are experiencing.

In the context of those challenges, the paper discusses several basic principles that should shape our teaching and learning environment. The paper goes on to sketch seven options for change to UWA course structures. Some would involve only relatively minor modifications, others are more far-reaching.

The final section outlines a range of matters that need to be investigated further in relation to the options indicated. At this stage, there is no attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the implications of each scenario, but the University acknowledges that any proposals for change will produce some questions and concerns. We intend to take these seriously, whether they relate to financial issues, entry criteria, workload requirements, quality assurance, the recognition value of a new credential among employers and professional bodies, or any other matter. I do not underestimate our responsibilities in this regard.

I encourage you to make known your views on the options presented. Information about how to do this is also available on the Course Structures Review website listed above.

* * *

*Professor Mark Cassidy*

The outstanding quality of our staff and students was recognised again recently with the award of Australian Physical Scientist of the Year to Professor Mark Cassidy, the Director of the University’s Centre for Offshore Foundations Systems. Professor Cassidy – whose work involves ensuring the stability of enormous oil and gas platforms on relatively unstable seabeds and ensuring the efficiency of pipelines three kilometres or more under the sea – was presented with the award, the Malcolm McIntosh Prize, by the Prime Minister.

Alan Robson
Vice-Chancellor
Strolling through UWA’s extensive gardens, one encounters numerous impressive stone busts and carvings. Socrates, brow furrowed with weighty philosophical matters, peers across the Reflection Pond to the bronze bust of Professor Hubert Edwin Whitfeld, the University’s first Vice-Chancellor. They in turn are observed by Diotima, the priestess who played an important role in Plato’s Symposium.

Such works of art slow the pace of campus visitors, and their creation is a tradition that the University still adopts when marking important occasions.

When UWA’s School of Medicine launched its golden anniversary celebrations earlier this year, a suite of bronze bas-relief sculptures of the professors who founded the School of Medicine were already forming a memorial walkway between the Medical and Dental Library and UWA’s Oral Health Centre.

At the opening of the walkway, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, Professor Ian Puddey, said the walkway honoured the vision and pioneering spirit of those who created the world-class health and medical Faculty we know today.

“This is our way of paying tribute to all 12 professors who came from various destinations around the globe to assist in establishing the new Faculty, as well as the Western Australian community which supported both the medical and dental schools – and continues to support our work today,” said Professor Puddey.

The commemorative walkway was funded by donations from the founding professors’ families, friends, colleagues and former students – a gesture that brought to mind the generous community support that formed the foundations of the School itself.

As the School celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is timely to remember that in a State which – as the British Medicine Journal pointed out – had a sparse population “no bigger than an English county”, the drive to start a School of Medicine was a huge challenge.

During the 1940s and 50s, pressure for a teaching hospital had gathered momentum in Western Australia and by 1955 it was considered that Perth’s major hospitals had developed to a level that could support a medical school equipped for the functions of teaching a new generation of doctors. At that time, medical students studied only first year Science at UWA, completing their degrees at the University of Adelaide or other Australian universities.

In 1944 Professor Walter Murdoch lamented that this method of providing the State’s doctors was unjust and wasteful – “Unjust, because it denies to the children of poor parents the chance of entering the profession; wasteful, because it makes no use of the talent or even the genius for medicine which is debarred for financial reasons from finding fulfilment.”

“The School of Medicine has a special relationship with the Western Australian community. It arose out of the dreams of a few, and these dreams were translated into reality by the donations of ordinary citizens. The School belongs to the public of Western Australia and I believe that, more than any other Faculty and more than any other Medical School in Australia, our School is cherished by Western Australians.”

Professor Neville Stanley

“Out of the dreams of a few...”
In the campaign that followed, much emphasis was laid on the economic barrier to the training of potential medical students of “worth not wealth”, given UWA’s status as the first free university within the British Commonwealth.

While attracting some significant benefactions, a 1950 fund-raising appeal for a school enjoyed only limited success. Historian Professor Fred Alexander attributed some of the success of the later 1955 appeal to the distinguished foundation professors who raised the School’s profile across the nation.

In *Campus at Crawley* (published by UWA Press) Fred Alexander observed: “The Medical School appeal was unique in more than its financial success. It provided additional testimony to the ability of an influential and well-organised profession to direct the support of its own members…”

When the second appeal was mounted, the timing was right.

Post-war optimism ran high and the creation of the School became part of the State’s post-war reconstruction. At the time Perth had three hospitals: the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, Princess Margaret Hospital and the new Royal Perth Hospital that had opened in 1948.

At the end of the war, Western Australia’s population was half a million, however the next decade saw it increase by a third due to a high birth rate, low infant mortality and an influx of “new Australians”.

The establishment of the School became a matter of urgency when, in 1954, the University of Adelaide announced it was unable to continue admitting WA medical students. Like the University of Melbourne, it was facing greater demands for doctors as population figures surged.

As the *British Medical Journal* observed, Perth was one of the world’s most isolated cities: “A community so situated must learn to be self-sufficient and so, even while its population remained no greater than that of many an English county, Western Australia began the task of developing its own cultural and educational centres.”

In 1954, UWA’s Vice-Chancellor Professor Stanley Prescott forwarded to WA Premier Bert Hawke a formal proposal that the School commence teaching in 1957. However, the government remained reluctant to commit, even after the UWA Senate proposed that the University would re-launch an appeal for funds to meet capital costs provided the State met the running costs.

“Everybody would like to have it, but nobody really does anything about it…,” lamented the President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. However, in June of 1954 the WA Branch of the British Medical Association met with the Premier, stressing the inadequacy of existing laboratory and pathological services in the State and the difficulty of attracting highly qualified personnel in the absence of a medical school.

By this time, public sentiment was behind the pressure from the University, local doctors, the press and organisations like the Rotary Club of Perth.

In 1955, Premier Bert Hawke responded, establishing a committee to investigate the costs involved. Working rapidly, the committee’s report was soon with the government and an Appeal Committee was established.

The Premier confirmed his government’s contribution up to £150,000 towards capital costs and an additional £100,000 for running costs. The fund-raising target was set at £400,000 – a formidable challenge given the State’s modest population.

Raising this much money was a momentous task but those charged with the responsibility planned the appeal like a military campaign. Neville Stanley, the then Professor of Microbiology, would later observe: “Without doubt, the extraordinary feature of the School’s creation was the financial support given by the people of Western Australia.”

Sir Ross McDonald was Chairman of the Appeal Committee, and Professor Stanley Prescott, and the Administrator of Royal Perth Hospital, Joseph Griffith, were Joint Honorary Directors. The committee comprised representatives of the WA Pastoralists’ Association, the British Medical Association, the Chamber of Manufacturers, Rotary International, the Red Cross, the University Senate, Royal Perth Hospital and the Trade Unions.

The committee’s headquarters in the former Kensington Hotel were quickly filled with a flurry of activity as an army of several hundred volunteers reported for duty.

The late Professor Stanley (father of UWA’s Professor Fiona Stanley) observed in *The First Quarter Century* (1957-1982): “From the outset emphasis was placed on the importance of providing the general public with as much information as possible regarding the form and character of the proposed Medical School. This initial program... preceded the direct appeal for money.
In that year both the first teaching writing at the Medical School began in 1957, the year in which the Raine Bequest was launched. This bequest amounted to more than half £10,000. This event alone raised £10,000.

Donations and promises amounting to more than half the appeal target flooded in as newspapers recorded the growing donations from September 1955 and the ABC launched a series of programs to maintain public interest.

The British Medical Journal reported: “The public response was immediate and unbelievably generous. Within two months of the appeal being launched £380,000 was subscribed and money is still steadily flowing in. Everyone in the community has cooperated. In town and country, mayors and town councillors, churches and banks, shops, trade unions and industrialists, doctors, nurses and medical students, Rotary clubs, masonic lodges and women’s institutes subscribed – there was no organisation that did not add its quota. Concerts and plays, bazaars and fetes, sports meetings and firework displays vied with each other, and all for the medical school. Individual contributions, large and small, swelled the total and there is now no doubt remaining that the original target will be quickly passed…”

Less than a year after the launch, the Appeal Committee proudly announced that it had commitments in excess of its target.

At the time the State’s population of 639,750 was served by 580 practising doctors. This represented one doctor for every 1,100. Today the ratio is one for every 482. Teaching at the Medical School began in 1957, the year in which the Raine Bequest was launched. This bequest alone of £1 million was nearly twice that raised by the public appeal and equates to about $45 million in today’s money (see From rags to riches – to charity) In that year both the first and final years of the course were taught. Sixteen students, who had done their first pre-medical year at Crawley and further studies in Adelaide, returned for their final year. By 1959 all years were catered for, and the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery were conferred for the first time at the end of 1959.

The headquarters of the Faculty of Medicine and teaching facilities for Pathology and Microbiology were accommodated at the old Royal Perth Hospital, adjacent to the new hospital. The Anatomy and Physiology departments began life in two large army huts in the grounds of the University, while a medical library took shape in the disused outpatient hall.

The University established eight new chairs – in Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Child Health, Pathology and Microbiology, Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry – and posts were advertised in the United Kingdom and Australia.

In 1958 the Perth Chest Hospital (renamed Sir Charles Gairdner in 1963) was opened and immediately designated a teaching hospital. In 1977 the enlarged medical complex became the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre.

“The establishment of such an array of chairs in such an atmosphere of lay and academic enthusiasm…must provide the professors who will be appointed an opportunity for co-operation and constructive development of the new school,” reported the British Medical Journal.

Australia, the journal noted, was a land of opportunity. “Western Australia considers it has as much if not more to offer …as any other State…It counts the establishment of the new medical school in Perth, the opportunities this will bring for undergraduate and postgraduate training, and the enhanced standards of medical care that must follow not least among the advantages which it will have to offer.”

Professor Stanley noted that the wide community involvement was unique in the founding of a medical school anywhere in the world.

“The coming of the ‘Founding Professors’ aroused a great deal of widespread interest and was hailed with warm enthusiasm by many sections of the community…” wrote the professor. “The School of Medicine has a special relationship with the Western Australian community. The School arose out of the dreams of a few, and these dreams were translated into reality by the donations of ordinary citizens. The School belongs to the public of Western Australia and I believe that, more than any other Faculty, and more than any other medical school in Australia, our School is cherished by Western Australians.”

Sources: UWA Archives; Campus at Crawley by Fred Alexander (UWA Press); The First Quarter Century (1957-1982), Editor: Neville Stanley (Faculty of Medicine); British Medical Journal, March 3, 1956.
From rags to riches – to charity

Mary Carter came to Australia with just £100 and turned it into a fortune that currently contributes $1.5 million to medical research each year, and has helped to shape the careers of outstanding scientists. The 50th anniversary of the Raine Medical Research Foundation turns the spotlight on the story of the woman who created UWA’s largest bequest for medical research.

In 1956 an amiable, larger-than-life Perth business identity, Joe Raine – one time master pearler and farmer – suffered a stroke that left him paralysed. Within months he died, leaving a distraught wife Mary who had known the happiest years of her extraordinary existence during 14 years of a late-in-life marriage.

One of 13 children, Mary Carter had come to Australia in 1900, with a sister Daisy and just £100. After working as barmaids in Queensland and Sydney, they sailed back to England, but Daisy was so seasick they disembarked at Fremantle. Once again, they took jobs as barmaids, living frugally and saving for the next leg of their voyage home.

On these tenuous beginnings were built the foundations of what would be Western Australia’s biggest bequest to medical research.

With thoughts of her homeland fading, Mary bought a Subiaco house – the first of many purchased with meagre savings, and rented to tenants. After a brief and unhappy marriage that took her to a Harvey farm, Mary returned to Perth and in 1915 bought the Bon Ton Café in William Street. As with other purchases, it prospered under her deft management.

More houses, shops and land were acquired during the property boom of the 1920s and the canny business woman ended up owning most of William Street, including her home and headquarters, the Wentworth Hotel.

In the 1940s, Mary met Joe Raine and they married in 1943, when she was 66 and he was 53.

However, the marriage that brought personal joy caused a family rift that lasted until her death.

When Joe suffered a stroke, Mary’s pleas for help to doctors led her to appreciate the need for research into diseases like arteriosclerosis. When Joe died in 1957, his wife knew of his intention to donate to the UWA Medical School appeal.

As sole beneficiary, Mary renounced her interest in Joe’s will in favour of the University. In establishing the Raine Medical Research Foundation, the University now held a half-interest in Mary’s properties, and the widow came to rely on the able guidance of the University Accountant, Roland Fletcher.

When Mary died, she left the bulk of an estate totalling nearly a million pounds to the Arnold Yeldham and Mary Raine Medical Research Foundation, with the income going “towards seeking, diagnosing and investigating the nature, origin and causes of diseases in human beings, with initial emphasis on arteriosclerosis and allied diseases, and the prevention, care, alleviation and combatting of such diseases”.

Dr Carl Georgeff, Mary’s personal physician, and a member of the committee that administered the Raine Foundation, recalled in a booklet The Story of Mary Raine: “To the public, in her latter days, she will be remembered as

“It is true to say that, if not today, or even tomorrow, certainly at some time in the future, each and every West Australian will benefit in some way from the generous legacy Mary Raine left to this State.”

Mary Raine’s biographer, Meg Sangster.

Above: Mary Carter and the Wentworth Hotel, William Street, Perth. Photos courtesy of the Raine Medical Research Foundation.
a tall, gaunt, impeccably dressed and groomed woman, sitting on a high chair behind the cash register in the lounge of the Wentworth Hotel.

“In the establishment of the Raine Research Foundation, Mary Raine saw what she called ‘a good business deal’. Her fortune could be used by generations of medical researchers to try to answer the problems that remained unanswered during her own lifetime.”

Dr Georgeff was the guiding hand behind the Raine Foundation Committee for more than 30 years, until he resigned in 1994.

The Raine Foundation is the leading non-government provider of medical research funds in Western Australia and has a unique position in the advancement of learning in this State. It has supported scores of major research projects, funded two Centres of Excellence, established numerous fellowships and scholarships, underwritten the visits of 165 international scientists and participated in major joint ventures. In monetary terms, the Foundation has grown from £1 million in 1957 to $33 million in 2007.

Many high-profile medical researchers such as WA Chief Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley, Professor Lawrie Beilin, Professor Trevor Redgrave, Professor Geoffrey Shellam, Professor Tim Davis and Professor Marcus Atlas have had their careers shaped by Raine grants.

The Foundation’s 2007 Priming Grants are currently supporting 15 outstanding young scientists from a range of disciplines.

When the Foundation celebrated its 50th anniversary at The University Club of Western Australia, many leading scientists attended the Raine Research Symposium chaired by Dr Robyn Williams, host of the ABC’s popular Science Show. Australian of the Year Professor Ian Frazer, who spent 20 years developing a vaccine for cervical cancer, delivered the oration.

When guests gathered at an anniversary celebration, there were toasts to the resourceful Londoner who stopped off in Fremantle and instead made a fortune that continues to change – and save – lives.

Meg Sangster, author of the Mary Raine biography *From Putney to Perth* wrote of her extraordinary legacy: “It is true to say that, if not today, or even tomorrow, certainly at some time in the future, each and every West Australian will benefit in some way from the generous legacy Mary Raine left to this State.”

“To the public, in her latter days, she will be remembered as a tall, gaunt, impeccably dressed and groomed woman, sitting on a high chair behind the cash register in the lounge of the Wentworth Hotel.”

Dr Carl Georgeff

The tradition of giving that characterised the birth of the School of Medicine continues today. When Professor Fiona Stanley, Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, launched the Foundation Professors’ Memorial Walkway to mark the 60th anniversary of the School of Dentistry and the 50th anniversary of the School of Medicine, she called for scholarships to support medical students undertaking a Bachelor of Medical Science degree which involves a year of medical research.

An appeal target has been set at $2 million for scholarships that honour each of UWA’s 11 Foundation Professors: Professor Gordon King, Professor Neville Stanley, Professor William Macdonald, Professor Eric Saint, Professor Cecil Kidd, Professor Cecil Lewis, Professor Mary Lockett, Professor Joseph Lugg, Professor Rolf ten Seldam, Professor Wilfred Simmonds and Professor David Sinclair. To enquire about the program or make a donation, please contact Fabienne Vonarburg on +61 8 6488 7222 or email: fabienne.vonarburg@uwa.edu.au.

General enquiries: raine@raine.uwa.edu.au or website: www.raine.uwa.edu.au.

Top: Mary Raine at the Wentworth Hotel (Photo courtesy of The West Australian). Above: Raine recipient Professor Fiona Wood, whose burns treatment helped many victims of the 2002 Bali bomb attacks.
Professor Susan Prescott, whose current research at UWA is helping to unravel the causes of allergic diseases in children, was inspired to become a doctor by an intrepid grandmother, Lady Monica Prescott – and a grandfather who, as UWA Vice-Chancellor, played a leading role in establishing the School of Medicine.

Monica Prescott came from a poor family but was determined to become a medical missionary in China. She won a scholarship reserved for a candidate who didn’t drink or smoke and was a regular church-goer – and later joked that she was probably the only eligible candidate. She eventually became one of few female doctors in the 1930s in Manchester, where she met a lecturer in physiology, Stanley Prescott. While Monica completed her studies, Stanley was appointed Professor of Physiology at Chee-Loo University Hospital.

“Monica left England in 1937, arriving in Hong Kong only days before war broke out in North China,” relates their granddaughter. “Stanley was stranded in the war zone. No ships would take him to meet her, so he travelled 1,300 miles at night in small Chinese junks. They married in Hong Kong but by the time they reached the hospital in North China it had been taken over by the invading Japanese.

“For the next three years Monica worked as a doctor, and Stanley as the medical superintendent. The Japanese paid well for medical treatment, and Monica and Stanley secretly used this to treat the Chinese. They saw some pretty horrific things and a lot of people they knew were shot.”

When Japan declared war and British subjects became the enemy, Monica and her son caught a cargo boat from Hong Kong to Sydney, dodging German raiders. Stanley followed, catching the last boat out. “It was so full he had to tie himself to the deck,” recounts his granddaughter. “Others were not so lucky, including Olympic runner Eric Liddell who worked for the same mission society and died in a Japanese prison camp.”

In 1953, Stanley Prescott was appointed Vice-Chancellor at UWA with a brief to establish the School of Medicine. His disciplinary interest in physiology was of less interest to the Senate than his varied administrative and practical experience. Only 42, his appeal to the Senate lay in his extraordinary combination of academic teaching experience, personal knowledge of Asian students, distinguished wartime service with the Royal Air Force and his acquaintance with Australian university conditions as Master of Ormond College at the University of Melbourne.
In Campus at Crawley, Fred Alexander relates a story that, when invited to WA for an interview and housed in St George’s College, Stanley ‘escaped’ for a private party with the Acting Vice-Chancellor.

“His absence having been undetected, his return in the early hours was barred by locked doors. It said much for the third Vice-Chancellor’s collegiate experience... and also for the lightness of his touch, that he was able to effect an entry by window and without disturbing his host – despite the fact that the morning sunshine revealed that he had stepped over a tray of twelve port glasses.”

While Stanley was involved with establishing the new clinical school at Royal Perth Hospital, Monica was active on the board of St Catherine’s College. Even after he retired in 1970, both remained involved in health and education. Professor Prescott was knighted in 1965. He died in 1978 and his wife survived him by 30 years, dying earlier this year.

Their granddaughter spent four years at St Catherine’s College, earning a place in the Prescott Wing. She credits the Raine Medical Foundation (which her grandfather helped to establish) with launching her own research career, and when she was promoted to Professor, the occasion was celebrated in the Prescott Room of the Vice-Chancellery.

“Like my grandparents, I feel that this University is my life. For me it is a living thing and I will continue to serve it in every way I can,” says Professor Prescott.
In pursuit of Good Medicine

In 1957 UWA had 13 medical graduates; this year more than 1,000 graduates and undergraduates are studying Medicine at UWA. As it marks its 50th anniversary, UWA’s impressive School of Medicine has much to celebrate, having produced a Nobel Prize winner, frontier researchers, passionate teachers and advocates, and outstanding graduates.

Over five decades, UWA’s School of Medicine has evolved from a fledgling centre scattered across makeshift accommodation to an expansive multi-faceted complex of state-of-the-art teaching and research, addressing every aspect of health care – from the triggers of disease in unborn babies to the pathologies of those in aged care facilities. And its research and learning links are global, providing exceptional opportunities for students and researchers embarking on careers that aim to improve health and relieve suffering.

Not surprisingly, the School has researchers who are producing life-changing devices and revolutionary treatments. From its research centres have come the means to prevent devastating neural tube damage; the ability to grow tiny inner-ear cells that could play a role in restoring hearing and balance; far-reaching medical advances in neuromuscular disorders; Nobel Prize-winning ulcer treatments; the world’s first soft artificial cornea; new biochemical tests to predict liver fibrosis – and the list goes on.

And along with the good medicine, there is the passionate advocacy by UWA leaders on behalf of those in need, the creation of databases unique in the world, and public health research that puts in place vital prevention and early intervention strategies.

One of UWA’s renowned health leaders, former Australian of the Year Professor Fiona Stanley, is a strong advocate of the efficacy of prevention. Sixteen years ago, her research team showed that a maternal diet rich in folic acid prevents neural tube defects in babies, including spina bifida. Professor Stanley helped to found the widely respected Telethon Institute for Child Health Research which brings together researchers with widely differing backgrounds. She also established the Australian Alliance for Children and Youth, a collaboration of researchers involved in enhancing child wellbeing.

In judging her the winner of the recent Bulletin’s Smart 100 Award for Medicine and Health, celebrated scientist, Sir Gustav Nossal, asked:

“Who else manages to have such a large group of Australian Aboriginal people as professionals? Who else combines epidemiology and public health aspects with first-class basic biomedical research...Who else integrates the molecular and cellular with the epidemiological and clinical in such an intelligent way?”

He might have added, who else has served as such an outstanding role model for so many researchers, including Professor Susan Prescott (see In grandmother’s medical footsteps), Professor Sandra Eades (Indigenous ‘trailblazers’) and Professor Lyle Palmer (Charting community health).

For Western Australians – who played such a vital role in its establishment – the familiar ‘face’ of the School is that of teaching hospitals and clinics where they benefit from the skills of surgeons, anaesthetists, physicians and clinicians, and where they see doctors-in-training being nurtured. But behind the clinical ‘face’ lies an array of laboratories where scientists – and students whose talents they help to shape – extend the reach of the School’s research.

In these diverse centres and research hubs, UWA advances its ability to tackle intractable diseases, to widen understanding of organs that still hold mysteries, and to develop better treatment outcomes. And the number of centres is constantly multiplying as we endeavour to meet the health challenges of the global village.

This year alone has seen the announcement of a $230 million super-centre, the Western Australian Institutes for Health, which will bring together 24 research organisations that carry out 95 per cent of medical research in WA. Funding these two state-of-the-art research hubs – a northern campus based at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, and a southern campus at the Fiona Stanley Hospital in Murdoch – marks the biggest investment in medical research in the history of Western Australia.

Three leading UWA researchers in pursuit of good medicine: (l-r) Professor Nigel Laing is exploring treatments for neuromuscular disorders, Associate Professor Karin Eidne’s research focuses on assisting women with reproductive problems, and Dr Mary-Anne Kedda is developing new ways to treat asthma. All are conducting their research at the nation’s ‘health hub’ – the WA Institutes for Medical Research (see The nation’s ‘health hub’).
Another boost to research into the genetic causes of major diseases came with the opening of the $20 million UWA Biomedical Research Facility at Shenton Park (a joint venture between UWA and the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research). Its innovative technologies and equipment will enable rapid identification and testing of genes involved in human disease. The Facility can cater for 500 researchers working with animals in the fields of medicine, microbiology, immunology, pharmacology, physiology, anatomy and human biology.

Also on the drawing board are the State’s first $10 million Clinical Trials Facility and a Centre of Excellence for research teaching and clinical care in occupational and environmental medicine.

UWA Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Robson, says that the State is now well placed to capitalise on UWA’s stellar medical researchers for the benefit of the community at large. Faculty Dean Professor Ian Puddey believes the investment of State and Federal funds in such facilities could see another Nobel Prize in Medicine being won in WA.

The Dean was among a party of medical leaders and researchers who journeyed to China recently to launch an initiative with the Zhejiang University School of Medicine, in WA's sister State.

Minister for Science, Premier Alan Carpenter, joined celebrations to mark the opening of the Co-operative Research and Development Centre for Biotherapeutics and Regenerative Medicine, a joint facility that enhances both UWA's engagement with China and the research and teaching objectives within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.

While the occasion opened the door for fruitful future collaborations, it also serves to internationally showcase the extraordinary breadth of research that makes this campus so attractive to medical students.

Providing insights into their research were some of the State’s most innovative scientists: WA’s Chief Scientist, UWA’s Professor Lyn Beazley, spoke about her work on the regeneration of damaged brain and nerves; Clinical Professor (and former Australian of the Year) Fiona Wood presented results from clinical trials with her ‘spray-on skin’ for burns victims; Professor George Yeoh, Associate Dean (Research), spoke of his work with liver progenitor cells that holds the potential for developing a bio-artificial liver for those in need of a transplant; Professor of Orthopaedic Research, Ming-Hao Zheng and Professor David Wood provided an overview of groundbreaking research in cartilage and tendon cell culture for repairing injured knees and shoulders; Adjunct Associate Professor Chooi-May Lai presented work from the Lions Eye Institute on gene therapy for eye disease; and Professor Peter Klinken, Director of the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research, updated his audience on gene targets for preventing the growth of cancer cells.

Professor Puddey said that the link with Zhejiang was an example of initiatives under way that enhance the University’s international reputation and its commitment to achieving international excellence.

UWA Medical student Joshua Vogel is currently taking a year out of formal studies to complete a Bachelor of Medical Science – and to serve as President of the 50-strong committee of the West Australian Medical Students’ Society which currently comprises 1,100 students. Apart from giving medical students ‘a voice’, the Society promotes sporting and charity functions, including the annual Scrubber Day and Bed Push events that raise thousands of dollars for local charities. This year, South African AIDS orphans, ear-screening programs in Indigenous communities and Get There programs (that help disabled children use public transport) will benefit. Another community service sees fifth year students on overseas electives donating used medical equipment to their host countries.

“You don’t want to spend six years of study without getting involved in these events. After all, a desire to ‘make a difference’ is what attracts us to Medicine,” says Joshua.
Speaking at a graduation ceremony early this year, the Dean recalled the remarkable community effort of State-wide fund raising that had been the starting point for the School.

“Hopefully, our 50th year graduates, in all their endeavours, will remember this original compact between the Medical School and the Western Australian community, making choices to ultimately serve across all areas of the State, but particularly remembering the rural communities that put an extraordinary effort towards the original fundraising, with the total amount per man, woman and child exceeding the results of any previous large-scale fund-raising seen in Australia.”

The shortage of rural doctors is very much in the news, and UWA is meeting the challenge by recruiting more students from rural backgrounds, offering generous scholarships, and encouraging students to experience rural medicine during their studies. About a quarter of the students training at the Rural Clinical School have a rural background (see Saluting those in rural practice).

Another significant area of achievement – in a year that has witnessed a litany of grim health statistics in Indigenous communities – is the admirable record of student retention at UWA’s Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health (CAMDH).

When established in 1996 – to increase recruitment, enhance the Aboriginal health curriculum and support community organisations and research into Aboriginal health – UWA had seen only two Aboriginal graduates in medicine.

The WAMSSS President says the biggest issue currently concerning students is the substantial increase in their numbers.

“WA will see a trebling of graduating doctors and we’re concerned about jobs, but also about the impact of this increase on the integrity of our clinical training, which continues after graduation. With so many students and fewer teachers, can the quality of clinical education be maintained – in the interests of patients and students?”

Another matter of concern is the Bonded Medical Places scheme, which binds medical students to an area of workforce need for six years later in their career, often in rural areas.

“There are multiple ways of addressing the shortage in rural areas, but the evidence indicates that incentives are more effective than bonded placements. This year, about 25 per cent of students will complete fifth year studies through Rural Clinical Schools and the students generally view this experience of rural practice as overwhelmingly positive. Positive rural experiences rather than contracts will best address the rural medical workforce crisis.”

Joshua’s current studies have made him a firm advocate of research opportunities for students.

“Medicine is evolving at an incredible rate, and it’s very exciting to be a part of it. You learn practical skills that serve you through your career and it’s a great way to sample a specialty before committing. You also get to understand the principles of gathering evidence, which is the key to practising evidence-based medicine. Best practice guidelines and patient outcomes only move forward with the work done behind the scenes with the research teams.”

UWA students, including Joshua, also participate in the Doctor Yes (Youth Education Sessions) program run by the Australian Medical Association (WA) Foundation. The program gives young people the opportunity to talk about sexual health, drugs and alcohol and mental health with medical students in a frank and informative environment. It has involved more than 30,000 high school students since it began a decade ago and has inspired other States to provide a similar service. The program was recently voted the Best Public Health Campaign at the AMA National Conference.
professionals back to the campus – along with many from overseas keen to learn new skills.

Fifty years on, the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences is supporting innovation in health education through CTEC. This state-of-the-art medical simulation centre offers a variety of accredited courses and specialist training for paramedics, nurses and allied health professionals as well as for medical practitioners from undergraduate to consultant level. Earlier this year, CTEC was recognised as leader in its field when named a Centre for Advanced Gastroenterology, one of only three in the world.

Since opening in April 2000, over 20,000 health professionals have been trained in CTEC’s interactive simulated hospital environment. This simulated training aims to increase patient safety by providing a safe setting in which to gain essential clinical, crisis management and communication skills before putting them into practice on patients.

CTEC, previously managed by an independent consortium, is now integrated with the Faculty’s Education Centre under Professor of Medical Education, Jeff Hamdorf. CTEC supports the Faculty’s advanced undergraduate skills training program by providing students with hands-on training in a simulated setting. “The aim is to produce graduates who are confident and who have practical skills that are transferable to the clinical setting,” said Professor Hamdorf.

Professor Ian Puddey, Dean of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, said CTEC is now set to play a major role in streamlining the transition from undergraduate to pre-vocational and vocational training. It will introduce innovative training methods to a new suite of postgraduate degrees, diplomas and masters programs to be developed with the prestige of the UWA stamp.

Professor Ian Puddey, Dean of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, said CTEC is now set to play a major role in streamlining the transition from undergraduate to pre-vocational and vocational training. It will introduce innovative training methods to a new suite of postgraduate degrees, diplomas and masters programs to be developed with the prestige of the UWA stamp.

But skills alone don’t define those who succeed in Medicine. Delivering the Occasional Address to medical graduates earlier this year, Emeritus Professor Lou Landau urged the junior doctors: “Continue to develop those inner qualities that will allow you to position yourself for career satisfaction and progression and for an important role in Reaching out to the region

Final year medical student Cherie Graziotti, currently at the Broome Rural Clinical School, recently won an MDA International-sponsored prize for a presentation of her work as a volunteer for the Institute for Indian Mother and Child (IIMC) in India. This was her second visit to the Institute which organises sponsorships for children and provides primary health care.

Cherie was based in Kolkata (Calcutta) and worked mainly in rural districts where mud villages were swathed with rice fields and swamps.

“In the clinics, we dressed wounds, treating infections and burns, did antenatal checks and vaccinations,” she recalls. “I spent a lot of time doing health checks in homes where children were sponsored by Australians through IIMC, treating or referring patients with ear and skin infections, worms and low weight. I put families in contact with health services that could treat relatives with tuberculosis and other diseases and negotiated ways to cover the costs of their medication in the future. I also looked at public health issues such as water, sewage and housing and arranged for several toilets to be built through sponsorship money.”

Cherie’s $1,000 Alan Charters Elective Prize was donated by her to a new centre for disabled children and a new maternity and health centre that IIMC is building.

“I feel passionate about health issues in the developing world and enjoy the challenges associated with Third World work,” says the UWA student. “I strongly encourage students to reach outside their familiar zone to explore the health needs of those in poorer countries. Even as a student, your skills can be very useful – and health work is a fantastic way to immerse yourself in another culture and learn about different ways of seeing the world.”

Cherie’s overseas elective has convinced her to specialise in paediatrics when she graduates.
your community. But a most important quality you must nurture is generosity…”

That generosity of spirit is already apparent in UWA’s young doctors – such as Cherie Grazioti (see Reaching out to the region) who recently won an MDA International-sponsored prize for a presentation of her experiences working as a volunteer for the Institute for Indian Mother and Child in India. It is also exemplified by leaders of the calibre of Professor Ian Constable, Director of the Lions Eye Institute, who has done much to hone the skills of visual scientists in the region.

The Institute is the home of UWA’s Centre for Ophthalmic and Visual Science (COVS).

Professor Constable is a much-honoured researcher who has overseen the world’s first artificial soft cornea move from the laboratory bench to a New York-listed company which manufactures the revolutionary lens. Apart from treating more than 50,000 patients a year, the Centre produces ground-breaking research.

Recently, with Professor Elizabeth Rakoczy, Professor Constable’s team has developed a gene therapy treatment for macular degeneration, the most common blinding condition in mature humans. The research is supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council and research bodies in the United States. The Institute is also on the brink of providing innovative solutions for diabetes-related eye disease and glaucoma.

“Our patients inspire our scientists to keep pushing the boundaries – it is the perfect impetus,” says the UWA professor. He could well be expressing the mantra of every member of UWA’s School of Medicine dedicated to producing good medicine.

Saluting those in rural practice

Country WA played an important part in the fund-raising that established UWA’s School of Medicine. Now medical students can complete part of their studies at a string of Rural Clinical Schools that are helping to tackle rural doctor shortages.

Addressing graduating medical students earlier this year, Emeritus Professor Lou Landau pointed out that Western Australia, after Siberia, is the second largest state or province in the world.

“It has special needs and special opportunities; consider how you can contribute to them,” he urged those embarking on medical careers in Australia’s largest state.

UWA is meeting the challenges of rural health by extending the reach of medical education through a string of Rural Clinical Schools catering for both students and practitioners. The Kalgoorlie headquarters of the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia (established last year with the University of Notre Dame) was recently officially opened by Prime Minister John Howard who saluted the young medical students and doctors who had found a passion to work in remote areas of Australia.

“They are committing themselves to a life that forsakes some of the comfortable constants of medical practice in the more heavily populated areas,” he observed.

“In doing so they are representing the finer aspects of their profession in a very impressive way.”

UWA has been addressing the needs of rural health since it created the WA Centre for Remote and Rural Medicine 17 years ago. The University opened its first Rural Clinical School in 2002.

“We have long recognised that supporting future and current country practitioners in study and professional development is crucial to the maintenance of a vibrant, sustainable rural medical workforce,” said UWA’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Robson, at the Kalgoorlie opening.

Professor Robson said that more than a quarter of students training at the School have a rural background, and generous scholarships aimed at rural and indigenous students were helping to tackle the rural doctor shortage.

RCS head Professor Campbell Murdoch pointed out that medical students were now appreciating the specific advantages of studying in rural areas that provided greater opportunities than overcrowded city hospitals.

School Coordinator, Dr Phil Reid, says that because of this, students are now keen to volunteer for rural placements. There is also evidence that students from rural areas are more likely to return to work in the regions. Dr Reid recently received a Churchill Fellowship that will take him to British Columbia, Labrador and Alaska to investigate the recruitment and retention of GP obstetricians in both urban and rural environments. The UWA graduate has been a GP obstetrician for 27 years.

Rural Clinical Schools now exist in Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Derby, Esperance, Geraldton, Narrogin and Port Hedland. You can visit the School’s website at: www.meddent.uwa.edu.au/go/rcs.

Simply the best!

Three UWA PhD students supervised by UWA’s Professor Ming-Hao Zheng and Associate Professor Jiake Xu won major awards at a recent Medical Research Week symposium that saw presentations from 90 young researchers.

Tamara Davey’s research focused on characterising the function of a novel bone protein which could benefit the treatment of osteoporosis. Yu Qian’s study provides solid evidence of the efficacy of a WA-developed artificial bone graft while Tak Cheng was studying the workings of osteoclasts (bone-eating cells). (Photo: Lindy Brophy)
Two Indigenous researchers have gained PhDs through UWA’s Faculty of Medical, Dental and Health Sciences and are making substantial contributions in the area of Aboriginal health.

In 2004 Dr Sandra Eades became Australia’s first Aboriginal doctor to be awarded a PhD at the University of Western Australia. Since then, she has strived to balance a research career path with the leadership demands of being one of the few senior Aboriginal people working in this area. In 2006, this high-profile researcher was named as Woman of the Year in New South Wales.

In 2003 Dr Eades was appointed a Senior Research Fellow at The Sax Institute, NSW, where she is working on projects to reduce smoking in pregnant women, to explore the health environments of urban Aboriginal children, and to develop tools to assist researchers working with communities, in addition to a large-scale capacity-building program to train new Aboriginal health researchers.

Dr Eades grew up in Mount Barker. In 1990, after completing her Medical Degree at the University of Newcastle, she returned to Western Australia to work at UWA’s Department of General Practice, and as a GP at the Perth Aboriginal Medical Service. From 1994 Dr Eades began to move towards health research, in particular the epidemiology of Indigenous child health in Australia.

In doing so, she faced many hurdles. “I had no professional role models that fitted with my natural sense of enquiry and curiosity about why things are the way they are,” she recalls. “Other hurdles included questions about why I would desert a clinical career for research when Aboriginal communities generally perceived there were few benefits for communities from research.”

However, she overcame these doubts and pays tribute to the outstanding researchers she encountered at UWA.

“I was lucky enough to meet Fiona Stanley, Anne Read and other world-class researchers in Perth and be mentored and trained by them,” she recalls. “My years in clinical practice with the Perth Aboriginal Medical Service were critical as well, because the practical experience and connections made within the community have had a major influence on my thinking and research practice.”

When she was awarded her PhD in 2004, Professor Fiona Stanley, Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, said that Dr Eades had provided a vital, detailed and multi-layered analysis of the state of health of many Aboriginal families in Perth.

“I know that it has been pivotal in raising awareness among Aboriginal families about improving the health of pregnant women and children,” said Professor Stanley.

Some 274 urban families were involved in Dr Eades’ study examining a range of factors contributing to poor birth
outcomes and health in the first 12 months of life. The study was the first to demonstrate a strong link between infant health outcomes and social factors such as maternal educational level and access to housing.

When delivering the 2006 Charles Perkins Memorial Oration last year, Dr Eades said that despite the grim statistics, she believed that small and incremental gains would eventually overcome health inequalities in the long term. She also highlighted the importance of integrated social action to benefit the health of any community.

Following in Dr Eades’ footsteps is UWA health lecturer Dr Julie Owen, a Nurrunga woman from South Australia, who recently became the second Indigenous PhD graduate from the Faculty – and the first Indigenous PhD graduate from UWA’s School of Population Health.

“It’s an outstanding achievement – she’s a trailblazer who has shown the way for what we hope will be other Indigenous PhD graduates,” said Professor D’Arcy Holman, who holds the Chair in Public Health.

Dr Owen’s thesis focused on the development of a culturally-sensitive program for delivering cardiovascular health education to Indigenous residents in the South West, with lay educators as community role models.

Graduating as a teacher in 1983, Dr Owen worked in the classroom for several years. She then did a Masters in Primary Health Care at Flinders University, later gaining experience as a health promotion manager in Darwin, Queensland and as a lecturer in Perth.

In 1999 she was awarded a School of Population Health scholarship and later a National Health and Medical Research Council scholarship. Additional support from the WA Heart Foundation helped to fund health promotion workshops, which formed the basis for her PhD.

Dr Owen developed a health promotion learning kit for Aboriginal lay educators to use in community-based workshops in rural towns. It is likely to be produced as a national resource. Lay educators use the kits to hold their own HeartAware sessions and provide information on diet, smoking, exercise and stress.

Currently Dr Owen is on a Fulbright Scholarship in the United States, looking at several Indian Health Promotion programs in different geographical locations to compare with Australian Aboriginal groups.

Professor Arun Dharmarajan, a researcher in UWA’s School of Anatomy and Human Biology, is working to halt the supply of oxygen and nutrients that allow tumours to spread.

“Tumours create their own network of blood vessels,” explains Professor Dharmarajan. “Signals sent from the tumour to nearby blood vessels cause new vessels to ‘sprout’ and supply blood that ‘feeds’ the tumour.”

A protein that inhibits blood vessel growth has been identified by the UWA researcher – in collaboration with Indian researcher Dr Suvro Chatterjee. It could play an important role in the treatment of diseases including cancer, arthritis and diabetic blindness. Because the protein is secreted by a body’s cells, it should cause few side effects.

There is wide interest in such therapies among pharmaceutical companies, and UWA’s Office of Industry and Innovation is assisting in commercialising the research.
When in 1999 Wesfarmers chairman Harry Perkins handed over a $5 million cheque at the launch of the WA Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR), the Institute’s Director and leading cancer researcher Professor Peter Klinken predicted that Perth could become the nation’s ‘health hub’ with the establishment of the $60 million centre.

Today this multi-disciplinary institute has succeeded in bringing together world-class scientists to collaborate on cancer, neuromuscular and heart disease, asthma and hormone research.

Professor Klinken says the Institute is an international leader in biomedical research and that the location of the specialists under one roof means that treatments can be developed more efficiently.

One example of WAIMR’s frontier research gives hope to people suffering from devastating muscle diseases. Professor Nigel Laing and Dr Kristen Nowak of the Laboratory for Molecular Genetics have discovered (in collaboration with European researchers) a number of children suffering from rare paralysing muscle diseases whose bodies have ‘switched on’ a gene usually turned off at birth. In doing so, they benefit from at least some muscle movement.

“Before birth, we all have skeletal and heart actin in our muscles but around the time of birth, we switch off the heart actin,” explains Professor Laing. “If we could find out how to switch the heart actin back on in the muscle we could use this to create new treatments for devastating muscle diseases. What is remarkable is that these children’s bodies have performed this ‘switching on’ process naturally, presumably to help counteract their condition which is caused by the complete absence of the crucial muscle protein, actin.”

UWA endocrinologist Peter Leedman and his team in the Laboratory for Cancer Medicine at the WA Institute for Medical Research have provisionally patented a novel gene that has the potential to shut down oestrogen in breast cancer cells and testosterone in prostate cancer cells.

Not initially identified when the human genome was sequenced, the gene was originally discovered by one of Professor Leedman’s honours students, Esme Hatchell, in a collaborative project with Professor Bert O’Malley from Baylor College of Medicine in Texas.

Professor Leedman, who is recognised internationally for his research, says that if his team can unravel the mystery of how the gene represses hormone action in cancer cells, so-called ‘smart’ drugs could be developed to home in on it. “The benefit is that ‘smart’ drugs should mean fewer nasty side effects as they target specific genes, not the whole body, as chemotherapy does,” explains the UWA researcher.

Patients are already making good use of the UWA Podiatry Clinic in Park Avenue, Crawley, which opened in March and provides clinical services and training for the University’s Bachelor of Podiatric Medicine students.

Under the supervision of academics and visiting podiatrists, students participate in clinical activity and the public benefits from reduced fees for a wide range of general podiatry services. It is no surprise that patients are already voting with their feet! For appointments, phone 6488 4522.

A grant from the Health Department has helped to establish the clinic which comprises 10 individual consulting bays, orthoses and gait analysis laboratories and support facilities. The clinic provides general podiatry care, foot assessment for children, treatment for sports injuries of the foot and ankle, diabetic wound management and minor surgery.

Diabetic and neuropathic patients will be among many who benefit from the equipment. Plantar pressure-measuring
encouragement a UWA student. Become a CAREER MENTOR. Apply at www.careermentorlink.uwa.edu.au

“...from someone else.” – George Matthew Adams

Encourage a UWA student. Become a CAREER MENTOR. Apply at www.careermentorlink.uwa.edu.au

equipment will be linked to video analysis equipment to provide clinically useful information, especially in the assessment and prevention of plantar ulcerations. The advanced technology has been made possible by an agreement between the Podiatric Medicine Unit and Perth-based Footwear Industries.

Based in the School of Surgery and Pathology, the four-year degree course is now in its second year, and is the first podiatry course in Australasia to be offered in a medical faculty.

**A world first**

Researchers at Perth’s Ear Science Institute Australia (ESIA) are the first to successfully isolate and grow inner ear cells that support the survival of cells controlling balance, movement and orientation. This medical breakthrough is an important step in developing solutions to diseases that induce vertigo and instability.

Professor Marcus Atlas, Director of the ESIA, says it is exciting news for the medical and scientific community around the world.

“Hearing loss and balance disorders continue to be major international health issues,” says Professor Atlas. “It is still very early days, but what has been achieved enables us to continue research in this field, which in the future could see the restoration of hearing.”

After asthma, chronic ear disease is the second most common reason for children being admitted to hospital. Almost 70 per cent of Aboriginal children suffer from recurrent chronic ear infection and to treat such children in remote WA, the Otolaryngology Department of UWA has developed a hearing project using telemedicine.

Software has been developed so that video otoscope images of the ear can be sent to ear specialists in Perth or regional centres who instruct healthcare workers on appropriate treatments.

Professor Atlas says that while there have been improvements, much still needs to be done to improve services for children in remote areas.

UWA is one of only five universities nationally to offer audiology training and since the course began in 2000 it has produced nearly half of the audiologists currently practising in WA. UWA offers a Masters degree in Clinical Audiology (the clinical science involving the prevention, assessment and rehabilitation of hearing loss and associated communication disorders). The course runs every two years, with the next intake being in 2008.

**Advancing heart health**

Earlier this year five UWA medical researchers were presented with National Heart Foundation of Australia research awards. All have been exploring the causes and treatments of heart disease, which remains Australia’s biggest killer and its greatest medical challenge.

Pictured below are (left to right) Professor Peter Thompson, a distinguished clinician and researcher who has been involved with the Foundation for more than 30 years, Dr Dominic Ng, Dr David Burgner, Dr Graeme Polglase and Ms Helena Viola. Each received research funding for their work and Dr Ng also received the Bendat Family Foundation Perpetual Scholarship to advance his research into the identification of potential key proteins involved in the progression of heart disease.

“In all of our lives and most of them have come about through encouragement from someone else.” – George Matthew Adams

Encourage a UWA student. Become a CAREER MENTOR. Apply at www.careermentorlink.uwa.edu.au
France Apartments & Cars

Perth owned French Holiday Houses and affordable new French Cars. For example:

- 30 days Car for 2 ___________ $1300.00
- 28 days Apartment for 2 _______ $2100.00

Other countries, other options.

Contact Pauline Ollivier
Phone: (08) 9367 4074  Mobile: 0428 674 074
Email: PaulineO@bigpond.net.au
Web: www.franceapartmentsandcars.com.au
In association with Travel Success – T.A.L. No. 9TA 1234

AUTHORS!
DO YOU HAVE A BOOK TO PUBLISH?

INDEPENDENT UK PUBLISHER NOW SEEKING NEW MANUSCRIPTS IN ALL SUBJECTS.
FOR A FREE APPRAISAL PLEASE SEND YOUR WORK TO

MELROSE BOOKS

( REF: UV ) ST THOMAS’ PLACE, ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.
CB7 4GG. UNITED KINGDOM.

PHONE: +44 (0) 1353 646 608  FAX: +44 (0) 1353 646 602
EMAIL: info@melrosebooks.co.uk  WEB: www.melrosebooks.co.uk

UWA Co-op Bookshop

October Sale
Mon 1st - Wed 31st

Special Prices on Fiction and Reference books
Mon-Fri
8.45am – 5.30pm
Sat
10.00am – 4.00pm

University Co-op Bookshop Ltd
The University of Western Australia, Guild Village
Hackett Drive (Hackett Entry 2), Crawley
Phone (08) 6488 2069, Fax (08) 6488 1007
Email uwa@coop-bookshop.com.au
From the steely blue of the Southern Ocean to the mangrove-fringed waters of the tropical north, the oceans that girdle Australia have a profound effect on climate and rainfall – and on the lives of the majority of Australians who live on the coast. With the longest coastline of any state and marine waters that support major industries, from pearling to shipbuilding to offshore gas and petroleum developments, Western Australia can lay claim to the title, ‘the Marine State’.

Our coastline also boasts assets of international importance – mudflats that annually accommodate thousands of migrating northern hemisphere birds, the spectacular coral gardens of Ningaloo Marine Park and a World Heritage-listed icon, Shark Bay.

Indigenous Australians were sustained by Shark Bay’s marine environment long before the pioneer settlers of the Swan River Colony came in search of the Bay’s creamy pearls, its aromatic sandalwood and guano. And they quickly discovered that you could effortlessly feed a family on the snapper, mullet and tuna that refrigerated vessels would later carry to the capital city and beyond.

Today this fishery and others along the west coast are a valuable source of export dollars and World Heritage status assures a steady stream of tourism dollars, as travellers and researchers converge on a marine and coastal destination like no other.

But how do we protect these pristine marine wonderlands that are nurseries for fish stock when our coastline is facing unprecedented development, and the demands of stakeholders as diverse as tour leaders of snorkelling backpackers from Japan to oil and gas companies charting offshore developments to feed the world’s insatiable demand for energy? How do we facilitate the exploitation of the chemical compounds contained within sponges that divers admire – and, that scientists suspect, could potentially also offer cures to some diseases? And how do we gauge the
possible effects of climate change on the Leeuwin Current, that unique swathe of southward-flowing warm water that has such a beneficial impact on our climate, agriculture and the diversity of our fish stocks?

Ask Dr Steve Blake, Chief Executive Officer of the newly-launched UWA-based Western Australian Marine Science Institution, and he’ll give you a straight and simple answer: “Good science, good decisions, good management.”

The Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI) aims to be the provider of the good science, bringing together 14 State, national and industry organisations with researchers and students from local universities. Together they will undertake the frontier strategic science necessary to meet the challenges of today and to set a pathway for the future.

When WAMSI was launched recently by WA Premier Alan Carpenter in the presence of scientific luminaries, industry leaders and passionate conservationists – including that great champion of the marine environment, author Tim Winton – there was an upbeat atmosphere. Everyone, it seems, is passionate about protecting our coastline.

“WA is known for its fantastic lifestyle and our marine environment is a large part of this drawcard,” said the Premier. “We’re committed to ensuring that our marine and coastal biodiversity and pristine environment are around for future generations. Climate change, population growth and industrial, social and econ-omic development are putting pressure on our marine ecosystems in a way never before experienced.

“What we need is the science and knowledge to preserve our abundant marine life. WAMSI will help establish WA as a world-leader in marine science, education and marine resource management. Nowhere else in Australia has this kind of forward thinking, collaborative approach to marine issues occurred, and the long-term benefits to WA will be immense.”

UWA Premier (and UWA graduate) Alan Carpenter

Sponges at Geographe Bay (Photo: Gary Kendrick).

“What we need is the science and knowledge to preserve our abundant marine life. WAMSI will help establish WA as a world-leader in marine science, education and marine resource management. Nowhere else in Australia has this kind of forward thinking, collaborative approach to marine issues occurred, and the long-term benefits to WA will be immense.”

UWA Premier (and UWA graduate) Alan Carpenter

and BHP Billiton Petroleum, the two industry foundation collaborators.

WAMSI’s reach will be impressive – investigating the challenges posed by climate change and undertaking the strategic scientific research for the conservation of marine icons such as Ningaloo Reef and Shark Bay. It will prospect the marine environment for biological compounds that have potential uses in agriculture, medicine or the environment. It will work to ensure that our fisheries remain sustainable, exploring ways of reducing the by-catch of commercial fishing and introducing flexible harvest regimes that work in harmony with the natural environment. It will advance our understanding of ocean conditions in support of offshore and coastal engineering.

“Western Australia has some of the last true coastal and marine wilderness areas left in Australia, so we have to look at our national and international responsibilities in this regard. We have to start to produce broad-based regional environmental studies involving all the stakeholders that will help us to understand and monitor these special areas for future generations. Shark Bay, with its healthy dugong population and vast seagrass meadows, is World Heritage-listed, but the amount of research funding that goes into it probably is out of proportion with its status as a natural icon,” says Dr Blake.

“WAMSI is not a lobby group. We are politically agnostic. What we do do is to provide State or Federal Governments and industry bodies with the findings of large impartial scientific research projects, using the best teams of scientists available. It’s then up to the stakeholders to make decisions in the light of this information. I believe that if we get the broad-based studies we need in place now, the future is bright. If we don’t, we will be left with less-informed policy and management decisions, rather than management based on the agreed, defensible scientific data.”

A keen supporter of WAMSI is UWA’s Professor Lyn Beazley, the Government’s Chief Scientist, and Dr Blake is hopeful that she’ll continue to encourage the adoption within the WA State Government of the sort of legislation that Queensland and the Northern Territory have in relation to bio-prospecting.

“At present WA is missing out on the R&D investment because major drug companies and smaller biotech companies are not going to proceed with research and commercialisation until legislation covering extraction and
benefit-sharing is bedded down and provides them with some investment certainty,” says Dr Blake.

To launch the Institute’s research, six interlinking research programs were identified, and top-up scholarships were awarded to eight PhD students. The foundation PhD studies include a focus on the Leeuwin Current, fisheries management in the Peel-Harvey region, the use of acoustic techniques for assessing fish aggregations and the mapping of sediments at Ningaloo Reef.

At UWA, PhD student Ben Fitzpatrick is studying the impacts of recreational fishing on ecosystems (supervised by Dr Euan Harvey), David Rivers is exploring seagrass dynamics (supervised by Professor Di Walker) while Abbey McCartney is looking at the Ningaloo marine environment from a social science perspective (supervised by Associate Professor Michael Burton).

“Capacity building is one of WAMSI’s priorities,” says Dr Blake. “We want primary school kids getting interested in marine science at an early stage; we want secondary students maintaining that interest and aspiring to undergraduate studies at one of the universities involved in WAMSI. And later, we want them to try for one of the PhD scholarships we are offering on their road to becoming professional marine researchers.

“In a way we’ll be matchmakers of sorts. If a student wants to study seagrasses, we’ll explore the opportunities within WAMSI projects, and decide who might supervise and what postdoctoral teams can assist in terms of developing a critical mass of research effort. WAMSI doesn’t offer courses per se, the universities do that, so to get one of our scholarships you need to already be enrolled in a partner university.”

It was Australia’s rich and relatively unexplored marine environment that attracted Steve Blake from the United Kingdom as a young graduate student in 1987 after gaining First Class Honours from Edinburgh University. Following completion of his PhD at James Cook University (JCU) in Queensland, he took up an ARC postdoctoral fellowship at the Australian National University and subsequently went on to work for the Department of Environment and other natural resource agencies in the Federal Government.

Dr Blake has always appreciated the multi-disciplinary nature of marine science that was acknowledged through the establishment of WAMSI.

“My PhD involved research for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Authority in the Whitsunday Islands region of the Central Great Barrier Reef,” he recalls, “and was probably one of the first marine science theses in Australia characterised as broad-based environmental rather than in a single pure science discipline. These days nobody would think that was anything special or unique, of course.

“It was a great place to study natural versus anthropogenic effects on coral reefs, and I got to work with the AIMS and JCU marine scientists which was a thrill.

“Whereas most marine scientists like to work on the outer GBR in clear waters – and who can blame them – I took water samples and set up instruments close to shore in turbid waters, measuring the impacts of sediments and nutrients from river discharges after major cyclonic storm events, dredging activities and sewerage outfalls. This work spanned several scientific disciplines. Most marine science issues are multi-faceted, with information coming from physics, maths, Earth sciences, biological and chemical sciences.”

At ANU he moved into the relatively uncharted territory of using stable isotopes and other geochemical tracers to distinguish between natural and man-made events and impacts. He was also involved in using satellites, airborne multi-spectral scanners, developing underwater light meters and customising instruments for satellite and scanner sea-truthing.

He also led research expeditions for Cambridge University and ANU to one of the remotest places on Earth in the central south Pacific that unearthed the world’s oldest datable fossil corals exposed on a raised coral atoll – some 840,000 years old; the previous record being around 220,000 years.

This work relates to historical climate change as it extends the datable chronology back further in time and Dr Blake says it highlights one of the elements lacking in the quest to understand how the world’s climate is changing.

“We are asked to talk knowledgeably about climate change impacts, yet there has been very little long-term monitoring of marine environments around Australia, so very few marine science benchmarks have been established for future comparison,” says Dr Blake.

“One of the priorities of WAMSI is to do strategic research. We have an initial allocation of five years. The portfolio of research projects that we have got underway and planned is the largest that has ever been undertaken in Australia in a true multi-disciplinary inter-institutional format. And the governance model that WAMSI has put in place is also a first. At the end of the day, it is the governance that is the key because it’s all about building the most qualified project teams, plus trust and cooperation between parties, whether they come from a state, federal, university or industry background. It means we have the best and most experienced project teams working on the key issues of the day.”

The Institution is located in UWA’s School of Plant Biology, which also accommodates AIMS’ WA Office. For more information, visit the website: www.wamsi.org.au.
“Get set for FIREWORKS,” ran the headline in *Australian Doctor*, when the magazine reported that UWA graduate and Perth GP Dr Rosanna Capolingua had secured an “upset victory” in this year’s Australian Medical Association (AMA) presidential election.

It was assumed that Sydney psychiatrist Dr Choong-Siew Yong, AMA Vice-President for the past two years, was all but guaranteed the presidency. But that was before the widely respected Dr Capolingua announced her candidacy and – despite the comparatively small number of AMA members in her home state – was elected to head one of the nation’s most effective lobby groups.

The medical media saw Dr Yong as the quiet achiever and safe negotiator; the Western Australian doctor as the straight talker who would “look governments in the eye and tell them when enough is enough!”

The achievement for the former President of AMA WA and member of the Federal Council brought immediate applause from UWA graduate and current State President, Dr Geoff Dobb, who said that Dr Capolingua’s experience and ethical standards would ensure that the community received a high standard of medical services.

Dr Capolingua insists that health has not enjoyed sufficient prominence on the Federal election agenda. “It’s been the environment, industrial relations and a bit of education,” she says. “We need to re-establish health on the agenda and make sure that no government, whichever it is, jeopardises patient care.”

Living up to her reputation for straight talking, Dr Capolingua has been harsh in her criticism of a lack of hospital beds in WA and of what she describes as the current “tent land” at public hospitals. She wants to see a new children’s hospital in Perth, queries just when the Fiona Stanley Hospital will finally open, and demands that the State Government reinvest in Royal Perth Hospital, not close it down at a time of increasing demand.

The UWA graduate is also highly critical of the fact that during a period of protracted national economic prosperity, health remains under-funded.

“It’s insane, isn’t it? With such a buoyant economy – we’re reminded about it all the time – it would be timely to invest in infrastructure and hospitals, adding beds, refurbishing...” I don’t want increased funding that’s going to be used to create layers of bureaucratic implementation in States, or be spent on plans or research or reviews. I want real dollars to go to real service providers and service provision and buildings and infrastructure.”

So, in the context of putting health on the agenda for the Federal election, is she just what the doctor ordered? She certainly believes that the looming election is a good time to bring Indigenous health issues to the forefront of public debate, and is appalled by statistics that indicate that Indigenous Australians have a life expectancy 17 years shorter than other Australians.

“We need to be talking to Indigenous people, particularly in the health sector, understanding what it is they believe they need, working at community level, involving them in taking ownership of the way that they live.
“So it’s about lifestyle as well as access to healthcare, and really making some grassroots changes. And to change life expectancy, you need to start with Indigenous women before they even fall pregnant and the babe’s in utero.”

Dr Capolingua also wants increased funding and placements for doctor training.

“By 2012 we will have a doubling in the number of our medical graduates in Australia. They are at last on their way but it’s going to take a while from that time to train them into specialties. We have to ensure we have valid, good training positions for them. We must secure intern posts and we have a responsibility to increase our capacity to train our young doctors. The standard of internship and pre-vocational years must remain high, with quality rotations that build on their University study. We have an obligation to provide expanded, funded vocational training using both the public and private sector.”

As she watched daughter Cassandra go through medical training at UWA, Dr Capolingua saw parallels with her own training. Now seeing Lauren in fourth year studies, she appreciates the challenges presented by the largest ever cohort of UWA medical students.

“This is going to be a big issue,” she says. “There will be greater demands on the students – to commit, to throw themselves into it, to go those extra yards so that they get that learning they need from consultants, registrars, residents and interns. The younger doctors will carry a huge responsibility for training those beneath them because the pressure will travel all the way down the line. So we have to expand manpower so that students get sufficient teaching, and teachers continue to want to teach. We need to think broadly and more laterally about how to sustain the system.”

Rosanna Capolingua says she can’t remember a time when she didn’t want to be a doctor. The daughter of hard-working Sicilian migrants, she and her siblings were the first generation of the family to attend university. She did two years of Science at UWA before going into third year Medicine. During her fifth year she married and during her sixth, she had her first child, Cassandra, 10 weeks before final exams.

“When you are young, you take these things in your stride,” she said.

Will she be tempted to follow the example of Federal Defence Minister Brendan Nelson (a former GP) who moved into politics from the AMA’s national presidency?

Dr Capolingua says she is focussing on activities associated with the presidency which involve travelling to AMA headquarters in Canberra, while also running her Floreat practice.

“I am very busy right now, and I try to be organised,” says the graduate who now speaks for 50,000 doctors around Australia. “When I have time to myself, I enjoy simple things: the warmth of the sun, being with friends and family, good wine and cooking. Sometimes just being alone and having space in your mind – when no one is demanding anything of you – that is all I need!”

Below: All in the family: Dr Capolingua with children, Dr Cassandra Host (centre) and medical students Lauren and Ben (Photo: The West Australian).
Genetically modified – no worries

Noel Fitzpatrick will give the keynote address at Convocation’s 50th Anniversary Luncheon. He talks to Rita Clarke about his career in the business of agriculture.

Noel Fitzpatrick was young, just 42, the day the call came through which was to eventually promote him to Director of the WA Department of Agriculture. As he put the phone down, his wife rang to say he should come home as quickly as possible as she was about to have the baby. He tried to discuss his news with her in the car on the way to the hospital, but “she wasn’t very interested,” he remembers, with a wry smile.

When, at 39, he was appointed Deputy Director, the news was received with more interest, but also wryly, by his colleagues, one of whom told him that he always knew Noel would become Deputy Director and then Director one day, but “well, not quite so early”.

But “early” was something Noel himself was used to, having been born into a farming family in Narembeen. As a child he had many early-morning jobs to attend to before driving six miles in the sulky with his sister (by themselves) to school. He even remembers being glad he broke his arm because his sister then had to milk the cow. “I went to a school with 11 students and one teacher, a woman about 22. I didn’t start school until I was six, and she helped me do grades five and six in one year so I could sit for a scholarship.”

After turning twelve, he won a scholarship to Northam Senior High and took seven subjects (including three maths and three sciences) in his leaving year. “The headmaster thought I was the pits and a cultural retard, because I was only interested in anything mathematical or scientific.” He laughs, and puts it down to genes. His grandfather and father were “outstanding mathematicians” although his father left home at 13 after running away three times. When the local policeman rang Noel’s grandfather to say his son had found a steady job and suggested he be allowed to stay away this time, his grandfather agreed, but said his son was never to darken his doorstep again.

Noel did not, consequently, ever meet his paternal grandfather, but those genes obviously fired his existence. He gained a BSc (Agric) (1951) and an MSc (Agric) (1957) from UWA. He went on to become a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science (1987), the Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering (1993), and the Australian Institute of Management (1993), and was made a Member of the Order of Australia (1991). He was awarded the Medal of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science (1976), the Farrer Memorial Medal (1995), and the Centenary Medal (2003).

His university years were spent “enriched by fellow students, including many ex-servicemen”. There were about 30 agriculture students in his year. “I was lucky to have Professor Underwood – he was outstanding, Reg Moir who was young then and lectured us in all sorts of things, and Professor Ross for physics, who was pretty eccentric and had a really icy wit.” He played any sport he could get his hands on – cricket, tennis, football, rugby, hockey. In the holidays he worked as a weighbridge officer at the Cooperative Bulk Handling Stores, weighing trucks, doing the books and signing warrants.

After university, he started as a Plant Research Officer in the Department of Agriculture, and worked his way up through the Scientific Liaison Department, to become Deputy Director (1969-1971). “There were loads of problems and lots of experimental work going on to provide a sound scientific base for development of the sandy surfaced soils of the wheatbelt and the forest country of the higher rainfall districts. We went all over the agricultural areas of the State, trekking across sand plains and staying at remote locations or the available hotels. There was a lot of unwritten and very successful research work done by a limited number of people, which allowed millions of acres of land to be opened up for farming.” He also, over several decades from 1960, experienced what he was trying to preach, by developing his own 1,200 ha farm in Esperance. He sold it fully developed.

There, then, in 1971, was young Noel, fatherhood notwithstanding, faced with overseeing the challenges of the whole State’s burgeoning agricultural industries. He was to remain in charge until 1984.
“It was during this time that all the extensive work was accomplished, which established the present system of farming. It was fortunate that we were in a time of considerable progress,” he adds, “and that I had a dedicated, if small, group of people in the department.” The department also became involved in projects overseas, working in places like Iraq, Thailand, Nigeria and Libya, where Libyan farmers were helped to develop their land using WA legumes and plant varieties.

Noel went on to become Deputy Secretary of the Department of Primary Industry and Energy (1984-1988), President of the Murray Darling Basin Commission (1988-1994), a Member of the Board of Rural Traders Company (1997-1999) and Chairman of Voicenet Australia Ltd. (1995-2000). He has had numerous statutory appointments, sat on Commonwealth and State committees, research advisory and educational committees, councils and societies. He has been a consultant on major review boards, including the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Farm Management (1995). Fittingly, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Royal Agricultural Society in 2006.

Retired, but not idle, Noel has just finished making his fifth desk for his fifth grandson. Years back, he made the cot for his own five children and several pieces of furniture. He works with imported Nyatoh wood, (“rather like cedar”) and is at the moment busy making the laundry cupboards for a house his daughter is converting. His carpentry skills have been picked up along the way, although he’s always been handy with his hands, he says. Since his maternal grandfather was a plumber, you can probably put that talent down to those lucky ancestral genes as well.

The 50th Anniversary Luncheon will take place on 18 November 2007. Contact: Juanita Perez Scott, Tel: +61 8 6488 3006; email: convocation@uwa.edu.au.

50th Anniversary Luncheon
Sunday, 18th November 2007

Coming soon – Convocation’s famous Annual 50th Reunion Luncheon, to be held in Winthrop Hall on Sunday 18 November 2007. This year the guest speaker will be fellow graduate, Mr Noel Fitzpatrick AM, who was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Royal Agricultural Society in 2006. Join us and make this milestone celebration of your student days at The University of Western Australia an enjoyable and memorable occasion. Graduates who have already celebrated their 50th Anniversary with us, or those who were unable to attend earlier functions, are also invited.

Where are they?
We’ve lost contact with a few graduates, whose names are listed below (maiden names in brackets). If you have an idea of their whereabouts, could you please let us know.

Graduates Coordinator Juanita Perez Scott (+61 8 6488 3006) is the person to contact if you have information.

There couldn’t have been a much better outcome to Esther Ooi’s recent trip to the Congress of the European Atherosclerosis Society (EAS) in Finland. Except she would have liked to have seen snow, and have had more time for sightseeing. “I love architecture and buildings and I did manage to see a beautiful Lutheran church. It was really bright weather, not too chilly and I walked through the markets where you could buy gorgeous big, fresh salmon from the stalls, and dark chocolate. I brought back lots of chocolate to share with my family,” she says, laughing. “It’s a bit sweeter than ours.”

She wasn’t, of course, in Helsinki as a tourist but to share scientific research with her other family of international peers. And that too was sweet, for when she presented posters of her research work to the Congress gathering, she did so with such accomplishment they awarded her one of five Young Investigators’ Awards. There were 2-3,000 presentations. Thirty contenders for the Young Investigators’ Award were selected initially and then 15 were short-listed before five winners were chosen. To win she was obliged to front the audience and explain her research, her methods and her findings and conclude with an outline of the ramifications and benefits of her discoveries. Then she fielded questions.

Esther submitted two presentations to the Congress. The first outlined findings of her investigation into the effects of two doses of rosuvastatin (10 mg/day and 40 mg/day), a cholesterol-lowering drug, on the metabolism of lipoproteins (cholesterol-carrying complexes), that are associated with the development of cardiovascular disease. The second presentation highlighted findings on the effects of the same drug, rosuvastatin, on the metabolism of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the good cholesterol in the lipoprotein system. “It is important to identify the mechanisms that regulate lipoprotein metabolism as it serves as a platform for developing future therapies.”

Esther is passionate about the application of a systems biology approach, which is an integrated method to study the behavior and function of systems, to better understand the effects of various drugs on lipoprotein metabolism and how this may translate to better cardiovascular outcomes. As she points out, heart disease is looming as a huge problem for an increasingly obese Australian population, and she believes that research is one of the tools, in addition to generating public awareness, to help overcome it. “The EAS Congress was a wonderful opportunity to hear and learn from leaders in my field and to be able to talk with colleagues about the common issues and methodologies of clinical studies. The knowledge acquired can then be brought home.

Young Investigators’ Awards

As a consequence of a Convocation Postgraduate Research Travel Award, Esther Ooi was able to attend a congress in Helsinki in June this year. She talks to Rita Clarke about the success of her presentation.

Participating and winning the Young Investigators’ Award was an exceptional bonus. The experience simply allows you to mature in thinking and perception and makes you want to progress even more in academic research.

Esther Ooi
The University of Western Australia
Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association

Annual Elections

• ELECTION OF WARDEN AND DEPUTY WARDEN

• ELECTION OF EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF
CONVOCATION, THE UWA GRADUATES ASSOCIATION

Application forms are now available for the above positions.

Dr Suzanne Baker will complete her one-year term as Warden of Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association, in March 2008.

Mr Simon Dawkins will complete his one-year term as Deputy Warden of Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association, in March 2008.

Eight members of the Council of Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association, will complete terms in March 2008.

Please consider nominating for one of these positions. Nomination forms for all positions are now available from Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association. Please telephone Juanita Perez Scott, the Convocation Officer on +61 8 6488 3006, or email to Convocation@uwa.edu.au including your postal address.

The closing date for nominations for all positions is 5.00pm, Friday, 11 January 2008.

Applications received after this date will be invalid.

The University of Western Australia invites all graduates and other members of Convocation to attend the FIRST ORDINARY MEETING of Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association which will be held in UNIVERSITY CLUB on Friday 21 March 2008 at 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start.
1940s

- John Jefferys (BSc(Hons) 1947; DSc 1962) and his wife, Charmaine Jefferys (nee Candy) (BSc 1949) have lived in Colorado, Hawaii and most recently Tucson, Arizona. John retired a few years ago from a career in astrophysical research. He now spends his time painting in oils, watercolours and pastels mainly working on landscapes. They have three children and five grandchildren.

1950s

- Neville Permezel (BSc(Hons) 1953) is a retired biochemist and spent most of his career in Montreal, Canada. He returned to Australia and now lives in Mangerton, NSW. Former classmates can contact him at nevperm66@hotmail.com.

1960s

- John (Terry) Allen (BA 1967) and his wife have embarked on a sea-change, moving from North Beach, Perth to Denmark, WA. Terry, a retired teacher, writes that they will give it four seasons and hope that it works out because at this stage they are not anxious to shift again!

1970s

- Tony Ruse (BCom 1970) writes that he and his wife have purchased a property on Scottsdale Road, Denmark. They are producing wine under the label Silverstream Wines, and varieties include chardonnay, merlot and cabernet franc rose. Former classmates can contact Tony at alruse@optusnet.com.au or visit the web site www.silverstreamwines.com.

1980s

- Pauline Bance (BA 1971; DipEd 1975; BEd 1978; MEd 1982) completed a Doctor of Teaching degree from Charles Darwin University. She continues to teach at Hong Kong International School and writes for the South China Morning Post. Her doctoral thesis, entitled Alphabet Headaches, examined the huge challenges faced by Hong Kong’s brisected learners of English, who are rarely taught the skills of sounding out unknown English words. Pauline made a return visit to the Cocos Islands in 2004, as guest at the territory’s celebration of 20 years of political integration with the Commonwealth of Australia.

1990s

- Peter Le Rossignol (MPE 1984) writes that he is helping students of Human Movement gain practical experience in exercise rehabilitation, corporate health and sports science. He is also on the Australian Academy of Exercise and Sports Science committee, which is developing knowledge, skills and competencies required for the new exercise physiologist program at the Queensland University of Technology. Former classmates can contact Peter at p.lerossignol@qut.edu.au.

- Gerard Aroozoo (BE 1985) and Angela Aroozoo (nee Wong) (BJuris 1986; LLB 1987) have moved to Lagos, Nigeria, on an expatriate assignment with ExxonMobil. Angela has taken up the position of International Contracts and Project Manager with the company.

- Janet Pritchard (MSc 1988) retired in 2000 from lecturing in the Department of Physiology, University of Melbourne. She maintained her clinical practice in the Metabolic Clinic, Royal Melbourne Hospital, until late 2006. Janet is now fully retired and writes that she enjoys travelling, painting and other hobbies.

1940s

- Marion Milton (MED 1985; PhD 1990) has left academe and recently opened Lumiere Gallery in Cottesloe. She has had a long involvement with the arts community, first as a school art and craft teacher in the 1970s and later developing her skills in photography. Marion took early retirement from her position as a Senior Lecturer at Edith Cowan University and that has enabled her to return to creative ventures. The gallery hosts monthly exhibitions of art by both established and upcoming artists. She welcomes UWA graduates and can assist in sourcing art works. Marion can be contacted at mari@lumieregallery.com.au.

- William Witham (BSc(Hons) 1990) has been living in Esperance since 2002 and regularly commutes to Perth where he is involved in three exploration companies.

- Judith Cousins (MEd 1991) retired as Senior Lecturer in Science Education at Edith Cowan University in 2006. She enjoys playing badminton, travelling, reading and being with her grandchildren.

- Fiona Smith (BSc 1993) moved to London with her husband in 2006 after working in New Zealand for the past five years. She is now Human Resources Manager for an international energy trading company. Former classmates can contact her at flundies@btinternet.com.

- Kuan Moon Tuen (BE(Hons) 1993) has been working in Jakarta for the past four years as Director of Commerce for Telkomsel, Indonesia’s largest mobile telecommunications operator.

- Peter Krozowski (BSc(Hons) 1977) has retired after spending the last 35 years working in medical research. He spent most of his working career at the Baker Heart Research Institute, where he held the position of Principal Research Fellow of the NHMRC and as Associate Professor at Monash University. After a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in France in the early 1980s, he worked as a molecular biologist in the area of steroid action in hypertension. Zig has published over 160 scientific papers on the subject. Former classmates can contact him at zkroxowski@optusnet.com.au.
EPIC CYCLE RIDE

If you thought the three-week Tour de France was a severe test of strength, courage and endurance, think about the nine-and-a-half month, 25,000 km cycling marathon of UWA graduate Kate Leeming.

From May 2004 to February 2005, Kate fought dehydration, severe exhaustion, relentless heat, sand and corrugations in an epic round-Australia bicycle ride that led her through some of the most remote outback tracks in Australia, including the 2,000 km Canning Stock Route (she was the first woman to cycle it), the Gunbarrel Highway, and the Tanami Track. Cycling for eight hours a day, and alone for the second half of the ride, she averaged 130 km daily on tarmac, and 100 km on gravel. On sand, through four deserts, she managed only eight kilometres a day.

Kate pedalled in the tracks of her great-great-uncle William Snell who, in 1897, cycled from the Eastern Goldfields to Melbourne in 26 days. Snell also led an expedition in 1929 to repair some of the 51 wells along the Canning Stock Route.

Her expedition had a serious aim: to promote sustainable development, and it was selected as a demonstration activity for the United Nations’ Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Despite cycling alone for thousands of kilometres, loneliness was never a problem. “I was always meeting people, visiting schools, giving talks, and I only had to camp ‘wild’ four times. I stayed at lots of stations, and one station would ring another down the road, and the people would come and pick me up.”

No newcomer to cycling, Kate was the first woman to cycle across the ‘New Russia’ – a 13,400 km ride in aid of the child victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Is she planning her next marathon? “It is a bit of an obsession,” she admits.

“I started with a little journey in Ireland and since then they’ve just got bigger. I have a few ideas, but I want to do the research first…”

The book on her Australian epic – Out There and Back – is available at selected bookshops and through www.gracexpedition.org. Kate hopes it will assist her cause. “If it encourages people to explore their own country, it will put them in a better position to make the right choices.”

Great Uncle William would be proud.
Music graduate’s unique career path

When Vahé Sarmazian graduated from UWA in 1996 with a Bachelor of Music degree, he would not have dreamed that a decade later he would be the only person in Australia, and one of only five in the world, with piano technology qualifications from the prestigious Steinway factories in New York and Hamburg.

Following graduation, Vahé – who was a child star pianist in his home country of Armenia before coming to Australia – launched into a career as a concert pianist, travelling the world from his home base in Perth.

After a few years, however, he decided to switch from performance to technology. “Performance is very competitive and as I have always been good with my hands, and very interested in piano technology, it seemed like a natural progression.” He was also dissatisfied with the technical expertise available to prepare concert pianos for performances, and at one overseas venue became so frustrated that he decided, “I’ll do it myself”.

It was impossible to get the training he needed in Australia, but then, in 1999, he won the Queen’s Trust Award for Young Australians, and the opportunity to go to Boston to study for a postgraduate degree in piano technology at the New England Conservatory. After further training at the Steinway factory in New York, he worked in Boston before returning to Australia in 2002.

And here he found not merely a gap in the market for his unique skills – “There was a big void.” Today Vahé runs his own business in Sydney, working solely on concert grand pianos. Travelling from one centre to another, he prepares the instruments for performance, and back in his workshop, he rebuilds concert grands: “I pull everything apart and start from scratch.”

He was also invited to work as part of the team at the Hamburg Steinway factory and, more recently, his unique skills were again recognized with an invitation from Wayne Stuart and Sons to train on their pianos – unique Australian-designed and manufactured instruments requiring very specific skills.

As to a favourite composer, Vahé’s list is too long to select just one, but Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt and Prokofiev are right at the top.

A fascination with caves

A fascination with caves that began in childhood has impelled author and lawyer Hal Colebatch (PhD 1995) to translate his passion into a book, one of three he has completed recently, as well as collaborating on a fourth.

In Caverns of Magic (from online publisher Cybereditions) the author takes the reader on a journey through caves and their mythology – caves as treasure houses, caves guarded by menacing supernatural beings, caves associated with the legends of King Arthur. “It’s about caves in literature and the place of caves in the imagination,” says Dr Colebatch.

He explores the cave literature of writers like Tolkien, Jean Aule and Rider Haggard, the Narnia stories of CS Lewis, and Treasure Island. The real caves he writes about are closer to home, however. In 1972, as a journalist with The West Australian, he was involved in discovering extensions (several kilometres long) to the Easter Cave near Augusta. And he relates how a cave found north of Perth in the early part of the last century, and visited by the then WA Premier and Governor Sir James Mitchell, was sealed temporarily to prevent vandalism and has never been found again. The discovery was written up in the Journal of Agriculture, which described them as huge, spectacular, brilliantly coloured and containing fossil-beds. “It was somewhere in the Pinnacles National Park,” Dr Colebatch recalls.

Poems written over a period of time are brought together in The Light River, his seventh book of poetry. Published by Connor Court, with a foreword by eminent Australian poet Les Murray, it features poems on the Swan River, Rottnest Island, life in Perth, and his travels abroad.

The third book Struggle and Achievement is a history commissioned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Parents’ and Friends’ Federation; and the fourth, on which he collaborated with barrister Patrick Mugliuston and Police Officer Stuart Ainsworth, is a legal textbook, Traffic Law in Western Australia.

Not content with this impressive output, Dr Colebatch is already absorbed in two new projects: a novel about sailing set in WA, and a history of technology.
As a first time home buyer, you CAN get into the market with a fantastic LOW INTRODUCTORY RATE that’s locked in for 12 months - so you don’t feel the financial ripples of rate rises or additional costs.

**LAP UP THE SAVINGS**

- Low intro rate for 12 months
- Great ongoing variable rate
- NO ongoing fees
- NO annual loan fees
- LOW establishment cost

**OUR SMART START HOME LOAN GIVES YOU A CLEAR ADVANTAGE.**

6.50% pa fixed for 12 months

7.74% pa comp. rate

Call a Unicredit Lending Consultant today on 9389 1011.

*Smart Start rate accurate at time of printing and subject to change without notice. Introductory rate reverts to the current standard variable rate after 12 months. Please refer to www.unicredit.com.au for current rates. Early termination fees may apply within the first four years. Comparison Rate subject to change with market rates. Comparison rate is for a loan of $150,000 for a term of 25 years. WARNING: This comparison rate is true only for the examples given and may not include all fees and charges. Different terms, fees or other loan amounts might result in a different comparison rate. All loan applications are subject to Unicredit’s normal lending criteria. Fees and Government charges apply. Please refer to our Fees and Charges Schedule, available from any Unicredit branch or discuss with a Lending Consultant. The University Credit Society Ltd. ABN 90 087 651 901. AFSL Number 244168.*
Membership of
The University Club of Western Australia:
The Educated Choice

Join before
30th November 2007
and receive a
$100 voucher
to spend at
your club

For more information about joining
The University Club, please contact
us on +61 8 6488 8770 or visit
www.universityclub.uwa.edu.au