A Spanish masterpiece
in Nedlands

by Lindy Brophy

Wanted: a blank wall at least 3.5 metres by 4.5 metres.

Such a space is being sought by fine arts students for a permanent home for their latest masterpiece.

First year students of lecturer Paul Trinidad acquired an understanding of oil painting by preparing an actual sized interpretation of 19th century artist Francisco de Goya Lucientes’ famous painting The Third of May.

The huge painting of Spanish rebels being executed by Napoleon’s soldiers is one of Goya’s most prized works and is held in the Prado Museum in Madrid.

The painting was downloaded from the Internet, divided up on a grid, and each of about 20 students was given a postage stamp size section to recreate as a piece about 400mm square. Once they had done their initial drawings, they worked in small groups to transfer their work onto the huge canvas.

Paul Trinidad is delighted with the result and is hoping the WA Art Gallery will consider exhibiting it along with a selection of Goya prints early next year.

“I chose this painting for this project as it encapsulates much of the ethos behind many forms of contemporary painting in manner and style, as well as the significance of the artist in his ability to interpret and personally express significant cultural and historic events and issues,” Mr Trinidad said.

He said the School of Architecture and Fine Arts was striving for a balance between hand-on experience in painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and photography and explorations into digital, film and time-based media, oriented to cutting edge arts practice or career paths within the arts.

The students’ painting will be on display on Level One of the Architecture and Fine Arts building until the end of this month.

More of their work can also be seen in a small exhibition space in the Swan Bell Tower in the city.

“The Swan Bells is a somewhat controversial site but it is also very interesting graphically. I took the students there in first semester and, by talking to visitors, they each formed individual interpretations of the landmark,” Mr Trinidad said. “I thought it was also appropriate as the bells were originally a gift to UWA.”

Their 24 prints, all widely diverse but inspired by the Swan Bells, will be exhibited on site until February.
Reviewing the Future

The blaze of jacaranda trees has again come to campus. They can signal exam season, final marking, the end of the academic year and some welcome vacation days over the Festive Season.

Yet the jacarandas are also a beginning – spring into summer, and the new year ahead.

We have had a big year at UWA ... the culmination of academic review and planning which has produced a new academic structure for our University. We are now implementing a new budget model and looking to the establishment of new Schools and Faculties in 2002. The challenge of self-defining discipline groups is also on the agenda for next year.

Overall, I think we shall recall 2002 as the year when we positioned UWA as a 21st century university in its form and structure, and set some bold strategic targets for the decade ahead to our centenary in 2011.

The process of review-discussion-implementation has yielded a significant result, and I am really appreciative of the creative and committed role played by so many of our campus community in preparing UWA for the future.

We need to see the same thing happening on the national scene for higher education.

The overall shape and character of the sector very much reflects the major Dawkins reforms of a decade ago. And that framework urgently needs fundamental revision and recasting. The original design has, in many ways, come to unravel, and under-funding has seen the sector show real signs of wear and tear. A mass system of higher education has emerged with fair quality. But it operates under terrible strains. This applies to everything from teaching loads to research infrastructure. Now money has been put into the sector through the Commonwealth's well-aimed Backing Australia's Ability. But it is not enough of an investment and is spread over too many years. A stronger level of base funding is needed to ensure quality in the growth of the sector to meet societal needs.

Funding is not enough, however: the policy frameworks also need substantial revision. The funding formulae do not sufficiently recognise or encourage real diversity in institutional missions. It is a classic case where one size does NOT fit all! Moreover, the present system is, in truth, now a complex tangle of policies as piecemeal changes over the 1990s have tried to remedy problems but lack a coherence. Facilitating self-reliance, with carefully designed policies of de-regulation need to be debated. We need to stop talking about levelling playing fields by policy, and create different playing fields, on which different kinds of universities can reach for excellence.

My own contribution on AVCC – of which I do indeed become President in 2002 – is strongly to encourage this fundamental review of our sector, involving both levels of funding, in particular through a new indexation model – as well as a new framework of public policy in which a revitalised sector can flourish.

For that projected review to succeed it requires a membership and terms of reference which give it a high degree of public esteem and acceptability. We should do it in a mood of constructive engagement with the new Minister (Dr Brendan Nelson) and other related key Ministers (eg in Science, Finance, Industry, Regions etc). We also need to win the support of the Prime Minister in establishing universities as a key priority for the future of our country.

At UWA we shall make our own submissions to that process. There are some very creative ideas and policy options embedded in our recent Profile documents to DETYA. We have also, as an institution, shown how commitment to fundamental review can lead on to highly positive results for teaching, learning and community service. We now hope the Commonwealth will also ‘Seek Wisdom’ in these matters!

2001 has been a dramatic year: who can ever forget September 11 and its consequences? It has also been a year of strenuous endeavour on our campus. To all involved I say Thank you ... and I close my regular open letter to campus with the sincere wish — in which Paddy joins me — that you have a peaceful and joyous Festive Season in your own family. May 2002 be good for us all at UWA.
A graduate student from UWA has helped to draft the United Nations International Youth Declaration.

Fiona Pui San Whittaker was one of four students and one staff member funded by the University to attend the World Conference Against Racism in South Africa in September.

She worked up to 12 hours a day with a small group writing the paper that will set the agenda for young people to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Fiona, an arts student, and Maria Osman, Equity Manager, attended all four conferences (government, non-government organisations, youth summit and academic policy) that filled a month of lobbying and inquiry for more than 6000 delegates from all over the world.

Graduate law students Gningala Yarran-Clanton and Lillian Makinda and social work student Cheryl Wong made up the UWA group and were part of one of the biggest state delegations from Australia.

They met and heard from many inspiring world leaders including Angela Davis, the Rev Jesse Jackson, Fidel Castro, Thebo Unbeki and Mary Robinson, as well as grass-roots activists and Hollywood stars who lend their weight to the fight against racism.

Gningala Yarran-Clanton said that, while the delegate from the US was highly organised and very vocal and managed to keep the issue of slavery and reparation on the agenda, she and other Australians were disappointed that similar issues for Aboriginal people – the stolen generation, colonialism and the affect they are still having on some communities – were hardly canvassed.

“Australia once led the way in multiculturalism … now, sadly, well behind many countries

The group was at the conference during the Tampa crisis. “Many people were asking us what was happening in Australia, a country that had once led the way in multiculturalism,” Maria Osman said. “Most of them felt that Australia was now, sadly, well behind many other countries.”

She said that many of the forums they attended on the intersection of race and gender were, for many women of colour, the unfinished business of the Beijing UN women’s conference in 1995.

“We met many wonderful black women activists and leaders working with some very marginalised and oppressed women … women who face double and triple discrimination, because they are women, black and poor.”

The UWA youth delegates lobbied to include in the International Youth Declaration a demand that states repeal mandatory detention of refugees and increase the humanitarian immigration intake, and abolish mandatory sentencing to replace it with culturally appropriate early intervention and rehabilitation programs.

A major outcome of the conference is the establishment by the UN of an anti-racism unit with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Locally, a Western Australian Universities and WA Coalition Against Racism has developed a working party to plan a year-long series of forums and events to raise awareness of the role universities can play in dealing with racism.

The UWA delegates will present some of the key issues from the conference on the Centre for Staff Development at a lunchtime forum on Thursday December 13.
Plant scientists cluster at UWA

The soils of Western Australia are among the oldest and most heavily leached and nutrient-impoverished in the world.

To overcome this problem and live in soil where no crop survives, the Australian plant family Proteaceae has developed proteoid or cluster roots.

These clusters of longitudinal rows of hairy rootlets enable the plant to make use of what nutrients there are.

As well as having poor soil, the southwest of WA is also one of the world’s hotspots of higher plant species diversity. The Proteaceae represent the top most species-rich plant family in Australia, with 17 genera, 760 species and 140 subspecies in WA.

The combination of the poor soils, the adaptations plants must make to survive and the high diversity of the plant life makes UWA a unique place to study plant adaptations to soil conditions.

The Plant Sciences group recently hosted an international workshop on cluster roots.

The role of carboxylates in the mobilisation of phosphate, micronutrients and aluminium from WA soils was discussed in the four-day workshop, Structure and Functioning of Cluster Roots and Plant Responses to Phosphate Deficiency. The workshop’s papers formed the basis for a special issue of the journal Plant and Soil.

Professor Hans Lambers, head of the plant sciences group, hosted scientists from Switzerland, South Africa, the USA, Wales and around Australia.

Professor Enrico Martinoia, from the University of Neuchatel, Switzerland, contributed his work on white lupin, which is closely related to the line of research on cluster roots carried out at UWA.

Big Company

Tiny blind almost colourless crustaceans provide the latest environmental focus for mining giant Hamersley Iron.

Stygofauna (stygo meaning adapted to living underground) live in underground aquifers in the Pilbara region, where the company mines iron ore. The fauna is dominated by crustaceans, and include amphipods, isopods, copepods and ostracodes.

Zoology post-doc Terrie Finston is half-way through a two year study of the amphipod fauna, funded by Hamersley.

“Some people will question the significance of these tiny fauna, but simply the fact that they are unique in the world, due to our unique geological formations, is enough for us to find out everything we can about them,” Dr Finston said.

“Hamersley sometimes mines very deep, below the water table. And when they do this, they ‘dewater’ the aquifers, pumping the water out. So they are keen to know what they can do without endangering a unique species. Our research focuses on identifying the number of species present, their distributions, and their ecologies. Hamersley are definitely committed to understanding these organisms,” she said.

Zoology Honours student, Emma Jones, discovered that stygofauna’s food sources (which are few) include eucalyptus and organic material found in the sediments, and that the population increases in the wet season.

“But there’s still a lot we don’t know. I’m using genetic markers to identify species and their population structures.

There is a wide range of morphological variation present, and we need to understand the basis of the variation.

“Apart from the Pilbara, stygofauna also exist at Cape Range, near Exmouth, and in some parts of the Kimberley, which all have calcrete (limestone-like) formations, but we don’t know if they are the same species without making direct genetic comparisons. The only ones I’ve studied so far are from the Pilbara.” Dr Finston said.

The creatures appear to have a long life. The stygofauna in her lab in Zoology are growing and developing very slowly.

Her genetic research is carried out on field-collected specimens for which scientists must sometimes bore down 100 metres. Adult amphipods vary from two to six millimetres.

Dr Finston has the support of Hamersley Iron for an application to the Australian Research Council next year for a linkages grant to continue the project.
Mediation is the best way to sort out a dispute because, as senior law lecturer Robyn Carroll points out, “it is not about winning because you are clever: it is about listening.”

Mrs Carroll teaches mediation skills to undergraduates in the Law School, along with colleague Lisa Goldacre. Both lecturers spread their skills more widely this year by teaching high school students about mediation. Each of them coached a Year 10 team for the Schools Conflict Resolution and Mediation (SCRAM) competition.

Mrs Carroll has sons at Shenton College and is on the board of management of the University’s Learning Links program with the school. She joined with teacher Tim Gibbney, head of society, environment and humanities at the college’s senior school, to run four hour-long classes on mediation and dispute resolution for students in the Academically Talented Program (Humanities).

“It’s a terrific initiative. This is real grass roots stuff. Our undergraduate students can see how invaluable mediation skills are and it’s even more effective a tool for life when you can teach younger students the skills of negotiating without using bullying or being arrogant or competitive.” Mrs Carroll said.

The class voted for eight of their members to be further coached by Mrs Carroll for the state championships of SCRAM. While they worked with her during the year, the rest of the students looked at designing a peer mediation program for Shenton’s middle school (years 8 and 9).

The team negotiated its way to the grand finals of the competition, working out how to deal peacefully with school-based issues including a party that dissolved into violence, gang battles at the local shopping mall and a student protest at a rock band booked to perform at a school.

They bowed out to Presbyterian Ladies’ College in a narrowly-lost dispute about rock climbing.

Mrs Carroll sees the mediation course and competition as a valuable part of the world-wide peace movement and plans to do it again at Shenton College next year.

“If it’s taught them nothing more than that there is always more than one point of view and that there is not always a right and wrong in every issue, then it’s been a success,” Mr Gibbney said.

One of the team, Chris Barry said the course had made it easier for him to find common ground in conflicts. Simon Rudland said he found himself analysing his friends’ arguments.

“I’ve sown the seeds through the Learning Links program that I hope will continue to grow, develop and spread to other schools,” Mrs Carroll said.

Two horns short of an orchestra

When the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra came to Perth recently, they were short a few instruments.

But with seven musicians from UWA in the orchestra, there was no question about where they could borrow them.

The School of Music loaned the orchestra two horns and a violin for its November performance in the Concert Hall.

The graduates are in the famous orchestra, which toured Australia following a successful European tour, finishing with the London Proms, where they received rave reviews.

UWA musicians swell the ranks of the Brandenburg Orchestra:

Back: Rex Carr-White (violin) Doree Dixon (horn) James Jennings (violin)
Front: Emily Barton (horn) Marina Phillips (violin) James Beck (cello)
Jacqueline Poole (violin)
Genetics unravel an unlikely liaison

Medical scientists around the world are trying to find the link between a chronic skin condition and a particular form of arthritis.

The reason why a skin disease should be associated with a joint disease is not well understood, but there is a proven link between the chronic skin condition psoriasis and a particular type of arthritis known as psoriatic arthritis.

Dr Ellie Korendowych is at UWA’s Centre for Molecular Immunology and Instrumentation (CMII) to try to discover the elusive link through the study of genetics.

With a degree in Medicine from Cambridge and Oxford Universities, Dr Korendowych is a specialist trainee in rheumatology in Bristol and Bath and is particularly interested in the immunology and genetics of inflammatory arthritis. Her year’s research at UWA will form part of her PhD and is funded by the Arthritis Research Campaign in the UK.

Her Copeman Travelling Scholarship allows rheumatologists to pursue their research interests at any centre of international repute around the world. Dr Korendowych chose UWA because of the expertise at CMII in immunogenetics and their particular interest in psoriasis.

“The link between the skin and the joint is intriguing and yet to be resolved.”

Professor Roger Dawkins, the director of CMII, and his group have been working on the immunogenetics of psoriasis for many years.

“I wanted to work with Professor Dawkins’ group to expand the interest and expertise of the group in psoriasis to include psoriatic arthritis as well.”

“The link between psoriasis and arthritis is more complex than isolating one single gene,” Dr Korendowych said. “The group I’m working with at CMII is interested in extended and ancestral ‘haplotypes’ - groups of genes inherited ‘en bloc’ from one generation to the next.”

“It is likely that complicated diseases such as psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are associated with particular combinations of genes which together form a disease-associated haplotype.”

She explained that as many as one in 50 people suffer from psoriasis and about 10 per cent of people with psoriasis will develop psoriatic arthritis.

The arthritis can take one of five different forms, ranging from involvement of a single joint to a severe disabling form of arthritis. It can affect all ages including children although it is most common in the 30’s and 40’s. The arthritis usually follows the psoriasis, sometimes by as long as 15-20 years, and it is often mistaken for other forms of arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis until a history of psoriasis is noted.

She said that sometimes it was difficult to make the connection between the two conditions as they do not always exist together.

“In some patients, when their psoriasis flares up so does their arthritis and vice versa. But in other patients they may not be so clearly linked. Some patients develop arthritis after only a single bout of psoriasis and others never develop arthritis despite having very severe psoriasis.”

“The link between the skin and the joint is intriguing and yet to be resolved. Genetic studies will help to shed more light on these fascinating diseases but it will not provide all the answers – other factors such as infections and environmental triggers also contribute.”

She has been at CMII since July. For the previous 12 months, she collected DNA from patients with psoriatic arthritis at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases in Bath which she brought with her to UWA.

She will also be helping with the organisation of the 13th International Histocompatibility Workshop in Seattle in May next year. The CMII is co-ordinating the psoriasis and arthritis component of the workshop in collaboration with many centres around the world.

Dr Korendowych will complete her fellowship next June.
If you think of your immune system as a computer security system, then viruses are like hackers, they get into the system and wreak havoc.

These vandals seem unstoppable as they learn quickly how to bypass new security systems and survive to attack again.

They include viruses and tumours, which can escape immune surveillance and survive inside the human body, ready to cause serious health problems.

Dr Mariapia Degli-Esposti and her team of researchers in the Department of Microbiology are devoted to understanding how the immune system works, what pathways pathogens utilise to evade immune surveillance and, eventually, they hope to collect the information required to develop therapies that could boost the immune system to fight insidious invaders, such as viruses and tumours.

Dr Degli-Esposti’s team uses cytomegalovirus (CMV) as a model for their research. “CMV infects about 90 per cent of the population and doesn’t cause any problems. The really interesting feature of this virus is that it can survive lifelong within its host, and this is the focus of our research - what mechanisms is the virus using to escape immune responses?” asks Dr Degli-Esposti.

“In people who are immuno-suppressed or immuno-compromised CMV will cause problems. These people include unborn babies, AIDS sufferers and patients undergoing suppressive therapy for cancer treatment or organ transplantation. Therefore, understanding the interactions between CMV and the host’s immune system will also provide important information for designing better therapies to help these people” she said.

In an attempt to better understand the viral/host interactions that drive immune responses, Dr Degli-Esposti and the researchers in her laboratory, including PhD student Dan Andrews, have studied dendritic cells (DC), cells that are crucial in generating and maintaining immune responses.

“The importance of dendritic cells was unrecognised until 15 or 20 years ago. Today, DCs are widely recognised as the central initiators of immune responses.”

“So we went and had a look at what happens to DC after CMV infection and we found that the virus could infect DCs, and importantly, although the dendritic cells were still alive they were paralysed, switched off.”

“We are pretty excited by these findings,” Dr Degli-Esposti said.

The importance of these findings, generated by the research of Dan Andrews as part of his PhD studies, has been recognised both nationally and internationally with the data being published last month in the prestigious journal, Nature Immunology.

“This body of work has had a huge impact on our understanding of CMV infection and particularly the interactions between the virus and the host immune system.”

“You don’t do research for the money or because it’s easy. You do it because it consumes you. There is a sort of passion about what we do, a passion that has the people in my lab hooked. I am very fortunate to have such a group. They love their work, they are dedicated, they work hard and their rewards come from discoveries such as this.”

Dr Degli-Esposti said her group’s work was building on research into CMV initiated by Professor Geoff Shellam and his group in the Department of Microbiology almost 20 years ago.

“This is just the beginning. We want to find the causes for the phenomena we observed after infection of DCs, to define the pathways and to know exactly which arms of the immune system are being affected. It’s still a long way before we can start thinking about therapeutics, but our research has already given us crucial clues about which pathways to follow,” she said.

Dr Degli-Esposti holds a five-year Wellcome Trust Overseas Senior Research Fellowship in Biomedical Science. Dan Andrews is supported by an AMRAD PhD Scholarship. Grants from the National Health and Medical Research Council support the remaining lab’s staff.
The Senate has approved the University Budget for 2002, so completing the three part review of the University’s academic plan, its organisational structure, and now its budget.

The Budget has been built around some important underlying principles, notably:

• that it must support the achievement of University goals and objectives;
• that it must reward excellence and success;
• that it must be reasonably simple and transparent;
• that it must recognise external policy and funding arrangements as well as internal University policies, priorities and structures.

The Budget has various mechanisms to achieve its purposes. In broad terms, a proportion of the budget is allocated for the University’s capital development; a proportion for University infrastructure and facilities maintenance; a proportion for discretionary allocation on strategic initiatives; and the bulk is distributed by formulae which are essentially performance-based and explicitly linked to both University and Commonwealth government policy. In this way the budget is a planning tool designed to enhance UWA’s competitiveness and performance externally, while ensuring an equitable distribution of resources internally.

The 2002 Budget will deliver an estimated increase in income over 2001 of some $25 million, much of it restricted in its use by the terms of its acquisition, such as with national competitive research grants. Some of it is unrestricted, as with course fees and charges. This success in income generation has enabled the 2001 budget deficit of $7.5 million to be reduced to $5.5 million in 2002.

The strategy underlying this budget deficit is one of investment in the future capacity of the University to deliver high quality performance and generate further (preferably unrestricted) income. This will not be achieved unless the quality of staff and the operating environment is maintained at competitive levels while the University builds its capacity to be more self-reliant in the face of escalating costs and a shortfall in public funding. As this is achieved the deficit will be eliminated.

The full details of the budget model, its rationale and component elements will be placed on the web as soon as possible.

Peter Curtis
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ACADEMIC SERVICES) and REGISTRAR

Senate Approves 2002 University Budget

Cancer technology goes commercial

The Office of Industry and Innovation has successfully negotiated a licensing arrangement with the German biotechnology company Epigenomics AG.

The company specialises in the area of DNA methylation which is a core technology need in the diagnosis of cancer and other diseases.

The arrangement includes up-front payments, milestone payments and a licensing fee if the technology is commercialised by Epigenomics.

Dr Peter Kay (recently retired from the Department of Pathology) had invented a single step novel method which takes less than 30 minutes to perform. The method is capable of detecting methylated cytosine residues within any DNA sequences.

Dr Kay complimented the efforts of the Office of Industry and Innovation (OII) and the Legal Services Office in concluding the commercial arrangements.

Dr Andy Sierakowski, the manager of OII said he was pleased with the negotiations that involved a telephone hook-up including Berlin, Perth and Seattle. Given that Seattle local time was midnight at the start of the call, he dubbed the project ‘Sleepless in Seattle’.

Professor Michael Barber said he was delighted with the successful outcome of this project and with the fruitful engagement of the new Office of Industry and Innovation and UWA researchers.

Dr Peter Kay (centre) is financially rewarded by equally delighted Professor Michael Barber and Dr Andy Sierakowski.
An Aussie experience at the Somerville

A starlight picnic at an outdoor cinema rates as an Aussie experience alongside the dawn service on ANZAC Day.

And, like ANZAC Day, the Somerville Auditorium’s Perth Festival Lotteries Film Season, is dominated by medals and awards.

Almost every film bears a proud array of prizes (happily for artistic achievement, rather than bravery in battle).

Perth International Arts Festival’s film buff, Sherry Hopkins, has again put together a program of amazing variety and exceptionally high quality.

The season opens, as is traditional, with a comedy, the Australian premiere of The Closet, from director Francis Veber (Dinner Game). Francois, a dull, rather sad accountant, unassuming to the point of near-invisibility, who is so desperate to save his job at a condom factory that he lies to his bosses and masquerades as being gay. The company’s macho homophobe, Felix (Gerard Depardieu), led to believe he could lose his job if he is not kind to Francois, goes hilariously overboard in his attempts to be nice to him.

Award-winning films from France and Italy dominate this season, which promises to be controversial.

Other films from France include the Grand Prize Winner from the 2000 Montreal Film Festival, The Taste of Others and Jules Dassin’s Rififi, the 1955 classic and one of the great gangster films of the 20th century.

Italy is well represented with many award winners including the Palme d’Or Winner from the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, The Son’s Room, a deeply affecting story of intergenerational conflict, tragedy and loss within an ordinary family.

From Britain, Merchant/Ivory’s The Golden Bowl, a sumptuous romantic period drama, based on a Henry James novel, with wonderful performances from Uma Thurman, Nick Nolte, Kate Beckinsale, James Fox and Angelica Huston. Also from Britain is Intimacy - the much anticipated and controversial look at the power of lust.

British director Michael Winterbottom has taken Thomas Hardy’s The Mayor of Casterbridge 14,000 kilometres away to the snowy Sierra Nevada mountains to retell this fantastic story in his film, The Claim, starring Peter Mullan and Nastassja Kinski

Tears of the Black Tiger is a gay western which pays tribute to the B-movie cliches, westerns and melodramas - thrilling, wildly imaginative and deeply absurd. It won the Dragons and Tigers Award for Young Cinema at the 2001 Vancouver International Film Festival.

Also on offer is the 2001 Sydney Film Festival’s Most Popular Film, Divided We Fall, set in occupied Czechoslovakia in 1943 and based on a true story about a Czech couple who hide a Jewish prisoner in their attic, along with a side of pork!

The predicted crowd pleaser will be Together, set in a ’seventies Swedish commune. It follows the journey of an abused woman who seeks refuge with her brother in a chaotic house inhabited by long-haired people who discuss politics, have free sex and drink lots of red wine while listening to Abba.

From Haiti, a docu-drama, Lumumba, is based on the true story of Patrice Lumumba, a young self-taught nationalist who, in June 1960, became the first head of government of the new independent state, The Congo. He would last two months in office.

The Somerville’s final offering is Australian director Rachel Perkins’ multi-award-winning country and western musical, One Night the Moon, based on the true story of Aboriginal tracker Riley and the 1932 disappearance of a child in the harsh, unforgiving Australian outback.

See Info Liftout for details of GREAT discounts on Festival tickets for UWA staff
Even with low rainfall, rural areas can increase their water supply by improving their dams.

A study undertaken at the Centre for Water Research will provide landholders in WA’s wheat and sheep districts with cost effective and sustainable strategies to get the best out of their dams.

The two and half year study, funded by the Office of Water Regulation, Agriculture WA and the Water Corporation, explored strategies to improve the efficiency of rural water stores, with the objective of identifying cost-effective and environmentally sustainable methods that may be easily and widely adopted across the wheatbelt. They estimate that specific strategies will assist 75 per cent of landholders in the wheat and sheep districts who rely solely on on-farm water supplies.

Farmers now have guidelines to reduce evaporation, reduce leakage into the sub-surface, and increase runoff.

A simple tool to design an effective windbreak or shelterbelt offering evaporation reductions of around 30 per cent is available to water-managers. Improved methodology for the design of engineered catchments that supply both town and farm dams and alternatives to sealing leaky dams and improving runoff into town dams have also been developed.

The study, conducted by postgraduate student Matt Hipsey, under the supervision of Professor Murugesu Sivapalan, has been hailed as a milestone in providing welcome relief to the sheep and wheat growing areas of Western Australia.

Professor Sivapalan has recently been awarded a Biennial Medal of the Modelling and Simulation Society of Australia and New Zealand.

The award was made in the category of Natural Systems. It is in recognition of Professor Sivapalan’s sustained high quality contributions to simulation and modelling over many years.

Other staff at the Centre for Water Research have also been recently decorated. Chair of the centre, Professor Jorg Imberger, has won the James N Kirby award and Associate Professor Chari Pattiaratchi has been appointed an ‘Eminent Sri Lankan Scientist’ by the Sri Lankan government.

The James N Kirby medal is awarded to someone who, in the opinion of the Australasian Region Board of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, has achieved eminence, distinction and public recognition in his or her particular sphere of activity.

Born in 1899 in Sydney, Sir James Norman Kirby CBE was one of Australia’s leading industrialists. The award commemorating his contribution to Australian manufacturing industry, was instituted in 1954.

Professor Pattiaratchi’s nomination means he will expand his work for the Sri Lankan government. The Ministry of Science and Technology says that

Professor Pattiaratchi co-ordinates applied ocean science in the Department of Environmental Engineering. He has also recently spearheaded a successful funding venture for collaborative projects in marine science.

Three ARC linkages grants, a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation grant and five scholarships from the Strategic Research Fund for the Marine Environment will support ten PhD students.

The collaborators include the CSIRO Division of Marine Research, Australian Institute of Marine Science, Royal Australian Navy, Department of Conservation and Land Management (WA) WA Fisheries, WA Museum, MG Kailis Ltd, JP Kenny Ltd, the Esperance Port Authority, the University of Melbourne and Curtin University.

**Damn the drought**

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Professor Imberger, Associate Professor Pattiaratchi and Professor Sivapalan
Research delving back to agriculture’s origins in Afghanistan and China could help WA field pea growers curb the affects of black spot and capture the financial rewards of the $300 per tonne crop.

Field pea has been a popular pulse crop in WA, but its viability has been threatened by the fungal disease, black spot, which typically cuts yields by 10-20 percent, and has the potential to completely wipe out a crop.

Collaboration between the UWA-based Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) and Russia’s Vavilov Institute has delivered 350 promising lines to local breeding programs to build black spot resistance in commercial crops.

“Vavilov Institute is the world’s most comprehensive seed bank, with more than 213,000 samples, representing 2,539 species, so it really is the best point for places like CLIMA to begin searching for new material,” said Professor Clive Francis, CLIMA’s Deputy Director and co-ordinator of the Vavilov collaboration.

Seed numbers were built up at the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), Syria, and then sent to Ethiopia. Black spot is endemic in Ethiopia, making it an ideal location to screen for resistance. The project, supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation, identified 20 more lines with potential black spot resistance.

Most were collected from Afghanistan and China, two of the world’s first agricultural regions and home to some of its most genetically diverse crops.

While searching for black spot resistance, the project found several other lines displaying beneficial agronomic qualities which will be tested and developed to deliver further advantages to WA growers.

“The best advances in science often occur when conducting separate enquiries,” said Professor Francis. “When you’re working with a resource like Vavilov, the world’s first seed bank, you have to make the most of that opportunity, so CLIMA simultaneously reviewed prospective lines for other utilities besides black spot resistance.”

The Vavilov Institute is 107 years old and has survived Tsarism, Communism and Nazi invasion. While under fire from German forces, scientists guarding the Institute starved to death rather than eat the packets of rice, corn and other seeds in their desks.
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA • 3 DECEMBER 2001

A Pilgrim’s Progress: Seeking Wisdom at UWA

I set out for Australia about six months after graduating from University College London.

I did it in style at the University’s expense with a first class cabin on the liner Oronsay (actually I was a ‘ten pound pommy migrant’ as I discovered when I tried to leave the country 18 months later. The University had merely ‘upgraded’ me. In a University context things are rarely as they seem).

As an undergraduate I had taken no interest in the University’s affairs, I had never met a Dean, let alone had any idea what he did and I did not have the faintest idea of how the University was run. I had only once met the Provost, the equivalent of our Vice-Chancellor. This was an uncomfortable interview. I was asked to explain why I, then captain, and most of the UCL cricket team, had been arrested for playing football with a number of Belisha beacons in the streets of Bath at 1 a.m on a Sunday morning.

I didn’t think of the Shane Warne answer, that it would have been alright if we hadn’t been found out. I pleaded inebriation after celebration of a famous win over a toffee nosed Bath cricket club. He congratulated me warmly on the win and said that if I wrote to the Bath police apologising on behalf of the team that would be the end of it. So my first impression of University administrators was a favourable one.

The Dean
On the Oronsay with me was Professor Alexander. That was how he introduced himself and that was clearly how he wanted to be addressed. We met in the final of the Deck Quoits tournament which my partner and I won. My partner and I went happily to the bar and celebrated. About two hours later we heard an announcement over the PA system requesting our presence on the games deck. There we met the Entertainment Officer, a chinless wonder called Lord someone or other, whom the family must have decided was better off out of England. He was with a grim faced Professor Alexander and said that Fred had complained that on every other boat he had been on the final was played over three games and not one. Would we mind playing the best of three? We said we couldn’t care less and not unexpectedly, given our condition, duly lost the next two games in record time. What I didn’t realise at the time was that I had had my first encounter with a Dean of Arts, and lost.

Collegiality
When we berthed at Fremantle I was met by Professor Austin, another who was obsessed with being called ‘Professor’. He said, “I must go and say hello to my old friend and colleague Freddy Alexander. Have you met him?” “Yes,” I said, “he has been really good to me. This morning I was given a bar bill for 50 pounds which I couldn’t pay. I asked him what I should do and he immediately wrote out a check for 50 pounds and gave it to me.” “He did what? “ said Austin, “don’t ever be indebted to that man” and he too pulled out a cheque book and wrote me a check for 50 pounds. Apart from the thought that it was very easy to get money out of Australian professors, this was my first experience of academic collegiality at work!

Academic Politics
Academic politics was totally unknown to me, but I learned from an expert. I loved Faculty meetings and was always proposing motions. Once when something I had proposed got through, which wasn’t often, I spoke to Larry Blakers, Professor of Mathematics, at tea-time and said, “I am glad that you thought the same as I did on that motion.” I learned

continued on page 11
The best staff discounts ever offered to University staff, for Festival shows, are available this season for ‘earlybird’ reservations.

As long as you book your tickets by December 21, UWA staff will receive a 25 per cent discount, with a minimum purchase of four tickets per performance.

The University and the Perth International Arts Festival are keen for the campus community to feel some ownership of one of the best arts festivals in Australia.

Programs are available at the Visitors’ Centre and you can book at the Octagon Theatre or by ringing BOCS on 9484 1133.

Make sure to quote the reference number UWA01 when you book, to ensure your discount. Family tickets for a show could make a great Christmas present.

The film season at the Somerville opens this week and the Festival proper on Friday January 25, with free events over the Australia Day weekend.

A red carpet for future Pilbara teachers

Teachers and other graduates interested in working in the Pilbara can have all their questions answered at a workshop in Perth in January.

Living and Working in the Pilbara information seminar is an initiative of the Pilbara Development Commission.

The Commission will host the seminar with the Education Department of WA and the Pilbara local government authorities. Speakers will address issues including the fantastic tourist attractions, excellent sport and recreation facilities, teaching Aboriginal students, the history of the region, the flora and fauna, the extensive mining and energy industries and what to expect when you arrive.

The Commission has invited teachers and graduates who are relocating to the region in 2002 to attend the seminar.

Held in January each year, this will be the sixth seminar hosted by the Commission. Its purpose is to help teachers who may be coming to the Pilbara to gain information and community contacts which will help them to settle in when they arrive in the region, and to take advantage of the region’s fantastic, but little known lifestyle opportunities.

It is hoped this initiative will encourage teachers to feel part of the community and stay longer in the Pilbara, leading to better education outcomes for our schools.

The presenters and facilitators for the day all have a close association with the Pilbara region and include Mr Brian Hayes, an Aboriginal spokesperson from the Thalanyji people, Ms Pam Glossop from the Ministry of Sport, Ms Sharon Szczecinski from the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, Ms Minda Penn from the Pilbara Tourism Association, Dr Peter Kendrick an ecologist from CALM, Mrs Robyn Crane, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Pilbara Development Commission and long term Pilbara resident and representatives from the local government authorities and District Education office. The acting Director General of the Education Department, Mr Ron Mance will officially close the days proceedings.

The Living and Working in the Pilbara Information Seminar will be held in Perth at the Mercure Hotel on Thursday 17 January 2002, and is open to all teachers and graduates and their partners.

The Commission is grateful to all presenters and facilitators, the Mercure Hotel, the Pilbara local government authorities and the Education Department for their support of this project.

To reserve a place at the seminar or for further information please telephone Nicole Nugent on telephone 1800 673 996 or 9185 0188 or email nicole@pdc.wa.gov.au.

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Kenata Rentals

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Book now for new staff and visiting academics arriving from 2002.

Location: cnr Edward and Fairway Streets, Crawley (opposite Mechanical Engineering).

Enquiries: 0412 953 100 or fax 9389 8326
Monday 3 December
GENDER AND CULTURE SEMINAR SERIES/GENDER AND VISUALITY
‘A is for animatics (automata, androids and animats)’, by Dr Cathryn Vasseleu, Research Fellow, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney. 6.30pm Art Gallery of Western Australia Theatrette.

Tuesday 4 December
GENDER AND CULTURE WORKSHOP/GENDER AND VISUALITY
Convened by Professor Hilary Fraser. 9.30 to 4.45pm, Art Gallery of Western Australia Theatrette. Registrations (including lunch and refreshments): Full: $25 including GST. Students/Concessions: $10 (including GST). Contact Terri-ann White on 9380 2114.

Thursday 6 December
WABCAP SEMINAR SERIES
‘Christmas Breakfast, Richard Prince on Future Development’. 7.30am, WAIMR Meeting Rm, Ground Floor, B Block, SCGH.

Friday 7 December
BIOCHEMISTRY SEMINAR
‘The many functions of plant mitochondria’ by Dr Lee Sweetlove, Oxford University. Simmonds Lecture Theatre. 1pm. Enquiries ext. 3324.

Saturday 8 December
RED CROSS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW SYMPOSIUM ON LANDMINES
The symposium features international and national speakers on a range of issues: demining; legal aspects of landmines; a victims perspective; a surgeon’s experience; technological solutions to combat landmines and an ICRC photographic exhibition on landmines. All participants can view the Centenary of Federation art exhibition featuring One Hundred Years of Australian art on display at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery during the exhibition featuring One Hundred Years of Australian art on display at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. Registration $55 (full) & $45 (conc.). To register or for more information contact Harpal on 9325 5111.

10 to 14 December
11TH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON STEREOLOGY, STOCHASTIC GEOMETRY AND RELATED FIELDS
This workshop brings together international experts and practical users of stereology, stochastic geometry, spatial statistics, image analysis and related fields. Held at UWA. Contact ext. 3338, stereology@maths.uwa.edu.au or check out the conference web site at www.maths.uwa.edu.au/~adrian/workshop.html.

Thursday 13 December
PUBLIC LECTURE
‘The Stolen Generations’, Professor Robert Manne, La Trobe University, Melbourne. 7pm, West Australian Museum, James Street.

Friday 14 December
CLIMA SEMINAR
‘Transgenic pulse development project’, Dr Steve Wiley. 4pm, CLIMA Seminar Rm.

14 to 15 December
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES SYMPOSIUM
‘Constituting a “people”: the legacy of white Australia’, convened by E/Prof Laksiri Jayasuriya, UWA, Prof David Walker, Deakin University, Dr Jan Gothard, Murdoch University. 9am to 5pm, Social Science Lecture Theatre. Registration (including lunch and refreshments): $100 or $50 per day. Concession (students, unwaged) $40 or 20 per day. Dinner: $60 or $45 when registering for the Symposium. Full programme details and registration at www.ias.uwa.edu.au/activities.html or contact Terri-ann White on 9380 2114.

Sunday 23 December
MESSIAH CONCERT
Performed by the UWA Choral Society. 6.30pm, Winthrop Hall. Tickets $28 (full) & $25 (Conc.) available from the Octagon Theatre (9380 2440) or at the door.

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This is the last issue of UWA News for 2001. The first issue next year will be published on Monday March 11. The deadline for editorial and advertisements is Wednesday February 27. Your ideas, comments, pictures and stories are always welcome - it is your magazine.

Editorial copy and enquiries about news stories should go to Lindy Brophy in Public Affairs on extension 2436 (lindy.brophy@uwa.edu.au).

Please send advertisements and diary notices to Joanna Thompson in Publications on extension 3029 (joanna.thompson@uwa.edu.au).

We hope you can live without UWA News over the summer break! Have a great holiday. Watch out for next year’s deadlines and publication dates in the first issue for 2002.
Symposium in Honour of
Philip Brown Professor of Accounting

Professor Philip Brown, Chair of Accounting and Finance in the Department of Accounting and Finance, is retiring after a long and distinguished career of teaching and research in many areas including Financial Accounting and Capital Markets.

To recognise Professor Brown’s contributions, the Department is holding a two-day symposium in his honour, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in December.

Professor Brown earned his BCom degree from the University of New South Wales where he was a University medallist; and then, with a Fulbright Scholarship, travelled to the United States, where he gained his MBA degree (in finance, 1965) and PhD (in economics, accounting and finance, 1968) from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

After serving as a faculty member of the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business for two years, Professor Brown joined UWA’s School of Commerce in 1968.

In 1970 he was appointed a Professor of Accounting. He accepted an offer as Professor of Management and Foundation Director of the Australian Graduate School of Management at the University of New South Wales in 1975. He returned to UWA in 1990, as Professor of Accounting, a position he has held until his retirement. He was Head of Department from November 1980 to May 1981 and again from 1985 to 1990.

His contribution to the discipline of accounting and finance continues to be outstanding, and is reflected in the high reputation the Department of Accounting and Finance has internationally.

Students can snap on their laptops

University library staff were faced every day with queues of student waiting to use computers for on-line resources … then suddenly, SNAP! They had the answer.

Student Network Access Project (SNAP) is a project designed to give students better access to the University’s on-line resources and the Internet.

The project has provided 31 wired access points in libraries across the campus and installed wireless access in the Arts building, the Guild Village, the library coffee shop, the student terraces and even in the Great Court.

So students can now bring their laptop computers to University and connect up. Previously, they could only work on their own assignments so most of them left their laptops at home and queued for the libraries’ and departmental computers.

Manager of the libraries’ IT team, Stephen Trefry, is spearheading SNAP. He said a recent student survey suggested that 25 per cent of students owned or used laptops.

If they could bring them to University and go on-line, it would relieve computer congestion.

“Our trial, with up to 70 students, is just coming to an end. Depending on the results, we plan to install more access points around the campus to help the students,” Mr Trefry said.

The University Initiatives Fund was used to help find a solution and library IT staff worked with University Communications Services staff to bring SNAP to fruition.

For information about SNAP: http://snap.uwa.edu.au
IT facilities under euro-microscope

A group of businessmen from the Netherlands inspected UWA’s Centre for Medical and Surgical Skills (ctec) while on a recent investment mission to Perth.

The group, involved in the IT and telecommunications industry, was most interested in the development of surgical skills training models. Medic Vision, the company which runs the telecommunications for ctec, is working closely with CSIRO further developing computer-based surgical training models focusing on basic surgical skills.

Several delegates from the Netherlands group of 17 are involved in the design and construction of technology parks similar to the one in Bentley, and one, Peiter Angenent, is director of a Dutch company linked with the design and construction of a medical and surgical skills training centre in Holland.

Mr. Angenent is keen to investigate the possibility of using Medic Vision as a design consultant for their facility. The group was hosted by the Department of Industry and Technology in Perth. Medic Vision is currently in discussions with groups building similar facilities in Melbourne, Sydney, Singapore, Sri Lanka and New Zealand.

WANTED TO RENT

ACADEMIC COUPLE visiting UWA from England are looking for a house to rent/ house sit from mid-January until the end of March. Please contact Prof. Elaine Fox (efox@essex.ac.uk) or Dr. Kevin Dutson (kdutt@essex.ac.uk). Further details can be obtained from Prof. Colin Macleod (UWA Dept. of Psychology, colin@psy.uwa.edu.au). ACADEMIC COUPLE with 4-year-old child seek comfortable house near to UWA or in pleasant location in Perth, for the period 2 Jan to 13 May (starting could be flexible). Please contact Della Sala at sergio@abdn.ac.uk.

FOR RENT


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FOR RENT


HOLIDAY HOUSE IN LANCELIN. Only one hour from Perth in the lovely, peaceful holiday seaside town of Lancelin. Go snorkelling, surfing, walking, sand-boarding or just relax. A three-bedroom house, comfortable accommodation for four adults and four children, one minute from the beach. Reasonable weekly or daily rates. Contact Mel on 041 992 9851.

FOR SALE

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