A gift from Italy

UWA is one of nine Australian universities to benefit from a $23 million investment in the nurturing of Italian culture.

Italian philanthropist Dr Dino De Poli announced the remarkably generous gift at the University recently. It follows a $6 million gift from his Cassamarca Foundation nearly four years ago, and is the biggest single funding for the humanities in the history of the University. UWA is the Australian Cassamarca host.

Frequently described as a modern Medici for his generous promotion of Italian culture, the president of Italy’s philanthropic Cassamarca Foundation could also be seen as a modern day Marco Polo. He is fostering cultural exchanges that link Italy with China, Central Asia, and many other nations.

Speaking through a translator Dr De Poli spoke of going to China to arrange an exhibition of Chinese sculpture in Italy, of establishing Italian studies in Kyrgyzstan, of organising a conference in Spain on Islamic and Latin humanism, and of bringing an exhibition of Van Gogh paintings to his hometown of Treviso in Northern Italy.

While he works on a truly global scale, this philanthropist lawyer is intent on fostering cultural rather than trade links. “He is the very opposite of an economic rationalist,” whispers one of his companions as his entourage gathers in Winthrop Hall, cameras flash, and Dr De Poli begins an interview with SBS television that ranges across the world and across numerous topics — from what the world can learn from Roman humanism in an era of terrorism to the importance of the Roman empire’s legacy to Britain.

“People think that my focus on culture is strange,” says Dr De Poli, “but I believe that in the age we live in, humanistic studies are of vital importance. Technology is everywhere, but culture is the true human capital and my aim is to revive and integrate Italian studies in universities throughout the world.”

UWA’s Associate Professor Loretta Baldassar, Chair of the Cassamarca Lectureships Committee, says that the injection of Foundation funds has been the lifeblood of a recent revival of Italian studies.

“During the 1970s and 1980s, the movement to recognise Australia’s place as part of Asia and to focus on regional languages resulted in a reduction in funding for European languages,” she explains.

“Italian Departments were absorbed into European language schools and in Western Australia UWA became the only university to continue teaching. And that scenario was repeated across Australia, so prior to the Cassamarca initiative, Italian studies were in dire straits.”

A/Professor Baldassar said that the Foundation’s lectureships were now attracting a new generation of Italian teachers to tertiary institutions, and its support extended beyond language and literature teaching into areas such as migration history and classics.

BELOW: the countryside around Treviso
Students rock Timor

UWA focus on Timor Leste’s natural resources

Seven honours students are helping Timor Leste (East Timor) to get back on its feet after nearly thirty tumultuous years of occupation, war and unrest.

The students, from the School of Earth and Geographical Sciences and the School of Water Research, all volunteered to join the efforts of their teachers in both schools, who began last year to help the island better understand its natural resources.

Led by geologists Dr Myra Keep and Associate Professor David Haig, the students chose areas in which they could research and complete their honours projects while doing something useful for the Timorese community.

“It’s been so exciting for the students, a tremendous opportunity,” A/Professor Haig said.

After groundwork at home at UWA, which included learning some basics of the local language, Tetum, the students, accompanied by geology post-doctoral fellow Dr Warwick Crowe, set out for Same, a hilly region south of Dili, where most of them spent six or seven weeks.

“The thrust of the whole on-going project is to help the Timorese people learn how to manage their natural resources, so we not only do some of the basic research work ourselves, but we train the Timorese people so they can undertake this type of work themselves,” A/Professor Haig said.

Last year, he and Dr Keep brought two staff from the Easter Timorese Directorate of Energy and Mineral Resources to UWA, then took them up north to gather geological samples. When they returned to Perth, the academics taught them how
to process the samples so they could do similar work back in Timor Leste.

“They are doing a complete geological survey of the island, so they can attract the big petroleum companies back to take up exploration there again, and we want to help them with this,” he said.

Each of the seven UWA students was paired up with a Timorese civil engineering student, so each could learn from the other. There is no Earth Science taught at the universities in Dili, so it was decided that these students were the closest to ours.

The group was also joined by an honours and a PhD student from Melbourne after Dr Keep and A/Professor Haig set up a collaboration with The University of Melbourne.

The geology students’ work focused on determining the geological history of the island and the potential of finding petroleum in Timor Leste. The geography students looked at mapping traditional lands while the environmental engineering students studied water quality.

“While the geologists and geographers spent their days interviewing locals, collecting rocks and climbing various mountains, Alex and I spent our time wading through rivers and inspecting the south coast while fending off the many salt-water crocodiles,” said Halinka Lamparski. She found that the water quality was very good and that the locals could think about developing a bottled water industry.

Alex Wyatt, a marine environmental engineer, worked on the rock platforms on the shallow coast, working out the effect on them of the rivers’ outflow.

“All the students’ work was aimed at providing basic information on which the East Timorese people can build their research and their industries,” A/Professor Haig said.

The group chose Same because it has some of the oldest rocks in Timor Leste, including those from the Triassic Period. Geology student Eujay McCaJohn (pictured above with local students) said he was narrowing down the age of the Triassic rocks and his preliminary analysis pointed to them being very similar to the rocks in the North West shelf, which indicates petroleum deposits.

Another geology student, Nina Wells, researched metamorphic complex rocks in the area, to come to an understanding of the tectonics of the island.

Nina and Eujay said they had a fantastic time in Timor Leste and that they would love to go back there one day.

The highlight for a third geology honours student, Logan Barber, was taking Timor Leste’s Secretary of State rock climbing in the Cablake Range, near Same.

Logan’s interest in geology blossomed from his hobby of rock climbing and when, at a welcome function, the politician said he would like to do some trekking in the range, Logan offered to escort him and explain some of the geology along the way.

“He described the history of the area as we went,” Logan said. “Apparently it is an important traditional place for Timor Leste.”

Logan’s work there involved sampling rocks from the mountain range to put together its depositional history.

“Our geological work will not only assist their petroleum industry, it will also help in road building and perhaps explain many of the landscapes important for a future in eco-tourism,” A/Professor Haig said.

He said Timor Leste would be perfect for eco-tourism, with its spectacular scenery, its small population and the picturesque Portuguese influence on the towns and buildings.

“Its natural beauty is similar to New Guinea, where I worked for eight years, but that’s a very dangerous place. There is no danger in Timor, so I think a future in tourism would be great.”

Alex Cullen, one of the two geographers in the group, said they did more hands-on work with the community than the geologists. “I helped with a methodology to empower them to map their own boundaries, as a basis for their own natural resource work,” Alex said. He made maps of the villages and left them with their chiefs.

Alex and Pyone Myatthu, the other geography student, will send their reports to the Timor government’s department of land and property. Pyone looked at traditional land tenure while in Timor Leste.

“People have adapted dynamically to the upheaval in their country, and gone back to traditional methods of living, which are sustainable, so it’s a great alternative,” she said.

Both the staff and students involved in the Timor Leste project are deeply committed to it. A/Professor Haig said that he and Dr Keep had financed the project with “research money put away from consulting work over the years and some of our personal money as well.” He said the group had a University small grant and some faculty grants, as well as some funding from the Tectonic Research Centre.

“We had about $30,000 to take these students up there,” he said. “But we also had a lot of support in kind. The Directorate of Energy and Mineral Resources in Dili gave us use of three vehicles. The District Commissioner for the Same area gave us a big old Portuguese house for all the students to stay in. And Conoco Philips (a big petroleum company) flew us from Darwin to Dili at no cost. Woodside funded our basic course in Tetum”.

He said the District Commissioner had also arranged access to the region for the students, with the local chiefs.

The Timor Leste project will continue, with an international symposium planned for later this year.
Vice-Chancellor’s column

Shaking off the myths

It is clearly as hard to shake some of the myths that surround the modern university as it is to have the wider community — including the editorial writers of a national newspaper — understand and acknowledge that all of Australia’s universities are not the same.

Some of you may have seen The Australian’s recent article about the relative number of academics and administrators in the national system. The paper followed up this article with an editorial — Too many clerks, too few classes — in which it made some extraordinary generalisations linking staff-student ratios to administrative-academic staff levels.

Apart from perpetrating a myth about professional and administrative staff, what concerns me most is the fact that those who should know better fail to recognise significant differences in individual institutions (as an aside, in recent months — The Australian has also twice referred to The University of Western Australia as the University of Western Sydney!).

The recent editorial prompted me to ‘do the sums’ for our University, and subsequently write to the newspaper making the point that the assertions made did not apply to our University, nor — I am sure — to many other universities.

From 1996 to 2003, our student-staff ratio rose by 15 per cent, the second lowest increase of any Australian university. During that period, our teaching and research staff increased by 14 per cent; our research staff increased by 10 per cent, and our professional and administrative staff increased by seven per cent. In relation to professional and administrative staff, the biggest increase occurred within the faculties (a 23 per cent increase) with a decrease of three per cent in professional and administrative staff in central administration. Some of the increase in administrative and professional staff is associated with our desire — and that of the community generally — for increased accountability and transparency.

Compounding past mythologies regarding the role of those providing administrative support to teachers and researchers short-changes many highly-qualified and committed individuals who deliver an important and essential element of the university learning experience.

I also pointed out to the newspaper’s editor that it served no purpose ‘pointing the finger’ while universities face an increasing level of regulatory and reporting requirements imposed by Government reforms of recent years.

Alan Robson Vice-Chancellor

Partners link up for richer research

Academics are working with industry partners in a wide range of research, from archaeology to economics, with the help of ARC linkage grants.

UWA has been awarded 15 grants worth more than $4 million in the latest round of grants. Projects funded span a huge range of research areas, from archaeology and prehistory to applied economics, public health, management, engineering, sociology, ecology and evolution.

“We are very pleased indeed with the grants,” says Professor Doug McEachern, Pro Vice-chancellor (Research and Innovation). “There are two rounds a year — this is the second round — and our success rate is 71 percent. The national average is 52 percent. We have also been awarded 15 APA grants for post-graduate scholarships.”

Projects include a study of the latest technology in laser vision surgery; measuring non-CO$_2$ greenhouse gas emissions in forests in south-eastern Australia; and developing a viable sheep dairy industry in Australia.

In recent years, many Australian companies have been hurt by big shifts in the Australian dollar, because they were unable to forecast these trends and because of deficiencies in hedging strategies when dealing with foreign exchange risk. A new project looks at alternative ways of forecasting the $A in real time and analysing gold prices to develop a viable method of hedging foreign exchange and commodity price risk.

A diverse range of industry and government bodies are partners in the funded projects, including Rio Tinto, Anglo Gold, CALM, Iluka Resources, the National Heart Foundation and ICIL Tasman.
Support for young medical researchers

UWA research into respiratory disease, spinal cord injury, immune system responses, regulation of cholesterol, and bone and calcium disorders have received a boost from the State Government.

All five winners of the Department of Health’s infrastructure grants this year went to UWA medical researchers. The New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support (NIRIS) Awards are worth a total of $75,000.

The five researchers have each received $15,000 to cover costs such as laboratory equipment, computers, animal facilities and support staff.

Associate Professor John Burnett a consultant medical biochemist at Royal Perth Hospital and Clinical Associate Professor in the School of Medicine and Pharmacology, is working on understanding naturally occurring low-cholesterol states that might lead to new strategies to help those with the opposite problem of high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease.

While high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the ‘bad’ cholesterol in the blood, are associated with increased cardiovascular risk, low levels of LDL are associated with protection from heart disease.

Dr Amanda Devine senior research officer, Bone and Calcium Group, School of Medicine and Pharmacology, works in the area of bone and calcium disorders. She is currently coordinating a big clinical trial of calcium supplements and their role in the prevention of fracture.

Dr Devine’s research interests are specifically the mechanism of various factors involved in bone disease, including hormonal status and nutritional and lifestyle factors such as diet, calcium supplementation vitamin D and physical activity.

Dr Silvana Gaudieri is the Healy Fellow at the Centre for Forensic Science in the School of Anatomy and Human Biology, and Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the Centre of Clinical Immunology and Biomedical Statistics.

Her focus is on understanding the genetic basis of complex diseases associated with a region on the genome that contains important immune regulation genes, the Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC). Dr Gaudieri is examining the role of MHC on a host’s immune response to infection agents such as HIV and hepatitis C, and in complex diseases such as psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Professor Lyle Palmer is Foundation Chair in Genetic Epidemiology at the WA Institute for Medical Research, and Professor Schools of Population Health and Medicine and Pharmacology.

He has interests both in methodological development in statistical genetics and in applied genetics research with a focus on complex respiratory diseases.

Professor Palmer has overall responsibility for enabling the internationally unique clinical and epidemiological resources in WA to be expanded into the areas of genetic epidemiology and genomics.

Dr Giles Plant is the National Health and Medical Research Council’s R.D. Wright Fellow, and Director, Red’s Spinal Cord Research Laboratory in the School of Anatomy and Human Biology. (Red is the nickname of the benefactor, Eileen Bond.)

His research interests are neurotrauma, particularly spinal cord injury and his laboratory is investigating transplantation techniques to repair that injury.

Dr Plant’s current work with colleagues in Melbourne is looking at the potential of human bone marrow cells to repair the injured spinal cord. They are studying the prospect of harvesting the cells from patients with spinal cord injury, then transplanting them into the injury site to induce axonal growth.
Many visitors to the UWA campus pause at the large handsome rock outside the main entrance to the Geology Building to examine it, and to read the inscription.

The rock is an agmatite, a complex patchwork of various granitic and other rocks which have been combined, deep in the Earth’s crust, during mountain-building episodes. Non-geological visitors tend to be particularly impressed by the dates on the inscription, which indicate that the components of the rock range from three billion to 550 million years in age.

Earth Science students are less impressed by such dates, but find the rock a suitable gathering point before lectures begin, and during the lunch hour. Neither visitors nor present-day students generally know about the events that led to its installation at the University by Professor Rex Prider, where it has become something of an icon.

Professor Prider, who is now 93 and lives in a nursing home, was brought up in rural WA before graduating from UWA. He took his PhD at Cambridge where he worked on the petrology of a group of rare volcanic rocks from the Kimberley area of Western Australia.

Dr John Glover, senior honorary research fellow in the School of Earth and Geographical Sciences, recounts the story of the majestic rock which has been a UWA icon for more than forty years.

His continuing work on these rocks, which are the source of many of the diamonds subsequently found in the area, helped establish his reputation as a petrologist.

Dr Prider joined the Department of Geology (as it was then called) at UWA, and in 1949 became the Department’s third Professor. One of the teaching duties that he particularly enjoyed was taking first-year students on brief, weekend excursions to quarry and outcrop exposures on the fringe of the metropolitan area. The Roads Board Quarry in Armadale, which had been a useful source of road metal, was a favourite locality.

The Professor maintained that the textures and structures in the Roads Board Quarry agmatite reflected many of the main geological events of the Precambrian Era in Western Australia. He also held the view that students, if asked the right questions, could work out the order of these events themselves from the evidence.

One large rock, of which the UWA rock was then part, served his purpose to perfection. It held centre stage during the discussions for at least an hour.

One Sunday in 1957, the Professor marched into the quarry at the head of about fifty students to find that his favourite rock had been completely whitewashed, thus rendering it useless as a subject for demonstration. Elsewhere, mildly indecempt
pseudo-geological observations were painted with whitewash on the walls of the quarry.

Professor Lawrie Davidson of Murdoch University was then a member of the class, and remembers how blandly Professor Prider switched to other rocks to point out structures and extract answers from the students. The Professor, however, was feeling less than bland inwardly, and his temper was not improved by finding a parking ticket, which proved false, on his car.

The next day, Monday, he asked me to drive to the quarry with him to look for clues to the identity of the vandals. We found empty white wash cartons and little else, but it was evident that repeat students were involved, because they knew precisely which rock to target. The Professor then decided to compare the handwriting on the fake parking ticket with that of repeat students in the previous year’s examination papers, which he had in his office. He thus identified the ring-leader.

The professor told the students involved that the quarry had to be restored by the next week, and according to Lawrie Davidson (who was not one of the villains), it was.

Professor Prider was not particularly elated with his investigative triumph. He knew the copycat nature of pranks of this kind, and never lost a lingering concern about the fate of the rock. Eventually, late in 1963, he arranged with Bell Bros to have the rock brought to the Department, where he could keep an eye on it out of his window.

The rock arrived after he had gone on study leave. Bell Bros had dropped it on the Causeway, where it split in two, to the confusion of following traffic. Thus two large rocks were delivered to the Department one afternoon. Basil Balme, the Acting Head of the Department, banished one piece to the rear parking lot, where it remains, and had the other mounted in front of the Geology Building. The delivery attracted a large body of very noisy students, and eventually the Vice Chancellor himself came to see what was happening.

The brass plaque explaining the significance of the rock proved an irresistible late-night target to roistering students, but was replaced without comment until they tired of removing it. In 1988, one of the plaques was dumped late at night at the Nedlands Police Station, about 25 years after being taken, and was returned to us. The circumstances have never been explained.

There was a further problem. The rock began to turn brown because of iron in the water of University sprinklers, thus concealing the all-important structures and textures. The Professor instructed the Museum Curator to clean it up with dilute oxalic acid from time to time.

Professor Prider maintained a proprietary interest in the rock long after his retirement in 1975. Until 1999, he generally presented the Prider Medal at an annual lunch held in University House, after which his routine was to walk back to the Geology Building with me, noting in passing if the rock needed a fresh oxalic acid bath.

In February 2000, the Professor attended a meeting of Geology alumni held in the Sunken Garden. He was then 89. I am pleased to report that the rock was in pristine condition, having been scrubbed by Museum Curator Jenny Bevan especially for the occasion.

RIGHT: Dr John Glover and Jenny Bevan have great affection for the rock (below).
Science and arts intersect

A seminar series that builds links between science and the arts is quietly revolutionising the way people are thinking about society and the environment.

The intersection of human values and environmental management takes place once a month, organised by a group of academics from right across the disciplines at UWA.

The Environment and Society seminars have been running all year and came out of discussions between two anthropologists, two scientists and a landscape architect.

One of the group, Dr Jane Mulcock, a postdoctoral fellow in Anthropology and Sociology, said the interdisciplinary seminars were the result of a wish to build links between the physical and biological sciences, and the social sciences, arts and humanities.

“The primary purpose of the series was to bring scholars from both areas together to talk about the intersections of human beliefs, values and practices, and environmental management,” Dr Mulcock said.

“As such, we are acknowledging the important contributions that both groups of scholars have to make to our understanding of environmental problems. You need multiple perspectives to get the whole picture.”

Although it was aimed at academic staff at UWA, the seminars have become very popular with people off campus, mainly from government and private environmental consultancies.

“It’s really good to provide a forum for people in the community, even though it wasn’t our original idea,” Dr Mulcock said.

A well-attended seminar in first semester was that presented by Professor of Philosophy, Andrew Brennan. He talked about biodiversity and agricultural landscapes and whether ‘wicked’ policy problems could be solved.

“Conservation issues for agricultural landscapes are typical examples of ‘wicked’ public policy problems,” Professor Brennan said. “They are the ones in which questions are not clearly defined, and there is apparent conflict between different sets of values, all of which are legitimate.

“Since ‘wicked’ problems involve the competition between multiple goods, and different — but perfectly legitimate — values, it is not helpful to regard them as having right or wrong answers.”

He said the challenge for policy in Australian agriculture was how to protect remaining natural values by processes that were fair to stakeholders, governed by scientific credibility, and sensitive to the plurality of values held by groups within the community.

The next seminar in the series will be presented by Associate Professor Billie Giles-Corti: Urban Design and Health — Work in Progress.

A/Professor Giles-Corti is coordinating a five year research project called RESIDE (RESIDential Environments), in collaboration with the department for Planning and Infrastructure, the National Heart Foundation and the Water Corporation.

The study aims to evaluate the impact of urban design on health, particularly the impact on walking, cycling, use of public transport and sense of community.

In her presentation next month, she asks: How does the design of communities affect people’s leisure time activities, transport patterns, health and sense of community?

The seminar is scheduled for 4pm on Friday September 10 in the Social Sciences Lecture Room 1. Please let Dr Mulcock (6488 1819 or jmulcock@cyllene.uwa.edu.au) know if you are attending.

For updates and notice of future seminars, visit the Environment and Society Seminars webpage: http://www/anthropology.arts.uwa.edu.au/home/envirosoc/environment
Researchers in Population Health took up their paintbrushes recently and created a mural that symbolises their work.

The Health Promotion Research and Evaluation Group (HPREG), lead by Associate Professor Billie Giles-Corti, spent a weekend together to produce a work of art that illustrates their collective vision of a community with all the elements essential to good physical, mental and spiritual health, and environmental sustainability.

It was created under the direction of artist David Giles, husband of A/Professor Giles-Corti, and some of the researchers brought along family members to the Fremantle Arts Centre, to make 11 artists in the group.

“In the spirit of traditional urban design, the community is centred around a civic building and natural features, and incorporates a vibrant mix of land uses including parks, shops, health services, spiritual centres and houses,” said Tya Shannon Smith, a PhD student in the group. “Community members use renewable energy and eat food grown sustainably in community gardens and farms. They are encouraged to be active, both physically and mentally, engaging in many forms of physical activity, learning and civic activities.

“Look closely and you will find a skate park, churches from different religions, a symbol of indigenous spirituality, bicycle and pedestrian paths, a tree-top walk, a beach café, and many other interesting details.”

The mural weekend was organised as a team building activity for HPREG staff and PhD students supervised by A/Professor Billie Giles-Corti and Dr Michael Rosenberg. The group is engaged in research projects looking at the effect of physical environments on aspects of health, physical activity in particular.

The artists were Jacinta Francis, Sarah French, Billie Giles-Corti, Joanna Granich, Andrea Lange, Karen Martin, Jasmine Martin, Rosie J Murray, Gavin McCormack, Tya Shannon Smith, Brian Wolfenden.

The HPREG website has colour photos of the mural. http://www.populationhealth.uwa.edu.au/welcome/research/hpreg/hpreg

BELOW: Population Health researchers Joanna Granich and Tya Shannon Smith are proud of the team effort that went into this mural, which is now in the corridor outside their offices.
Paintings promote peace

A Symphony of Colour is playing in the corridors of the Graduate School of Education.

A collection of paintings by Indian artist, poet and meditation teacher, Sri Chinmoy, are designed to promote world harmony, friendship and unity.

They were brought to Perth, framed and hung by UWA graduate, meditation teacher and devotee of Sri Chinmoy, Stuart Cunningham, who hopes to keep moving the exhibition to different locations, to spread a positive, feel-good message.

The vibrant colourful paintings have names like Shanti (peace) and Benevolence and all carry the artist’s signature birds.

Challenging solutions for salinity

Australia’s most prestigious prize for salinity research, the WE Wood Award, has been won by Associate Professor David Pannell, described as a man with a talent for challenging convention.

A/Professor Pannell is a researcher with the CRC for Plant-Based Management of Dryland Salinity

Presenting the award in Bendigo, Kevin Goss, the chair of the selection panel, said that A/Professor Pannell had shown that simple solutions, applied broadly would not work, in addressing one of the nation’s biggest problems.

“This presents a challenge to policy makers who so often work within the confines of short political time frames,” he said.

“David Pannell’s work has greatly influenced these policy makers, who are now heeding his message. We are seeing much greater attention paid to cost-effectiveness and a more realistic appreciation of the importance of socio-economic issues in developing salinity solutions.

“Our understanding of salinity has developed greatly in recent years, but this also serves to remind us that the more we know, the more we realise we don’t know. David Pannell’s consistent call for commitment to well-planned long-term research is a message we will ignore at our peril.”

Walter Ernest Wood, after whom the award is named, first recognised and reported on the salinity risks associated with land clearing in 1924.

David Pannell demonstrates that dryland salinity has the same effect as pouring salt onto plants.
High school students with visual impairment had a taste of University last month.

Eight students thinking about coming to UWA next year had all their questions about access answered by staff from Student Services, the Library and academics from the areas of social work, psychology, linguistics and law.

Filomina D’Cruz, project officer in the Student Diversity Access Program, said the aim was to present university as an option to students who may not have considered it possible.

“Here at UWA there are facilities and services to attend to their specific needs. For example, the Disabilities Office arranges special provision for exams and they also organise course material to be provided in alternative forms, which include Braille and electronic form, so it can be enlarged on the screen.”

There are already 14 students registered on campus with vision impairment and the prospective students met some of them over lunch and discussed problems and possibilities.

The visit by these students was organised as part of the wider Student Diversity Access Program which aims to encourage students from schools which are under-represented at UWA and by students of diverse backgrounds to consider university studies as an option.

“The visits are mainly by year nine students who come to the campus for part of the day to hear ex-students from their schools talk about life on campus and participate in organised activities. Certificates are also presented to the participants,” said Filomina.

“We would like the visiting students to meet staff members who attended their school or a school of a similar background. We would also like them to present their certificates and give a short informal talk to encourage the students’ tertiary aspirations.

“Another way to be involved is by organising an activity of 45 minutes to an hour’s duration for these campus visits. Students really enjoy hands-on activities in labs, or short lectures that give them a taste of university life,” she said.

Schools which will be visiting in the coming weeks are the Australian Islamic College, Girrawheen Senior High School, Armadale Senior High School, Mirrabooka Senior High and Northam Senior High.

If you are interested, please contact the Project Officer for this program, Filomina D’Cruz, on 6488 7863 or fdcruz@admin.uwa.edu.au

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A unique engineer

The University’s foundation Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Emeritus Professor David Allen-Williams, died on July 29.

He served as foundation professor for a remarkable 25 years, from 1958 to 1983 and was also head of the Mechanical Engineering Department from 1958 to 1977.

Associate Professor James Trevelyan, Discipline Chair for Mechatronics Engineering in the School of Mechanical Engineering, said: “Emeritus Professor Allen-Williams inspired the generation of mechanical engineers who built the mining, manufacturing, process and offshore oil and gas industries that have brought such wealth to this state.”

David Allen-Williams was a unique engineer, having mastered and practised all the braches of engineering: mechanical, civil, computing, electrical and electronic.

“He will be remembered as much for his quiet but insistent integrity, humility and loving guidance of his students as for his unique engineering achievements,” A/Professor Trevelyan said.
Communicating with the public: Why bother?

Why? Because we should!

There are many in the community who are genuinely interested in science; we see that first hand at UWA Expo. There is an extraordinary amount of fascinating research and development at UWA. Great satisfaction can be had by sharing the excitement. There is also a growing imperative to do so.

There is a decreased interest in science in schools with subsequent problems for university science faculties. With the imminent retirement of many of Australia’s teachers of enabling sciences (chemistry, physics, mathematics), who will teach the next generation? To avoid a crisis, we must interest young people in science.

Complicating the discussion of lower interest and reduced motivation to study science is the issue of public trust of science and scientists.

Once upon a time scientists who developed a new technology that was technically robust expected public acceptance if ‘experts’ deemed the benefits of the new technology outweighed predicted risks. New technologies must now be ‘socially robust’ as well. Particularly in Europe, policy shifts have been informed by BSE crises and controversies about genetic modification of foods.

What’s in it for me?

When specialists explain an idea or concept in plain English to a wider community, it helps clarify our thoughts. Every teacher knows that one of the best ways to improve their own understanding of a concept is to explain it to others. Many researchers know that explaining their work to someone outside the field can be an excellent way to improve an hypothesis or experimental design. Why is that? When explaining to an ‘outsider’, we have to peel away our jargon and get back to the fundamental idea. We have to examine assumptions and make sure we truly understand and accept them.

Technical words provide short hand or abbreviations for whole sets of ideas. When specialists talk knowingly about polymerase chain reaction or superconducting quark stars, they jump to a certain level at which a whole series of assumptions is accepted and dialogue can start. It also excludes anyone who does not understand the jargon. That may be appropriate but frequently is not. We must get better at being bilingual, switching between the jargon of our field and plain English as appropriate.

What can I do?

We can all improve our communication skills. I didn’t think as much about delivery when lecturing about iron uptake by plants as I do now when standing in front of today’s media-savvy students talking about effective communication. Daunting, I assure you. I will never have a flashy delivery, but hope I incorporate some of what I’m continually learning about effective communication.

We can share some of the excitement of what we do with the community. In doing so, we should remove jargon from our speech and writing whenever possible. One of the students in a Science Communication unit put it well, “Instead of trying to sound intelligent, I have reported the facts clearly and succinctly. My grades have improved by incorporating this technique.” There are many rewards to improved communication, this being but one simple example.
For any queries about the research grants published in this issue contact the Research Grants Office, ext. 3702.

2004 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING Awards

This is to advise all staff that a call for the 2004 Excellence in Teaching Awards has now been distributed to Faculties and Schools. The Awards were realigned in 2002 to take account of restructuring and for 2004 comprise student nominated awards only, as follows:

**Individual Teaching Awards**

- Postgraduate Coursework Teaching Award
- Postgraduate Research Supervision Award - Unit Award

Since 2002 the individual teaching awards have been considered on a divisional basis, as follows:

**DIVISION 1**

HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts
- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Economics and Commerce
- Law
- Non-Faculty based teaching
- Education
- Indigenous Studies

**DIVISION 2 — SCIENCES**

- Engineering, Computing and Mathematics
- Life and Physical Sciences
- Medicine and Dentistry
- Natural and Agricultural Sciences

The closing date for nominations by students is Friday, 15 October 2004.

Nomination forms and contact details for these awards are available at http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/page/19514

**ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS IN JULY**

**LECTURER TO SENIOR LECTURER**

- Dr Rasiah Gengatharen (Faculty of Law) — A highly regarded teacher in Finance, Securities and Asian Business Law, he has consistently published in very reputable journals in the finance, securities and banking areas; also published an outstanding text “Derivatives Law and Regulation”. A very highly valued member of the academic staff.

**SENIOR LECTURER TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**

- Dr Nicola Lautenschlager (School of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences) — An excellent teacher who has assumed a significant role in curriculum development and as academic coordinator. An outstanding contribution to the faculty, her discipline and the community. Has substantial and internationally recognised achievements in research, particularly in relation to cognitive impairment and dementia, and an impressive record in securing grants and in publication.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO PROFESSOR**

- Dr Andrew Deeks (School of Civil and Resource Engineering) — Teaches predominantly in the statics-solid mechanics/structural analysis stream where he has won a University Excellence in Teaching Award as well as a High Commendation for Innovation in Teaching. He has supervised several PhD students and made a substantial contribution to administration. He has engaged in superb, groundbreaking and internationally respected research in computational mechanics, with applications in the structural and geotechnical areas, with a very strong publication record, and has had great success in winning competitive external grants.

**RESEARCH ASSOCIATE TO RESEARCH FELLOW**

- Dr Euan Harvey (School of Plant Biology) — A valuable contribution to teaching, particularly of postgraduate students. His papers have provided a significant contribution, and at the cutting edge to the investigation of benthic fish communities by the development of stereoscopic underwater video systems, and he has a good record of attracting external research funding.

**Call for nominations to Academic Board**

Nominations are invited for the election of academic staff and general staff to the Academic Board for a two-year term from 1 January 2005. Elections will be carried out by postal ballot in these two categories. Those holding primarily research appointments should nominate in the relevant category according to whether they hold an academic or general staff appointment. The Chair of the Board, Professor Dennis Haskell, would like to encourage staff to nominate for the Board since it plays a crucial role as the University’s peak academic decision-making body.

Further details of the requirements in each category, nomination forms and optional pro formas for summarising prior experience may be found at the following address: http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/board/elections

Nominations from women are encouraged.

Completed nomination forms must be returned to Bernadette Ferns in the Secretariat by 5pm on Friday 3 September 2004.

If you have any queries regarding the above or would like further information on the role of the Academic Board, please do not hesitate to contact Trudi McGlade (by email on tmcglade@admin.uwa.edu.au or by telephone on extension 2457).
Monday 23 August
ASTHMA AND ALLERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE—2004 MEDICAL RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES
‘Health effects of natural dust: the role of trace elements and compounds’, Professor Phil Weinstein and Dr Angus Cook, School of Population Health. Lunch provided from 12pm. 12.30pm, Josie Seminar Room, Fourth Floor, G Block, SCGH.

PERTH MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE GROUP TALK
‘John Donne on The Trinity’, Professor Gerald O’Collins, SJ. Professor O’Collins has taught at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, since 1974, where he is currently the Professor of Systematic and Fundamental Theology. He is the holder of the Chair of Jesuit Studies, a joint initiative of this University, the University of Notre Dame Australia and St Thomas More College (UWA). 1 pm, Murdoch Lecture Theatre.

UWA ALBANY SKYWEST LECTURE SERIES
‘Human smuggling and the circuit of capital’, Dr Khalid Koser, Migration Research Unit, University College, London. Dr Koser’s talk will draw on his current research on human smuggling between Afghanistan/Pakistan and Western Europe, funded by the Leverhulme Trust (UK). It will answer the question ‘Does smuggling pay?’ by looking at how much smugglers charge, how migrants and their families raise the money, how the money is disbursed through the smuggling network and how much smuggled migrants remit once they arrive at their destinations. 5.30pm, UWA Albany Centre, 35 Stirling Terrace, ALBANY.

IAN CONSTABLE LECTURE
“Evolution of disease understanding! The X-factor uncovered”, Professor Paul Sieving, Director, National Eye Institute, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA. Professor Sieving’s presentation on X-linked Retinoschisis is a fascinating case study of the evolution of knowledge through disease gene identification which allows genetic testing and provides hope for future development of treatment. 7pm, F. J. Clarke Lecture Theatre (QEII Campus of UWA, off Verdun Street, Nedlands).

Tuesday 24 August
SCHOOL OF ANATOMY AND HUMAN BIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES
‘The fate of antigens after injection into the anterior chamber of the eye’, Dr Serge Camelo, Research Fellow, School of Anatomy and Human Biology. 1pm, Room 1.81, School of Anatomy and Human Biology.

MARINE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SEMINAR
‘Demersal fish assemblages of the Recherche Archipelago’, Euan Harvey, Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Plant Biology. 4pm, Room 119, School of Water Research.

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES—HISTORY DISCIPLINE GROUP SEMINAR
‘The Importance of Zoology and Conservation to Australian Progressives’, Natalie Lloyd, University of Western Australia. 4.30pm, Room 1.13 (First Floor Tea Room), Arts Building.

Thursday 26 August
SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL AND CHEMICAL SCIENCES—PHYSIOLOGY SEMINAR
‘Defective Membrane Repair: a New Mechanism of Muscular Dystrophy’, Dr Renzhi Han, College of Medicine, University of Iowa. 1pm, Seminar Room 2.01.

Friday 27 August
SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL AND CHEMICAL SCIENCES—MICROBIOLOGY SEMINAR
‘Prevention of Pneumococcal Disease in Children—Triumphs and Challenges’, Dr Peter Richard, School of Paediatrics and Child Health, 9am, Seminar Room 1.1, First Floor, L Block, QEII Medical Centre.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLoGY SEMINAR
‘Neo-liberalism in Australia—Ethnographic Perspectives’, Rob Lambert (Organisational and Labour Studies), Matthew Tonts (Earth and Geographical Sciences), and Martin Forsey (Social and Cultural Studies). 11am–12.30pm, Androphology Seminar Room.

UNIVERSITY MUSIC SOCIETY 2004 SEASON
‘Horizons—Celebrating Peter Sculthorpe’, The University Music Society celebrates the 75th birthday of Australia’s most renowned composer with this special concert. The program features two of his most acclaimed works as well as pieces by Debussy and Copland. Featuring Graeme Gilling (piano), Peter Moore (conductor), Paul Wright (conductor) and introduced by Peter Sculthorpe. Tickets from BOCS 9484 1133 or the Octagon Theatre 6488 1340; email ias@admin.uwa.edu.au; web site: www.ias.uwa.edu.au.

Sunday 29 August
UWA EXPO 2004
This exciting event combines informative course information sessions with hands-on displays, music, community events and campus tours. Visitors have opportunity to chat to UWA staff and students, view exhibits and demonstrations, attend talks on courses, enjoy concerts, grab a bite to eat, stroll through the beautiful UWA grounds or see them by tram or from a helicopter. There will be over 40 talks on areas of interest to prospective students, spread over six convenient time-slots (with repeat sessions for popular courses), from ‘What I wish I’d known in Year 12’ to ‘Career Planning’, and covering courses from Agriculture to Philosophy, and more! Faculty and Admissions staff will be on hand to answer any questions students may have about the application and admissions process. Visit the website www.expo.uwa.edu.au for program details. (Note: charges apply for helicopter rides) 9am to 4pm, Crawley campus.

Wednesday 1 September
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES—HISTORY DISCIPLINE GROUP SEMINAR
‘A Tale of Two Conversions: The Portuguese, the Paravas and Monomotapa’, Professor Ken McPherson. 12–2pm, G14 (Ground Floor Tea Room), Arts Building.

UWA PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY
‘War, Intervention and Morality’, Professor Laurence Goldstein, University of Hong Kong. 4.30pm, Arts Seminar Room 1.33.

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES
Literary reading by Canadian writer Robert Priest. Robert is a poet, playwright, songwriter and novelist. He has published seven children’s books and seven books of poetry and prose for adults. 6pm, Geography Lecture Theatre 1. For more information please contact The Institute of Advanced Studies on 6488 1340; email ias@admin.uwa.edu.au; web site: www.ias.uwa.edu.au.

Thursday 2 September
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES—POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SEMINAR
‘Media Cultures’, Professor Mark Poster, Professor of History, University of California, Irvine, and IAS Professor-at-Large. 10am, Old Senate Room (Institute of Advanced Studies).

Friday 3 September
SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL AND CHEMICAL SCIENCES—MICROBIOLOGY SEMINAR
‘SARS: a Glogal Challenge’, Professor Aileen McPherson. 12–2pm, G14 (Ground Floor Tea Room), Arts Building.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLoGY SEMINAR
‘Tsomba and Vorombe: Identity and Healing among the Vezo of Fiherena’, Beatrice Stotzer. 1–2.30pm, Thursday 2 September, The Anthropology and Sociology Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Western Australia. 4.30pm, Room 2.01.

ASIA STUDIES SEMINAR SERIES
‘Declare your Feminism: Identifying One’s Self in Feminist Fieldwork’, Laura Dales. 1–2.30pm, Seminar Room G.25, Ground Floor, Social Sciences Building.

BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
‘The c-Cbl RING finger determines thymocyte fate by regulating signalling thresholds’, Associate Professor Wallace Langdon, Pathology. 1pm, Simmonds Lecture Theatre.

CAMPUS Diary
23 August – 5 September
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**FOR SALE**

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- **HOUSEHOLD** furniture for sale: corner computer desk, 2 pine bookcases (3 shelves), 80lt evaporative cooler, 1 trundle bed & mattress, frostfree refrigerator/freezer (near new). All offers considered. FREE king size waterbed frame with liner and mattress. Phone Mary on 9386 9220.
- **NEUMEYER** German piano, reconditioned and tuned, lovely walnut case with French polish, beautiful sound in all registers, professional tuned, lovely walnut case with French polish, professional turned. $350. Shane 0414 442 829 or 6488 2391.
- **POWER Macintosh 6100 / 66, Microsoft OS 8.0, $350. Shane 0414 442 829 or 6488 2391.**
- **MAZDA 121 Metro 5-door hatch, 1.5 manual 1997, a/c, p/s, central locking, very good condition, low kms. $7890. Ph. 6488 3216 (W), 9383 9226 (H), 0402 812 804 (M).**
- **WINE: 2003 Grenache cleanskins, $65 per case (H), 0402 812 804 (M).**
- **NEUMEYER German piano, reconditioned and tuned, lovely walnut case with French polish, beautiful sound in all registers, professional turned. $350. Shane 0414 442 829 or 6488 2391.**
- **WANTED**
  - **VISITING academic seeks a house for rent close to UWA for October-December 2004 inclusive, suitable for family of 4. Please contact ian.reid@eng.ox.ac.uk.**
  - **ACCOMMODATION wanted from January 2005. We are relocating to Perth from South Africa in the New Year and I will be joining the University in January. We would like to rent accommodation for approximately 6 months. Requirements are 3 bedrooms and reasonable proximity to UWA. Contact Andy Fourie at andyf@civil.wits.ac.za**
  - **ACCOMMODATION wanted: Visiting New Zealand academic and family (2 children) seeking furnished accommodation for around six months in 2005. Timing is flexible. Prefer quiet area near schools. Maybe you are going on leave and would like to rent your house to us! If you’d like to meet, I’ll be visiting Perth Sept 28-Oct 1. Please contact robin.guald@otago.ac.nz**
- **LOW kms. $7890. Ph. 6488 3216 (W), 9383 9226 (H), 0402 812 804 (M).**

**FOR RENT**

- **CLAREMONTE, furnished or unfurnished 2-brm unit in small group, spacious, north-facing balcony, pleasant outlook, u/c car bay, walk to Claremont centre and public transport, short drive to UWA. Available 1 Sept. Phone Jan 9385 1890.**
- **LARGE furnished family home with pool in Kalamunda. Available c.15 Sept till late Dec 2004 while owner overseas. dkennedy@cyllene.uwa.edu.au or +61 (0)8 6488 2150.**
- **MAZDA 121 Metro 5-door hatch, 1.5 manual 1997, a/c, p/s, central locking, very good condition, low kms. $7890. Ph. 6488 3216 (W), 9383 9226 (H), 0402 812 804 (M).**
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- **LOW kms. $7890. Ph. 6488 3216 (W), 9383 9226 (H), 0402 812 804 (M).**
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**Redundant Equipment for Sale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>COND.</th>
<th>DEPT.</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIKON FM2 35mm camera complete with</td>
<td>$890</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Lance Maschmiedt, ext 5024</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIKON AF micro NIKKOR 1:2.8 60mm lens</td>
<td>Offers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unipark</td>
<td>Roger Davey, ext 3554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bids should be accepted by Monday 6 September with schools to have first option

Schools are reminded that all University equipment available for sale must be advertised in the UWA News. Receipts should be PeopleSoft account coded 490 (computing with barcode), 491 (non-computing with barcode) or 493 (items with no barcode). If equipment has an existing barcode please contact extension 3618/2546 for details.

CONDITION refers to the general condition of item (1 = as new; 2 = good; 3 = serviceable; 4 = unserviceable). AGE refers to the nearest year.